

## From Kent County Council's e-safety in Schools

### A Summary of the new Facebook Privacy Controls

As a result of concerns raised by users about Facebook's increasingly complicated Privacy Settings Facebook are beginning to roll out their new and "improved" changes to all users.

**facebook** Search Home Profile Find friends Account ▾

#### Choose your privacy settings

**Basic directory information**  
To help real-world friends find you, some basic information is open to everyone. We also suggest setting basics like hometown and interests to everyone so friends can use those to connect with you. [View settings](#)

**Sharing on Facebook**

	Everyone	Friends of friends	Friends only
My status, photos, and posts	■		
Bio and favorite quotations	■		
Family and relationships	■		
Photos and videos I'm tagged in		■	
Religious and political views		■	
Birthday		■	
Can comment on posts			■
Email addresses and IM			■
Phone numbers and address			■
Why are these settings recommended?			
<a href="#">Customise settings</a>			
<b>Apply these settings</b>			

**Applications and websites**  
Edit your settings for using applications, games and websites.

**Block lists**  
Edit your lists of blocked people and applications.

**Controlling how you share**  
[Learn more about your privacy on Facebook.](#)

A Summary of the Key Changes, benefits and any possible implications to consider:

- **Users' privacy settings are controlled from one central page now, which makes it significantly easier to work out what to change and edit.**
  - Hopefully this will make the process of sharing (or not!) information on Facebook easier for both Young People and Adults
  - You can control if a profile can be found via public Search listings (e.g. Google) by using the "Public search" option on the Applications and Websites page controls. This controls whether people who enter your name in a search engine will see a preview of your Facebook profile (often a worry for professionals). It also controls whether things you've specifically chosen to share with everyone show up in searches on and off Facebook.
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- **You can hide your interests (as well as other information such as your status, relationships etc) as part of the "Basic Directory Information".**
  - Previously your "Interests" had been changed to a new system after the last privacy revamp, to be known as "connections" and could not be set to friends only etc.
  - You control who can see the photos and videos you're tagged in that appear on your profile. However, this simply limits who see the tag, not the photo or video itself, so be aware that the owner of a photo (the user who uploaded or

posted it) can still share that photo with people you're not friends with. The only way of getting rid of any photos and videos is to report them to Facebook (but be aware they will only remove photos/videos which breach their terms and conditions) or ask that the person who posted the content removes it.

- If a photo or video is posted of someone under the age of 13, then parents/carers can contact Facebook request for it to be removed. For more information

visit <http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=831#!/help/?faq=17289>

- **You can share your information with friends, friends of friends or everyone, and Facebook offers users' presets options to help you do that.**
  - If you prefer, you can still customise your settings in more detail (a more 'granular' approach e.g. using Friends lists). Customise settings" displays a full list so you can control the privacy level for each setting". This also is where you can change your privacy controls for Photo Albums. All users should be aware that each photo album needs to be controlled and the privacy for each album needs to be set separately to "Friends only" etc.
  - With young people in particular the use of the term "Friends" may not always mean "real world" friends so should be used with caution if strangers are accepted onto any friends' lists.
- **Certain Information will now ALWAYS be public: Name, Profile Picture, Gender and Networks you are a member of.** According to Facebook this is to make it easier for your "real world" friends to find you.
  - This cannot be changed so this information, in particular profile pictures will now need to be very carefully considered before uploading.
  - You can of course use a nickname for your real name, avoid uploading photos you wouldn't want to share publicly as profile pictures, use avatars for profile pictures and don't join any networks such as towns or schools etc.
- **You can hide your friends list;** users can now choose to make friends lists private, so only your friends can see who you are friends with. That means applications and search engines etc will not be able to find out who your friends are.
  - This is a really good tool for professionals who use Facebook personally as you cannot always control what information is posted online by friends, family and colleagues. By hiding your friends list, you can limit the possibility that your friends profiles may accidentally share too much.
- **You can now opt out of Applications.**
  - You can now choose to block all applications and games, etc, meaning no application requests, and reducing levels of Spam and viruses. However it is unlikely many users will choose this option as they will be unable to continue to play games such as Farmville etc. For those who do wish to continue to use apps, then you can have greater control over what information you share and what information your friends can share about you.
- **Block Lists are easier to access and can be found on the same page as the privacy settings.** The block list lets you block people from interacting with you or seeing your information on Facebook. You can also specify friends who you want to ignore application invites from, and see a list of the specific applications that you've blocked from accessing your information and contacting you.
  - This is a very useful tool to highlight to all users, for example staff may wish to block young people etc from contacting them and young people may wish to use this to block comments and messages from online bullies.

- **Instant Personalization is still opt-out.** This is one of the key things which prompted all of the recent criticism of Facebook's Privacy Settings. "Instant Personalization" is still opt-out.
  - **Instant Personalization works by sharing information from your Facebook profile with some "select partner sites" in order to personalise the site for you. This only includes information that's already visible to everyone.**
  - You can turn off instant personalisation for specific sites or you can turn it off completely from the Applications and Websites options. This will prevent these partners from receiving your information through instant personalisation, including what's visible to everyone.
- **Implications for younger users (Minors)**
  - Facebook state that "We are committed to protecting minors who use Facebook." Until their eighteenth birthday, minors don't have public search listings created for them and the visibility of their information is limited to friends of friends and networks, even if they've chosen to make it available to everyone. Again, as discussed above, this does not apply to name, profile picture, gender and networks, which are visible to everyone so real-world friends can recognise them. This is something that should be carefully considered and discussed with younger users.
  - **The age restriction for Facebook remains at 13.** Facebook requires its users to be at least 13 years old before they can create an account. Providing false information to create an account is a violation of their Statement of Rights and Responsibilities and underage profiles reported to Facebook will be removed. However it is worth considering that there would be little to stop young people setting up a new account, so it may consider that it would be better for adults to know that underage young people have a profile and discuss safe online use and behaviour with them monitor it rather than potentially drive any incidents and concerns "underground".

These changes are currently being rolled out across the platform and it is strongly recommended that users revisit their privacy settings and ensure they understand how they work. Previous Privacy settings will be saved as they currently exist. These new settings and any changes made will also cover previous/backdated content as well as any future content and updates.

Facebook's privacy explanation (with full details) can be found at <http://www.facebook.com/privacy/explanation.php>

The Facebook Safety Centre also helps explain how to use Facebook and report any concerns <http://www.facebook.com/help/?safety>

**Reference:** Kent County Council (2010), *A Summary of the new Facebook Privacy Controls* [online] available at [http://kenttrustweb.org.uk/CS/community/esafety/archive/2010/05/28/a-summary-of-the-new-facebook-privacy-controls.aspx?utm\\_source=twitterfeed&utm\\_medium=twitter&utm\\_term=esafety](http://kenttrustweb.org.uk/CS/community/esafety/archive/2010/05/28/a-summary-of-the-new-facebook-privacy-controls.aspx?utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter&utm_term=esafety) accessed 7/10/10