



Profile privacy?

Yeah, right...

FACEBOOK CAN BE a great way to connect with friends, classmates or people from across the world. However, there's a dark side, too. By clicking 'agree' to these websites' privacy policies, you're actually giving up more about yourself than you know. Owen Thomas, managing editor of Valleywag, Silicon Valley's premier gossip blog, has covered Facebook's privacy policy extensively and offers some analysis about the site. —BRENDAN HILLIARD

1 Your information can be sold to third parties.

Facebook's privacy policy states, "Facebook may use information in your profile without identifying you as an individual to third parties." Third parties — or groups not affiliated with Facebook, often work with Facebook to sell their products or services. This means that the website can disclose your personal information to tailor advertising and products to you. "The reality is that absolutely no one besides reporters looking for a story and privacy activists looking for publicity reads [the privacy policy]," says Thomas.

2 Watch what you do with your photos.

Facebook may be an easy way to share pictures from a recent trip or a day at school by uploading your pictures to the site; it may not just be your friends who are seeing them. "[Facebook] has very bad security around its photos; they claim to respect user's wishes in keeping the files restricted to their friends, but in practice, it's simple to get around them. Yet, Facebook is one of the top photo-sharing sites on the Internet," says Thomas. Websites like Flickr (flickr.com) allow for tighter security by selecting certain users that can view your photos, or password protecting them altogether. "I'd argue that it's not a priority for Facebook's users, either," says Thomas. "You see, time and again, cases where they

don't make use of the privacy options Facebook offers."

3 Deleting something on your profile doesn't actually 'delete' it.

Directly under the "Changing or Removing Information" section on Facebook's Privacy policy page, it says, "Removed information may persist in backup copies for a reasonable period of time but will not be generally available to members of Facebook." Even you don't see your information anymore, Facebook still does. "That suggests to me that Facebook's point of view on privacy is entirely pragmatic — they know they have to make the right noises about it, lest they be excoriated by privacy activists, but they also know it's not really that important for their users," says Thomas.

4 Always stay up to date and informed.

The website's privacy policy is subject to change at any time. At the top of the page, the website updates the most recent changes to the site. Limiting the amount of information a user puts on Facebook is an effective way of protecting themselves. "A popular social-networking site like Facebook or MySpace could make whatever claims they want to about their lack of responsibility for protecting users' privacy, and kids would use the sites anyway — as long as their friends were on them, too," he says.

Event n.—A noteworthy happening.

Event n.—A place where nothing happens.

Poke v.—To urge or stir by prodding or jabbing; to interpose or interject in a meddlesome manner.

Poke v.—Electronic notifications of no particular importance that interrupt your train of thought.

Friend n.—One attached to another by affection or esteem; one that is of the same nation, party or group.

Friend n.—Someone who has agreed to share photos and personal information with you, in spite of the fact that you may never have met.

ADD Francesca
VIEW Francesca
SEND Francesca
SEND a gift
POKE Francesca

Friends 390 friends



Friends in other Networks

Report this person

00X

Networks: Chicago
SEX: Maybe
Birthdate: Someday 1, 1987

NEW FED SEE ALL

Yesterday

Francesca and Gabe are friends.
Francesca and Eric are friends.
Francesca and Tom are friends.

September 27,

Francesca and Matt are friends. 1³⁰ pm
Francesca and Blair are friends. 12³⁰ pm
Francesca and Lyle are friends. 12⁰⁰ pm
Francesca joins Chicago Network. 10³⁰ am
Francesca joins Facebook.

Education and Work

Education: School Hard Knocks
College: Elementary
High School: Elementary
Work Info
Employer: Ratso Rizzo

THE WALL

SEE AN



SHARE

BETTY HEREDIA

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