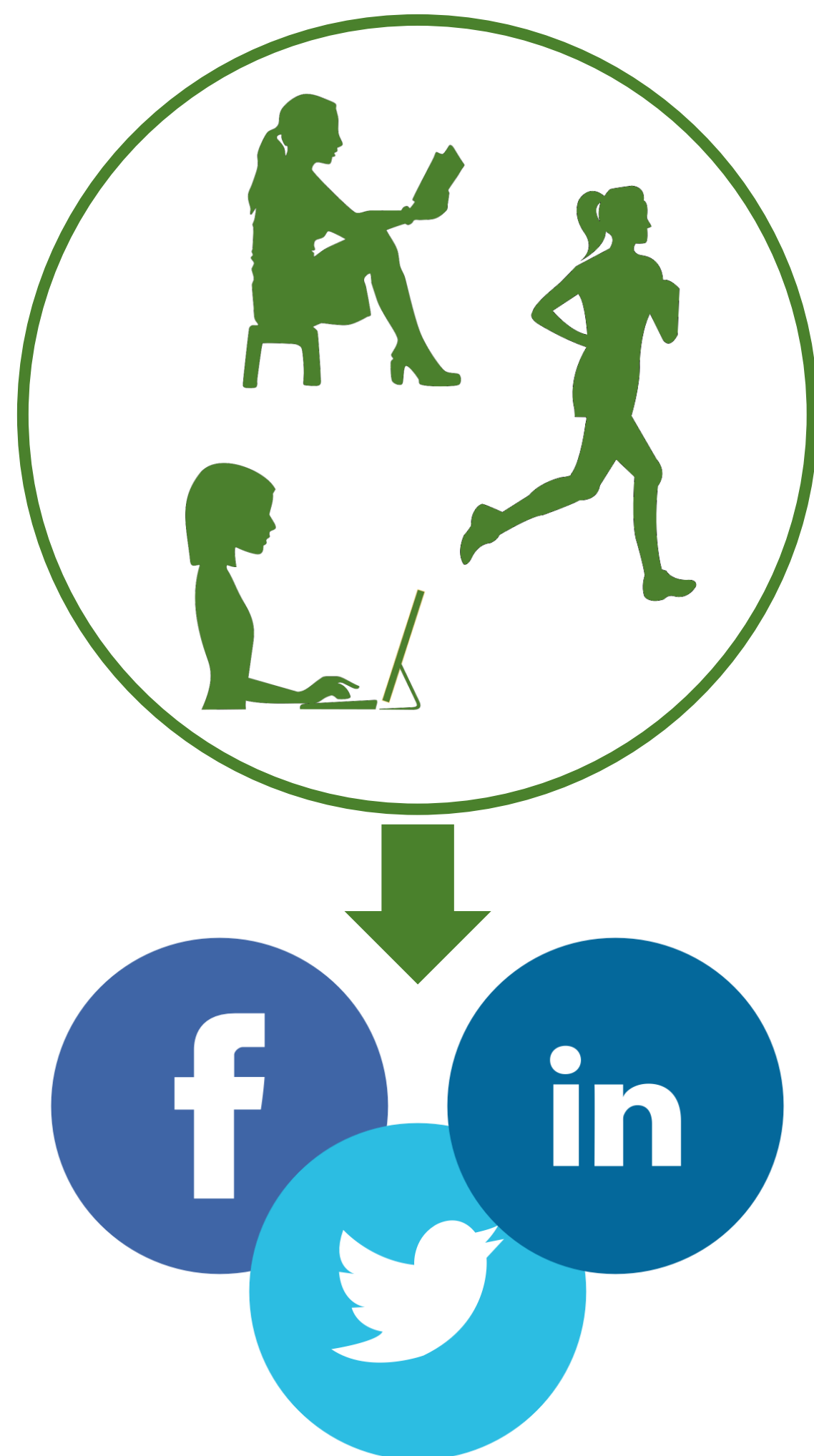# Building identities online

Frances VC Ryan, Peter Cruickshank, Hazel Hall, Alistair Lawson | School of Computing

How do individuals use **information to build identities** for themselves online?

Creating and using online personas and identities
- ▶ Based on offline identities and personalities
- ▶ To showcase aspects of "real world" selves
- ▶ Based on "appropriate" persona for platform
- ▶ Different personas for different audiences
- ▶ Identity creation is not necessarily intentional

Managing the blurring of information
- ▶ Between private and professional selves
- ▶ Between offline and online environments
- ▶ Levels of blurring varies across platforms
- ▶ Privacy settings and "selective sharing" used
- ▶ Often as a way of managing reputation

Private

Offline

Professional

Online

Deploying anonymous accounts and pseudonyms
- ▶ Complete anonymity is rarely used
- ▶ Pseudonyms associated with "real" identities
- ▶ Pseudonyms as "usernames", not new identities
- ▶ Consistent pseudonyms across platforms
- ▶ Some pseudonyms used to "hide in plain sight"

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