

How To Be Safe And Smart On Social Networking Sites

Did you know...

- More than 90,000 registered sex offenders were removed from one popular social networking site...and those were only the ones who used their real names.
- According to the Al Qaeda Handbook, terrorists search social networking sites for “government personnel, officers, important personalities and all matters related to them (residence, workplace, times of leaving and returning, children and places visited).
- Social networking sites have become a haven for identity thieves and con artists, and social networking viruses are on the rise.

Think about it: Facebook, Twitter and other social media web sites have become the world’s largest database of personal information, all served up intentionally by the user. It’s practically every scammer’s dream come true!

9 Smart Tips To Stay Safe

Protecting yourself requires some awareness of how cyber criminals use the system against you. Here are a few things you need to know:

1. Keep your firewall’s security and anti-virus software up-to-date.
2. Never log in from public hotspots. Social networking sites generally do not have secure logins available (that’s the https with the lock icon in the search bar). That means your username and password can be swiped at any time. Log in only from trusted wireless networks.
3. Use strong passwords that contain a mix of upper- and lowercase letters, symbols and numbers.
4. Remember the golden rule: If you wouldn’t do it or say it on a public street, don’t post it online.
5. Be wary of all links and files. Hackers often post links in comments to try and trick you into downloading an “update,” “security patch” or “game.”

6. Keep an eye on what your friends post about you. Many people have been fired or lost an important client because of online pictures and content.
7. Be careful who you 'friend.' Yeah, it feels great to have hundreds (or thousands!) of friends, but the reality is, you really know only a fraction of those people.
8. Be wary of all add-ons. Many of the games and plug-ins are written by third-party companies, not the social network itself.
9. Do a search on yourself. You might be surprised at just how much information comes up! If it's more than you feel comfortable with, restrict your profile online.