

What is Facebook and how do I use it?

Facebook is a popular social networking site. Originally restricted to people with .edu email addresses, Facebook is now available to anyone with a valid email address. A valid email address is one that is verified by Facebook – the user must receive an email message at that address and click on a link in the message to prove that it is a working address. Facebook members can join networks based on school affiliation, employers, and geographic regions. Facebook can be used for keeping track of friends both old and new. It is free to join and requires only that you be over 13 years of age and have a valid email address.

What should I post on Facebook? What should I keep offline?

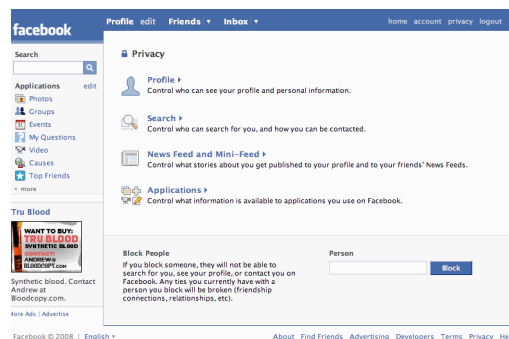
Most Facebook users post their real names; some post both first and last name, others post first name and last initial. Your real name is most helpful in letting friends find you online. Facebook gives you the opportunity to post a variety of other information about yourself, such as your educational and work histories, your contact information, your relationship status and lists of your favorite books, movies, and music. It's your choice how much information you reveal.

When deciding what to post, keep in mind that disclosing too much can be used against you. Posting your address, phone number, and full birthdate could lead to identity theft, a crime in which someone impersonates you to steal money or get other benefits. Listing favorite activities that are not flattering (for example, "Activities: skipping class and getting drunk") may backfire if a future employer looks at your Facebook profile during the hiring process. Pictures are another area where it pays to be discrete – don't post any picture that you wouldn't show to your parents or want to have a potential employer see.

Remember, when in doubt don't post your information. If you are not sure whether to disclose something, don't do it. It is very easy to add it later and very hard to remove information you wish you hadn't disclosed.

How can I post information and still protect myself?

Facebook has Privacy settings (accessed using the Privacy link in the upper right corner) which allow you to specify who can see your profile, who can search for you, what information about your online actions appears in Facebook's feeds and what information about you is available to applications.

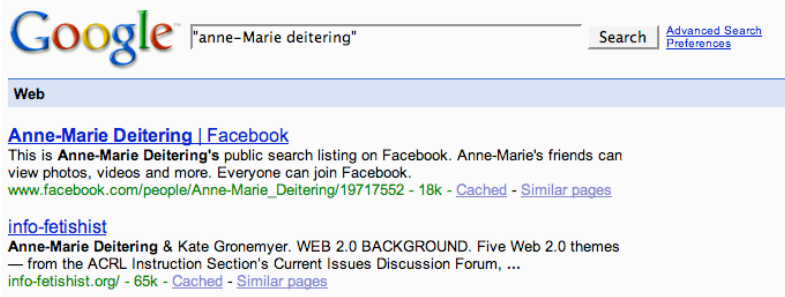
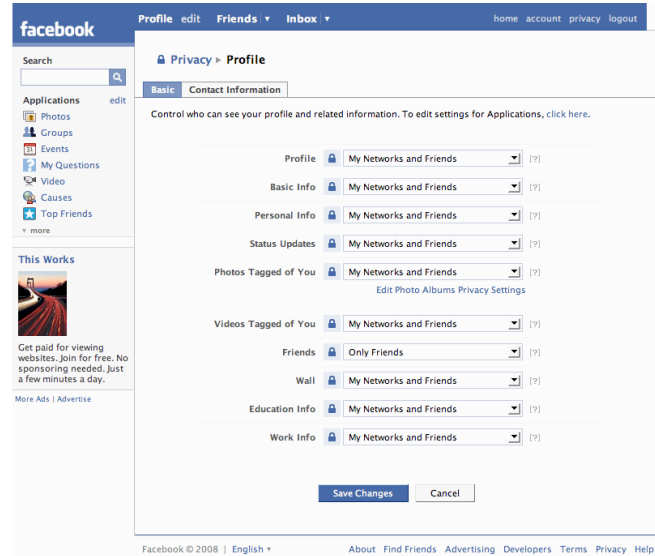


You can also choose to disclose some information and withhold some. For example, you are required to give your full date of birth to verify that you are legally able to be a member of Facebook, but you may choose to hide the year or full date on your profile page. You can also choose a profile picture of yourself which will identify you to friends but is not a headshot, which could be used to create a fake picture ID. When deciding what to enter for your current address,

consider listing only the city, state, and zip code (or just city and state) without listing your street address.

How do I control my Facebook profile's presence in search results?

Facebook pages have public listings which appear on Google and contain your name, networks, and list of friends. If you have your Facebook privacy set to allow all users to see your profile, remember that all a Google searcher has to do to see you is log in to Facebook. Facebook also provides its own search box so that Facebook users can search for each other.



In Facebook's Privacy settings you can control who can view your profile and who can search for you. If you set your profile to appear to "Only Friends," your friends will be able to view your profile but others will not. You can specify which groups will

see you in search results as well – this can be restricted to "Friends of Friends," your networks, people in other types of networks (such as regional, company, and educational networks) and so forth. You can also choose how much others can see about you, like your picture and list of friends, and whether they can send you a message and request to add you as a friend.

What should I know about meeting people on Facebook?

Remember that everyone's profile, like yours, is made up only of information they chose to enter. Some users may have chosen to enter incorrect information on their profiles. The only verifiable aspects of Facebook are a person's email address (verified by Facebook) and their membership in an educational network (verified by the possession of an email from a .edu domain). Geographic networks, ages, names, and photos are not verified in any way. If you do not know a person in real life, be cautious in your online interactions with them.

Where can I read more about Facebook?

Illinois State University has a Facebook information page at: <http://www.helpdesk.ilstu.edu/kb/index.phtml?kbid=1319>

Facebook also has its own page about privacy at: <http://www.facebook.com/policy.php>