

# Computer scientists' app measures our online footprints

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Computer scientists from Trinity College Dublin have developed an app – Bigfoot – that will allow them to assess how accurately the online footprints we all leave represent our personalities in the real world.

The [app](#) was created in collaboration with [artificial intelligence](#) experts AYLIEN and researchers at the ADAPT centre, which is based in Trinity.

Their 'lifelogging' tool will be showcased at Science Gallery Dublin's latest exhibition, which considers how [personal data](#) is shared and used over the Internet. Visitors will be able to take part in a walk-in laboratory that uses the Bigfoot app, so as to discover a bit more about the signals they are sending out online.

The exhibition is designed to make us think if it is possible for such data to measure the intangible things that really matter: love, beauty, satisfaction, mindfulness? Will a future filled with sensors and surveillance mean the end of privacy? How far and wide does our data travel, and does it represent an accurate depiction of who we really are?

The Bigfoot app has been developed by Research Assistant in the School of Computer Science and Statistics at Trinity, Dr Kevin Koidl, who is also based at the ADAPT centre, in collaboration with AYLIEN, a data analytics startup.

He said: "Bigfoot is essentially made up of three components. Together,

these will enable us to see how well someone's external online persona matches their true nature. If there is friction between these two, it might be that they're sending the wrong messages far and wide without knowing it."

The Bigfoot app can analyse a user's social engagement such as their likes, music tastes etc. and then visualise these via widgets.

The user is then asked to answer a few questions about their social media behaviour such as "Would you sell your data if you could, and for how much?"

The user's social media data and the questionnaires then result in a Bigfoot 'score' from A-E. 'A' represents a very shy Bigfoot, while 'E' represents a King Kong Bigfoot, whose digital footprint can be seen by anyone and everyone.

In the third part a user answers psychometric tests before the research team correlate the [social media](#) data with the psychometric data.

Dr Koidl added: "From a research perspective the main interest is to understand if our online behaviour is different to '[real-world](#)' behaviour, and whether our digital footprints send the right messages. Of course, some people might intentionally send the wrong ones, but that is interesting in itself."

**More information:** [dublin.sciencegallery.com/even ...  
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Provided by Trinity College Dublin

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