

Social Media and Privacy

Protecting your personal data

You might be giving away more personal information than you think. Do you really need the world to know where you are? Are you sharing more information with your social media organisations and third parties than necessary?



No matter what social media platform you use, you are always going to be sharing your personal information to some extent - some of which you might not want to be made publically available or used by other organisations.

You are usually only a web search and a click or two away from finding out how to change the privacy settings on most popular social media platforms - simply type the name of the website followed by 'privacy settings' into a web search engine (e.g. Google, Bing etc.)

Aware - Secure - Resilient

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Sharing by default

As soon as you sign up to a social media platform, you will most likely be sharing information about yourself publically. You will almost immediately have an online presence, even if you haven't posted anything.



By default, social media platforms will often set your account to be visible on web search engines and by other members of the platform. They may also set your account to make any post or photograph you upload to automatically be made public - this might be great for an organisation or public event but maybe not what you want to share with the world.

Is the service truly free?

Social media platforms may appear to be free to use but it isn't your money they are taking - it is your data.



Information about you and your interactions on social media can be used to create targeted advertisements, sold to third parties for marketing research and a multitude of other purposes, including subscribing you to email circulars or instigating unwanted contact from organisations promoting their services.

Your data could be stored by multiple companies in many places.

Social media platforms will sometimes give you the option to opt-out of some of these 'big data' sharing practices. You may have to search for these options in your social media account settings or sharing preferences.

Why do I care what I'm sharing with others?

Your data isn't just useful to organisations; criminals and fraudsters can also make use of knowing about you. They can potentially:



- send spam messages to your email address or social media account.
- use information they have about you to initiate a phishing attack or commit fraud.
- find out where you live, and when you're not in, to steal from your home.

Regularly review your privacy settings

Social media platforms sometimes change their terms of service so it is a good idea to regularly check your privacy and security settings to ensure nothing has altered, or if there are any additional preferences you can set.



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