

Handout: Setting Up a MySpace Profile Page

What Is the Motive?

When setting up your MySpace account you are asked, "I'd like to make space for: dating, serious relationship, friends, or networking. It is highly recommended that teens not select "dating" or "serious relationship."

Ways to Stay Safe:

1. Just as your parents used to say "do not talk to strangers" and "never get into a car with a stranger." Remember that these parental precautions are attempting to assure that something bad happening is minimal but possible.
2. Do not for any reason post provocative, i.e., sexually suggestive content.
3. Another safety assurance comes from not posting information in your profile or elsewhere that identifies where you live, where you go to school, where you go for fun, what your daily schedule is, what upcoming events you plan to attend, etc.
4. MySpace itself has its own software-embedded safety through account settings, blog settings, picture settings, etc. These settings can be applied to limit who can view your information and posts.

Responsible Account Privacy Settings to Utilize:

- Require email or last name to add me as a friend
(controls the friending relationship aspect of MySpace)
- Approve Comments before Posting
(allows one to control what information is posted on their page)
- Hide Online Now
(this helps one who might not want others to know they are signed into MySpace, especially in cases of online bullying, stalking, etc.)
- No Pic Forwarding
(extra precaution to control your information)
- Friend Only Blog Comments
(controls who can post to your blog)
- Friend Only Group Invites
(allows only your friends to belong to groups that you might create)

What Your Profile Shouldn't Say About You

- Interests & Personality – this is a section that is okay to complete, just keep in mind to refrain from disclosing information pertinent to your locations at school, home, etc.
- Dating-Related Profile Information:
 - It is not recommended that teens use MySpace as a dating service, thus they should choose: "In a Relationship" or "Married" to maintain their privacy.
 - As far as sexual orientation goes, it is best to supply "No Answer".
 - "No Answer" is best for the Children category as well.

- Schools – It is always best to not supply this information on the Internet because it pinpoints your location.
- Display Name – just don't do anything to reveal your actual name and location.

Photos – Photo Upload and Privacy Settings

- Choose to allow your photos to be viewable by: Only You or Everybody.
- Picture Policies ... In late March 2006, MySpace deleted 200,000 profiles, many because of pornographic content, and as of April 2006, MySpace is actively engaged in reviewing every picture that is posted on myspace.com.

Friends & Comments - One of the most-used features of MySpace is the practice that is nicknamed "friending."

- Friend Privileges – when you accept a friend request, or someone accepts a friend request from you, you have given each other approval to post onto your pages, and to observe content that you have designated as visible only for your friends.
- Friend Requests from People You Don't Know – Be careful and make sure that they are someone that you would like to be a friend. Check their friend lists, etc. For complete security against friend requests from people you don't know, activate the "Require email of last name to add me as a friend" option in your account privacy settings.
- Comments – When you post comments, you need to be especially sure you don't post information that could expose you or your friend to risky information such as: phone numbers, your school or town, where you or your friend lives, where you go to hang out.

Blogging – again with blogging don't post information that would allow others to locate or find you if they wanted to. One can use the blog privacy setting to only allow certain people to see posts: public, diary, friends, or preferred list.

Groups, forums and chat – follow many of the personal information guidelines mentioned throughout.

5. Last but not least there's your brain. Use it when you are online. Meaning think before you publicly post things about yourself or others.