

Social Networking

The internet has opened up a whole new world of resources and information. It has also created an entirely new social arena. While social networking sites allow us to connect with and communicate with others from the safety of our homes, there certainly are risks. As usual social barriers are removed, it can be easy to let down your guard and share too much personal information.

Use common sense and limit what you disclose. Never share your full name, social security number, phone number, address, or credit or bank account numbers.

Carefully consider what information you do share. While you may not share your exact address, other information could also lead a stranger with ill intentions directly to you. The name of your community and school, bus routes you take and a description of your home are seemingly innocent pieces of information that could give away more details about where you live than you realize.

Also think about the nature of the information you share. Will you be comfortable with family members, future employers or school admissions officials seeing the information and photos you are posting? Information posted online should be considered permanent.

Additional Safety Precautions

Carefully consider your screen name. Do not select anything that could identify you. Even a simple or partial personal identifier could be easily combined with other information and together, could help someone discover your identity.

- Do not post photos or videos of you or your friends.
- Do not accept files or downloads from people you don't know.
- Be wary of online friends who want to meet in person.
- Limit your friend or buddy list to people you know.
- Consider password-protecting your social networking page to control access to your information.
- Before participating in any online social networking, be sure to review a site's safety and privacy policies and associated violation reporting.
- If a problem occurs, do not hesitate to report it or any concerns to the webmaster, chat room moderator or, if needed, to the local police.



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