

## Social media behaviour fact sheet from the NSW Police Force

### **Be careful what you share on social media**

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn are used to stay in touch with friends, make new friends or business connections and to share information, photos and opinions about topics that you're interested in.

While they're a great way to connect, you need to think about how much information you provide and to whom.

### **Be careful with strangers online**

People are not always who they say they are. Think carefully before accepting friend requests from people you don't know.

- It is a good idea to limit the number of people you accept as friends.
- If you are 'friends' with people you do not know very well, consider the amount of information that you reveal and don't agree to meet them in person.
- Use your social networking site's privacy settings to limit access to your information.
- Be cautious if one of your online 'friends' asks you to send large amounts of money due to a sudden illness or misfortune; particularly if you've only recently met them online - it could be a scam. Never send your financial details via social media.

**Conclusion - Review your list of 'friends' regularly.**

### **Be careful how much personal information you post or share online**

Be careful with the type and amount of personal information that you share on social media - it could make you or your family vulnerable.

Personal information can be used by criminals to steal your identity or even break into your property. Users who share addresses, telephone numbers, birthdays, holiday plans and other personal information put themselves at risk. These are all clues for criminals.

- The photos, comments, messages and wall posts that you share could potentially be seen by anyone - not just friends. There have been instances of people having their identities stolen from their social media profile and used for fraudulent purposes, so check your security settings regularly.
- Limit information on your location. Turn off location sharing for mobile apps and check your phone settings to ensure that it's not broadcasting your location.

- Don't share your holiday plans in advance via social media. This information could be used by thieves to break into your home when they know that you're away!

**Conclusion - Be careful about the type and amount of personal information that you share on your social media profile. People don't need to know everything about you and your life.**

### **Be careful about sharing your opinion online**

Be careful about what you say about yourself and others online. Once you post a comment or photo, it can be difficult to remove. Comments and/or photos that you post may be used as grounds for disciplinary action at your place of work, and even presented as legal evidence in court.

- Posting something rude, offensive or derogatory in a public forum can have consequences. Your comments may be considered defamatory, offensive or even threatening by some people.
- If working, check with your current employer as to any policies they have regarding employee use of social media (depending on the type of work you do and/or the workplace agreement you've signed, these policies may apply to your private use of social media).
- Often when you apply for a job, companies may check to see if you have an online profile. Be aware that the photos and information you share with your friends may not be what you want your prospective employer to see.
- Be particularly careful of posting anything on social media after you've had a few drinks, are tired or angry; and avoid getting into arguments online.

**Conclusion - Think before you post! If in doubt, don't put it online - you may regret it**

### **Where to find out more**

**The Easy Guide to Socialising Online -**

[http://www.cybersafetyhelp.gov.au/easyguide/socialising\\_online](http://www.cybersafetyhelp.gov.au/easyguide/socialising_online)

**Cybersmart - <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au>**

**Stay Smart Online - <http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au>**