facebook 101

PRIVACY TIPS

1. Your Facebook experience begins with "Adding a Friend." Before Adding a Facebook Friend, ask yourself: **"Would I trust this person to the level that I'd leave them alone in my home with mine and my family's most valuable possessions and information?"** If they don't pass the Trust test, don`t add them. Period!

2. What you post on the Internet (specifically Facebook) exists forever and you simply can't control who might see your content. Any online profile you create, on any site, should reflect respect, and act as "Your Best Foot Forward." Facebook is about choices. The choices you make reflect who you are, what you think about in the world, and what you value, as does the quality of your Friends' List.

3. Facebook archives all of the information you add to your profile. Never add telephone numbers or your home address to your profile. Every word you add into the "Edit Your Profile" section turns into searchable keywords throughout Facebook. While many people value the ability to be searchable on Facebook (business people, people wishing to find old friends, networking) as a rule, less information is always safer.

4. Don`t post any pictures or comments that are embarrassing of you or of your friends that could lead to you, or them, being cyber-bullied. Your photos can be copied and stored by another person and used in another venue, when you least expect it. Also, consider whether to "tag" your Friends in any photos as, depending on their Privacy Settings, that photo will be sent out to their Friends' News Feeds - and beyond. Ask their permission before tagging.

5. In the upper right corner is the "Account" tab. This is your settings tool kit. Here you can Edit (remove) Friends, set all Privacy Settings, access the Help page and adjust your Account Settings. Begin by clicking "Privacy Settings."

6. There are two sections; "Connecting on Facebook" and "Sharing on Facebook." Click "View Settings" at Connecting on Facebook and move all settings to their tightest; Friends Only or less (Custom), if available.

7. On the main privacy settings page - "Sharing on Facebook", disregard the four setting presets (Everyone, Friends of Friends, Friends Only, Recommended) and click on "Customize Settings." There are three sections to be considered; "Things I Share," "Things Others Share," and "Contact Information." Move each setting to "Friends Only" or less. Set "Photos and Videos I'm Tagged In" to "Only Me." This prevents tagged pictures from appearing in other people's News Feeds. On "Include Me In People Here Now," uncheck the enable box. Then, in "Friends Can Check me into Places" click "Edit Settings" and choose "Disabled."

8. Third-party applications like "Bumper Stickers" or "Farmville," automatically provide the developer of that application with most of your information throughout your profile. To limit information from flowing out of your Profile to the developer's database, at the bottom left of the Privacy Settings page at "Apps and Websites," click "Edit Settings" and uncheck ALL boxes inside of "Info accessible through your friends."

9. To remove your name from Google Searches as having a Facebook account, also in "Apps and Websites," uncheck "Enable Public Search" within the "Public Search" option.

10. Most employers, colleges and universities, and anywhere someone will want you in their organization (summer camp, swimming instructor, dance instructor, etc) will evaluate your Facebook profile, in detail, to view the quality of what you are posting. In fact, some companies and universities are insisting that you open your profile to analyze and evaluate the choices you make on the content you've posted in your profile!

11. Consider not posting Status Updates that reveal locations, dates and overall timelines. Because all Status Updates are searchable, depending on your Privacy Settings, do not include words like "Vacation" or "Leaving."

12. Know that what you write on your Friend's Wall can be viewed by all of their Friends. Consider using the "Send a Message" function as it is private between you and your Friend only - and is not publicly displayed.

13. Facebook is a valuable communications tool to connect with friends and family, and to post and search for information that will help you identify opportunities to move forward in your personal and professional life. Recognize, however, that nothing is truly private on Facebook. Apply your settings properly (above) - and your experience should be enjoyable.

14. Finally, if you choose to remove Friends from your list in order to maintain tighter control over access to your information, be reassured that Facebook will not notify the Friend being removed. Also, take comfort in the fact that if you are removing names of people that you don't really know, they won't realize that you ever came off their list - because chances are they never knew you were there in the first place.

Chris Vollum; Facebook 101 Workshop Facilitator
Email: socialmediatrust@gmail.com