

How to Protect your Privacy on Facebook

When you register as a user of Facebook.com, the default settings allow the personal information you enter and photos you upload to be available to all other users to search and see. This is why it is important to change these default settings, if you care about your privacy. And, note that if you download Facebook Platform third-party applications into your profile, some of your information may be shared, despite the privacy protections you select.

It's easy to change the default settings. Once you sign in, click on “**privacy**” on the top-right side of the screen. The Privacy Overview menu has five categories in which you can determine the degree of privacy you would like. For each, click on “**Edit Settings**” to make your changes.

Profile: You can control who can see your profile, individual features of your profile, contact information, and applications you have added to your page. Please note (below) that these applications have additional privacy controls that must be activated separately!

- To limit the viewing of Profile information to only your Facebook friends, select “**Only My Friends**” in each drop-down menu.

Search: You can control who can find you in searches and what appears in your search listing. You can restrict which networks have access to your profile in searches and what actions people can do with your search results, such as contact you or add you as a friend.

- To be searchable only by your friends, select “**Only My Friends**” in the drop-down menu.

News Feed and Mini-Feed: You can control what actions show up automatically in your Mini-Feed and your friends' News Feeds.

- “Uncheck” any actions that you do not want your friends to know about automatically, such as when you make a comment on a posted item or add a friend.

Poke, Message, and Friend Request: You can select which parts of your profile are visible to people you contact through a poke, message, or friend request.

- “Uncheck” any features of your profile that you do not want seen by the people you contact

Applications: You can place some controls on the information available to applications on your account, including those built using the Facebook Platform. Third-party applications, however, may have their own privacy policies and user controls that prevail over your Facebook settings. As stated in Facebook's Terms of Use, these **applications are used at your own risk.**

- Under “**Added Applications,**” you can link back to the Profile section (see above) to control who will see the information that you have posted to applications you have added.
- Under the “**Authorized Applications**” tab, you may revoke previously granted authorizations to share information with certain applications.
- “**Other Applications**” has controls for applications installed by your friends as well as a set of options for information made available to other users through applications, and a general opt-out from any information being shared through the Facebook Platform. For maximum privacy protection, check off “**Do not share any information about me through the Facebook API.**” Please note that this option will automatically switch off if you download any third-party applications. **In other words, downloading applications means that information about you may be shared in ways you cannot control.**

In addition, the Privacy Overview page also offers the option of blocking specific people from viewing your entire profile, or hiding some of the information on your profile from specific people.