



# Social Networking

## *The Threats and How to Protect Yourself*

### "What's on your mind? Lisa is....."

Social networking uses programs like email, instant messaging, Facebook and Twitter to connect people online. It's a fun and easy way to keep in touch with family and friends - especially those who live far away from you. Websites like Facebook let you create your own profiles, make friends, share photos and videos and chat with others.

## *The risks*

Social networking has become very popular, but it's also very important to be aware of the risks when getting involved in the online world.

When you post something on the Internet, you often lose all control of what happens to your information. When you post photos or videos online, they cannot be taken back. The images of you and your friends or family is available for the whole world to see because anyone can download these images, save, copy or alter them.

### Personal information for all to see

There are many people out there surfing the Internet who you cannot trust. Predators go online to find young people and encourage them to take part in risky behaviour. You should never post personal information online that could make it easy for anyone to locate you.

#### You should NEVER post the following information:

- **your home address,**
- **the name of your school, or**
- **your home or cell phone number.**

A fully secure and safe Facebook page would also not include your full real name - you should use a nickname instead. To be completely safe, you should also never post any photos. If you are very interested in sharing photos online, you need to be sure that the photos you choose to post do not give any clues about where you live or hang out, and that you're not doing something in the photo that you will regret someone seeing later.

## *Online Bullying*

Facebook and online instant messaging creates a place where bullying can easily happen. Talking to someone online means you are not face-to-face. For many teenagers, being online feels less personal and it can be easier to do and say mean things. Bullies may feel like they have the freedom to spread mean rumours or verbally attack someone else because they think no one can find out what they are doing.

It is illegal for anyone else to harrass you in any way, including through the Internet, and they can be held responsible for their actions. Under the Criminal Code of Canada, it is a crime to communicate repeatedly with someone if your messages cause them to fear for their own safety or the safety of others. It's also a crime to write something that is meant to insult a person or to hurt a person's reputation.

- **Always tell an adult** if you or someone you know is being bullied online.
- You should **keep the communication** as proof that you were feeling threatened - but **do not respond to bullying messages.**



# Links

## [www.internet101.ca](http://www.internet101.ca)

A collection of safety tips, helpful presentations and links to help kids and parents surf the web safely

## [www.allfacebook.com/2009/02/facebook-privacy](http://www.allfacebook.com/2009/02/facebook-privacy)

10 privacy settings every Facebook user should know

## [www.safekids.com](http://www.safekids.com)

Safety advice for using the Internet

## [www.cybertip.ca](http://www.cybertip.ca)

Canada's national tipline for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children.

## [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

An interactive, educational safety resource to learn to stay safe online

## How can I protect myself?

It is very important to protect yourself and your privacy when you are using social networking tools.

Always think twice about the information you post online. Updating your Facebook status to say "Gone out of town for a week with my family!" lets thousands of people know that your home is empty. If you have also posted your home address and photos of your house, you have made it extremely easy for someone to break into your home.

An even more dangerous Facebook habit for your personal safety is to always update your status to tell others where you are at different times of the day. A predator can easily keep up with your status updates to find out your routine and track you down. It's simple to protect yourself from these risks by keeping your status updates very general such as "I just finished reading a great book!"

## Safety Tips

- Only accept friend requests for people you personally know and trust.
- Always remember to log off member sites.
- Never save your password on public computers.
- Never meet in person someone you first meet online without a parent or guardian

- ***Never do anything on a social networking site that makes you feel uncomfortable.***

## Internet Slang

### LOL

Laugh Out Loud

### ROFL

Roll on the Floor Laughing

### BRB

Be Right Back

### Ty

Thank you

### TTYL

Talk To You Later

### BTW

By The Way

## Facebook Security Settings

It's important to use the security settings on Facebook to make sure that only the people you want to see your information, photos and video are able to see them, instead of the whole world.

By using the security settings on your Facebook page, you can control who is able to view your profile, your photos, photos you are tagged in, and even who is allowed to search you online. It is even possible to block certain people from contacting you or viewing any of your profile information.

**Get an adult to help you with Facebook security settings, so that both you and your family feel safe and secure from online threats.**

For more information, contact the staff at Big Brothers Big Sisters at 368-KIDS (5437) or at [info@helpingkids.ca](mailto:info@helpingkids.ca)

Nalcor Energy and Big Brother Big Sisters of Eastern Newfoundland believe that everyone has a role to play to keep themselves and each other safe.



**Big Brothers Big Sisters  
of Eastern Newfoundland**

