Social media usage is omnipresent with the number of people with online digital profiles now in its billions. Every tweet, post, like or tag produces a digital footprint that can be connected perpetually to your digital identity. Many students will have started their digital footprint before they have even begun their University experience. But do our students know what they should or shouldn’t post on social media and the consequences that any ill-considered posts may have on their future employability, particularly for those considering professional degree pathways? Do they understand the value of a positive digital profile for improving employability, promoting professional networking, encouraging access to collaboration in education and as a method for wider and greater dissemination of research?

Within the College of MVLS there are several degree programmes which have associated Professional bodies that publish guidelines for social media use and misuse. But how do our students actually feel about the advice and guidance that is provided to them? Can they apply these guidelines to their own experiences in University? What are the motivators for our students to pursue their identity management and what are the challenges that they currently perceive with behaving professionally in a digital environment?

The undergraduate schools within the College of MVLS have recently developed student partnerships aimed at improving the use of technology to enhance learning and teaching. These partnerships are currently working on a project to focus on digital identity, wellbeing and professionalism. The student voice is an integral part of this project and a needs analysis study will provide an opportunity for students to identify areas they feel would benefit from additional resources for learning and teaching to enable them to thrive in a digital environment.

This presentation, delivered in collaboration with the student partners, will present the results of the study identifying the areas for development that will encourage
student reflection on both their personal and professional development as they transition through their degree programme enhancing their digital profiles and increasing their awareness of their digital wellbeing, to helping student to understand how to balance their usage of their always connected devices and their other developmental needs, consequently preparing them for global employment and citizenship.