

Discussion questions

These social networking profiles have been created to stimulate discussion about safe and potentially unsafe practices and features on social networking sites. They, together with the accompanying questions, have been designed to highlight ways in which users can protect themselves through appropriate use of the technology and also through choices they make.

Challenge yourself, your class, or your children to make your own profile as safe as possible using the tools on social networking sites and your own decisions about best practice as a user.

Highlight safe and unsafe features of this page (using different coloured markers/pens).

Safe and responsible social networking	Potentially unsafe and inappropriate features
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use of cartoon image as a profile photo</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited personal information is listed eg. No year given for birthdate (therefore no age)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evidence about how Chloe helped a friend who'd been cyberbullied</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chloe asks how she knows someone who has left a comment on her profile page</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Using the service to communicate about homework and other positive things</p> 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chloe uses her full name.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> She shares her email address, which is provocative</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> It is unlikely that the Chloe knows 1,186 'friends' personally.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chloe doesn't know everyone she has added to her profile as indicated by an unfamiliar user asking where she lives (Aatish)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chloe has posted photos of her and her friends partying; she mentions her GCSE's so we may question how legal this activity is.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate adverts on the page – these may be based on the Chloe's personal details (gender and relationship status)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chloe is considering plagiarising her own work as she does her homework</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chloe has been in contact with her page for at least 3 hours on the same day, this has also been during the early hours of the morning.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One of Chloe's friend's mentions that Chloe's parents are away for the weekend</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chloe has shared her location with those who can access her profile (potentially all Friendbook users if this is a public profile as previously suggested). This location is her home address!</p>

- What types of personal information is important to keep safe/private online?**
 – email, full name, images – photos and videos, date of birth, address, phone numbers, other people's information.

What is appropriate to share publically?
 – any information that doesn't give away your location or that will harm your reputation
- How long does information stay online?**
 – potentially forever. It can be copied, changed and used elsewhere and may never be completely retrieved from the digital world

Who could potentially see information online? Now? In the future?
 – parents and carers, teachers, employers, academic institutes, e.g. universities and colleges, anyone searching the web

How can you protect your safety and information on this service?
 – ensure your profile is private and that options for privacy with regard to photos and other applications have been considered
- How long has Chloe been online or checked her profile today?**
 – currently around 3 hours. The internet is a fantastic tool and can be accessed at the click of a button, actively using these services is not a problem as long as it is not to the detriment of other areas of your life eg your school work.
- What are your thoughts about the advertising found on Chloe's profile? Do you think it is appropriate for Chloe to be receiving adverts for dating services and weight loss products?**
 – please also note these adverts can be based on what you chat about or feature on your profile

What safety features are available on social networking pages to manage your reputation and protect yourself against things like cyberbullying?

The best way to protect yourself when using social networks is to ensure that your site is private, meaning that it can only be accessed by your friends or people you make a conscious decision to accept as a contact. Think about how you would like other people to perceive you, including schools and universities or future employers. It is important that you know how to block other users from accessing your information and that you know how to report abuse if it occurs on your page. It is recommended that you find out how to save conversations or learn how to take a screen shot in order to collect evidence of misuse of your profile should it occur.

- ▶ Look at each of your social networking profiles. Would you be happy for your family members to view the contents of your page? Is your profile private? Can you see a place to report unwanted or abusive comments? Do you know how to block another user from seeing your content? Can you save conversations or take screen shots of instances of misuse to use as evidence?

What are the privacy settings available for photo albums?

As with any information added to a personal profile, you have a choice about what is displayed and who can see it. Whenever you create a new photo album or upload new photos make sure that you set the privacy settings to 'only friends'. Photographs can give away a lot of truly personal information—your hair colour, eye colour, what your hobbies are, what your friends look like, and about how old you might be. Keep this kind of personal information safe from people that don't know you in the real world. Remember your profile picture and cover photograph will be public and viewable if people search for your name on Facebook, make sure these give a good impression and don't give away too much about yourself.

- ▶ Check the settings of your online photo albums to be sure that each on is set to 'only friends.' Consider making a cartoon character of yourself you use on your social networks.

What are the implications for a user having 1,186 friends?

Best practice suggests you should only add friends to your social network that you know in the real world. Contacts you have only met online are still strangers and may not always be trustworthy. It is very unlikely that anyone knows 1,186 people well enough to consider them completely reliable and allow them access to personal details, information and conversations.

- ▶ Go through your list of 'friends' and delete anyone from your contact list that you have not met in real life. You may also want to check that your privacy settings are set to 'only friends' as well. It is a good idea to check over your friends list on a regular basis.

What kind of contact information should you make available on your profile page?

Most social networking providers have tools for user protection, including privacy options. It is important to make sure that you know how to use these tools. Always keep personal details such as your full name, address, email, phone numbers, and passwords private. Utilise the privacy settings on your site to be sure that only friends can see any details you have posted on your site.

- ▶ Check your privacy settings and make sure that all say 'only friends'. It is not a good idea to display your contact details on any part of your page including your email address, Blackberry Messenger (BBM) pin, phone numbers or home address, and be aware not to discuss personal details within conversations you have online with your friends.

Should you display your birth date online?

It is important to keep as much information as possible hidden from public view. When signing up to social networks it is important that you sign up using your correct birthday. This will ensure you benefit from the protections that are inherently available to younger users. It is recommended that you only display the day and month (not the year) if you choose to display this information.

- ▶ Go into your settings and check to see what you have listed as your birthday. Make sure that you've listed your true birth year so you don't end up getting adverts or friend requests that are inappropriate. Lastly, check to be sure that your whole birthday is not displayed on your profile—keep your true age a secret!

Should you use location based services?

Sharing your location with your friends and adding your location to your photograph, status updates etc can be a great way of sharing the amazing places you have been. However it is important that you have considered who can see your location and that you remember that it will pinpoint that location on a map.

- ▶ If you choose to share your location, as with the other content you share you can then decide who is able to see it. If your privacy settings are set to 'friends' only those people you invite into your network will be able to access this information. You are also able to turn location based services off on your mobile devices, eg Smart phones and tablets

What dangers do targeted adverts pose to users?

Targeted adverts, such as those that may appear on your profile page, can sometimes be inappropriate. If you've joined a social networking site before you turned 13 years old and did not enter your real birth date for example, you may be subject to advertising intended for an older user. It is important to be aware that some adverts can send negative messages, for example telling you to lose weight or sign up for online dating services or to buy products you don't really need. These adverts could be tied to scams where free products or services are promised in exchange for you giving away your personal information.

- ▶ Look at your personal information and be sure that you've signed up to the site with your true age to ensure you don't receive inappropriate advertising messages. If you do receive ads that promise you something free don't click on them! As we well know, nothing in life is truly free and the site could be trying to get more of your personal details.