

Safety Tips for Using Social Networking Sites

The internet is very public, world-wide. If you use on-line social networks, here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Did I set my privacy setting to help control who can look at my profile, my information and photos? You may be able to limit access somewhat, but not completely, and you have no control over what someone else may share.
2. How much information do I want people who I don't know to know about me? If I give them my cell phone number, address, email, class schedule, a list of possessions (such as my CD collection) how might they use it? With whom will they share it? Not everyone will respect my person or physical space. Always be mindful of sharing your personal information- it only takes a little bit of information to steal someone's identity.
3. Would I post this material on a roadside billboard or to the exterior of the door to my residence? Posting something on the internet is akin to posting the same information in these locations.
4. Is the image I'm projecting by my materials and photos the one I want my current and future friends to know me by? What does my profile say to potential faculty members/advisors, future graduate school/internship interviewers, potential employers, neighbors, family, parents? Which doors am I opening? Which am I closing?
5. What if I change my mind about what I post? For instance, what if I want to remove something I posted as a joke or to make a point? Have I read the social networking site's privacy and caching statements? Removing material from network caches can be difficult and posted material remains accessible on the internet until you've completed the prescribed process for removing information from the caching technology of one or multiple (potentially unknown) search engines. It is also possible that someone else copied the item and posted it elsewhere online; in the absence of a legal argument (e.g., copyright), that person is not obligated to remove the item.
6. Have I asked permission to post someone else's image or information? Am I infringing on their privacy? Could I be hurting someone? Could I be subject to a libel or copyright lawsuit? Am I violating network use policy (either the site's or OHSU's)? Could I be subject to a judiciary hearing or a lawsuit?
7. Does my equipment have spyware and virus protections installed? Many social networking sites collect profile information to SPAM you. Others contain links that can infect your equipment with viruses that potentially can destroy data and infect others with whom you

communicate. Remember to backup your work on an external source in case of destructive attacks.

8. Social networking sites can be the source of cyber bullying, harassment, stalking, threats or other unwanted activity. If you are concerned, you can contact OHSU Public Safety (4-7744) or the Integrity Office (4-8849) for assistance.