

The "Like" button

This allows users to state whether or not they like a third party site to see how other Facebook users have interacted with that site. Facebook collects and aggregates this information. At present, we understand that for 90 days, this information is personalized.

So who has the keys to the car?

The user should determine who can see their personal information, and should have the facilities to revoke permission. At present, users do not have adequate control over the data they post on Social Networking sites.

So, what next?

Social networking, while presenting risks to users, can be positive, and it becomes positive when we, as its users take control.

Learning opportunity

If you are a "Facebook-phobic", now may be a good time to engage with your youngsters.

- ◆ **What's new?** Get them to tell you what the changes are, and how they are planning to use the new facilities. If they don't know, (or even have no idea the changes are coming) then learn about them together.
- ◆ **Profile content Have a "Spring Clean"** Now might be a very good time to review what content you or your child has on Facebook. What needs to be there, and what should be removed? Are any inappropriate comments there? (Is it really appropriate for a 13 year old to be "looking for a relationship?")
- ◆ **Photographs** Look at all the photographs – how many of them link "Face & Place"? How many photographs are you tagged in? How many of your photographs are high-resolution and might be susceptible to being copied and changed or show information in the background or school logo's?
- ◆ **Applications** Look at the Applications – which ones do you/your child use? Do you know who owns them? Do you know what information the application owner can see? Are you happy with that?
- ◆ **Contacts** – Do you know who all the people in your contact list are? (Does your child know who all their contacts are?) Some young people build up large contact lists in order to "be popular" or even to win competitions in schools. This can lead to a huge number of people who can see your personal details and read and comment on your posts. Now might be a great time for reducing your contact list. It is easy to accept "friends of friends of friends".

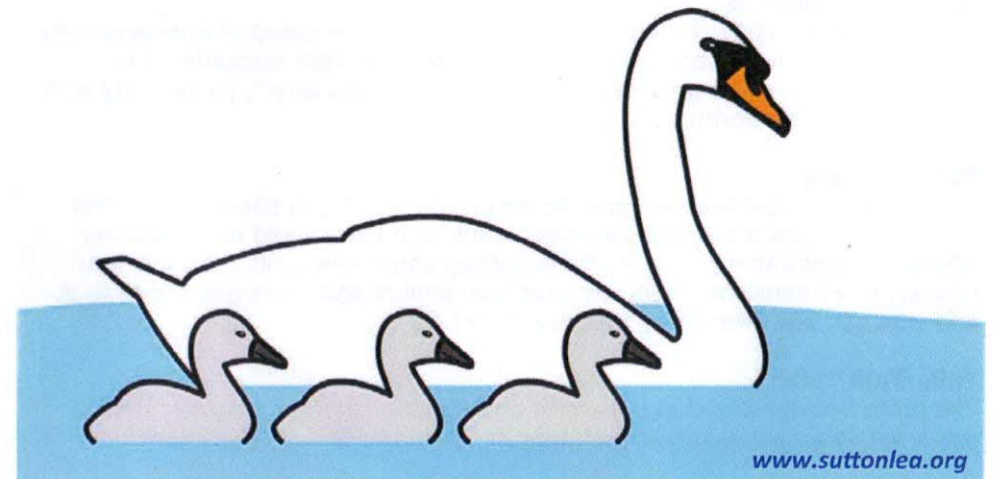
Are there any people at enhanced risk?

Research indicates that people on the Autistic Spectrum may well be an enhanced risk when engaging with social networking and chat rooms. They may impart information that should be kept private, although it has also been proven that people with Autism are strongly attracted to social networking and chat rooms because the subtext of emotional content, (facial expressions and tone of voice) is absent. This makes it feel like a safer, more familiar environment.



New Facebook Privacy Settings

A guide for parents, carers and teachers about Facebook's new privacy settings introduced in August 2011.



The Facts:

- ◆ Facebook users will need to understand the changes, and will need to be vigilant as to when they will apply to their account.
- ◆ **Some time will be needed to set up the controls as the user requires them.**
- ◆ Each photograph, comment, post etc. has the facility to be filtered according to the user's requirements. While commendable, this will take some time for users to adapt to.
- ◆ **There are still some gaps in user-information security. Applications in particular, and engaging with third party websites using the "like" button may make information available to others.**
- ◆ Most users do not pay a great deal of attention to the management of their social networking site – they want the contacts, not the hassle.
- ◆ **For parents and carers, it is important to understand how young people need to adapt their behaviours online to gain and retain maximum control over their profile information.**
- ◆ Young people place a large amount of information online - putting themselves at risk if it is not carefully controlled.
- ◆ **Many young people have a high appetite for risk, and many parents and carers do not understand enough about social networking.**

What has happened?

From 25 August 2011, Facebook are rolling out a new group of improvements to the way in which users can manage and monitor their accounts. It is intended to give users greater choice in "who can see what", particularly with regard to profile information.

Facebook say...

"Your profile should feel like your home on the web - you should never feel like stuff appears there that you don't want, and you should never wonder who sees what's there. The profile is getting some new tools that give you clearer, more consistent controls over how photos and posts get added to it, and who can see everything that lives there."

Talk, Talk Talk

The more Social networking, its risks and benefits and in particular, how to use it safely is talked about, the more people become informed users.

How do I manage the new system?

Content on your profile will appear next to an icon and a drop-down menu. This menu lets you know who can see this part of your profile and you can change it with one click.

Photographs and tags

Photographs you were tagged in would show up on your profile as soon as you were tagged. Now, you will have the ability to approve these tags before they show up on your profile. You can approve or reject any photo or post you are tagged in before it's visible to anyone else on your profile. You also have the option to review and approve or reject any tag someone tries to add to your photographs and posts.

Your Profile

You can now see how your profile appears to others. This tool was "behind the scenes" until now.

Your Posts

You will also have control over who can see your posts through an inline menu. (Public, Friends, Custom.)

What do you think of these changes?

Facebook exists as a means of exchanging and sharing information, and not just with friends and acquaintances. Many companies advertise through Facebook, or engage in market research using data that Facebook holds and some seriously heavy-weight investment banks have invested in Facebook. Everything you post online says something about you, whether it is the clothes you wear, of the hobbies and pastimes you engage in. A lot of people say "Facebook advertises the things I like." And this is not by accident.

For young users?

We have to accept the reality that a great many users access Facebook who are under 13. Of them, a large proportion do so with parental knowledge and consent. Having the ability to determine who can see each post, or each image is one thing, but will it really happen in practice? Facebook remains a complex system to manage well. It also still carries a high "must have" factor for young people.

Set to "off" by default

There are still many security gaps in Facebook. Engaging with applications can create an "App Gap", whereby application owners can access profile information through the activities of someone on your friends list. You don't have to use the "app" yourself!

Instant Personalization

This allows partner websites to access profile information *before the Facebook user knows about it* as soon as the user visits a partner site. We feel that this should be set "off" by default in order to give users the choice in who can see their information.