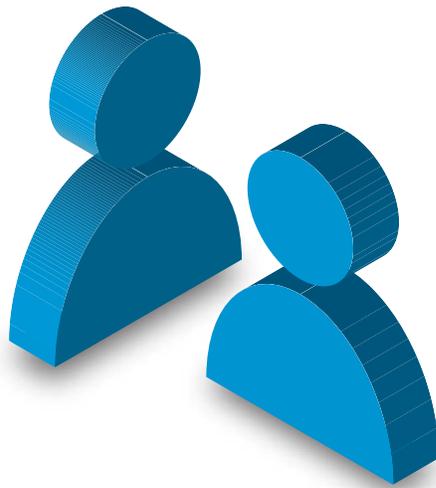




# Social Networking

is a great way to stay in touch with family, friends, and others with common interests across the globe. These networks are like unique communities in the cyber world because the Internet is filled with millions of people who are looking to meet others to gather and share first-hand information and experiences about music, sports, cooking, employment, and so much more. Just about any interest, object, or experience you can imagine has a community online devoted to that topic. While social networks are a great place to connect, they can also be dangerous. Users should always take the necessary precautions while engaging in social networking sites.



## Know the Risks

Social networking sites can be a great way to connect with friends and family; however, you should know the risks of using them.

- Once something is posted, it's there for good. Choose your words (postings) carefully as they can come back to haunt you in the future.
- Social networks can expose your personal and private information to strangers and/or unwanted "friends."
- Spreading gossip or starting rumors about you or someone you know is very common in social networking communities.
- Suspicious links and other attempts to collect personal and private information through social networking sites are climbing at alarming rates.
- The threat of being cyber bullied is one of the greatest concerns for teens and tweens who use social networking sites.

## Fact

More than 1.5 million pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photos, etc.) are shared on Facebook daily.

## Safety Tips

### Keep your profile slim.

Your profile should not contain any information that discloses your address, school information, and anything else that could provide "outside" visitors with personal information about you.

### Protect your privacy.

Never share your personal information on social networking sites. This includes your last name, contact information, home address, phone numbers, school name, email address, age, or birth date.

### Protect others' privacy.

Never share private information of friends or relatives across social networking sites.

### Don't post harmful information.

Never post inappropriate pictures of yourself or anyone else. Many people have suffered extensive damage to their reputations by posting or sharing what they thought were harmless pranks.

### Assume all eyes are watching.

Always assume that the things you post on the web are permanent and viewable by anyone.

### Know the privacy policy.

Only use social networking sites with clearly stated terms of use, and make sure they can protect the actual posts, not just the user accounts, with password protection.