

A Plain Language Guide To the Internet

Internet safety for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Created by the Arc of King County Healthy Relationship Program

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How to Use This Guide

The internet is a huge place. You can do so many things online and many of them are a lot of fun. Just like anything in life, going online has some risks. This guide will help you to make safe choices online.

You can use the Table of Contents to find the information that you want or you can read the whole guide. It is long because it has lots of information. Some of the information might not be helpful for you and that is okay.

If you read about something in here and want more information, you can talk to a trusted adult or you can reach out to The Arc of King County's Healthy Relationship Program.

Phone: 206-829-7059

Email: HealthyRelationships@arcofkingcounty.org



Let's start with some questions. What you like about being online? What do you dislike about being online? Do you spend lots of time on the internet or just a little? How much do you know about the internet?

Your Internet Goals



What do you want to do online?
Some examples are:

- Email
- Watching videos
- Reading the news
- Looking at art
- Learning a new skill or hobby
- Talking with family
- Making friends
- Finding a store or restaurant
- Ordering food
- Banking
- Dating
- Finding a job

Once you know what you want to do, it is time to set some boundaries for yourself.

Boundaries



What are boundaries?

- Boundaries are rules that you have for how you want to be treated.
- Boundaries are rules you have for yourself to stay safe and be comfortable.
- We have boundaries about our bodies, our things, and how people treat us.
- You get to choose your own boundaries.



Why do you need boundaries?

Boundaries help keep you safe and help you talk to other people about what you want. If you already know what you like and how you want to be treated, it is easier to stand up for yourself. Deciding what boundaries you have helps you live your life the way you want to.

Sharing Your Boundaries

Telling someone your boundaries helps them know what you need. Sharing your boundaries helps you to be more safe. People can show you respect by listening to your boundaries. You can show respect to other people by listening to their boundaries.

Your Internet Boundaries

It's helpful to make boundaries or rules about using the internet. Here are some examples of boundaries you might have. You get to choose which boundaries are right for you.

Common Boundaries on the Internet

I choose not to use the Internet

I choose to use the Internet, but only a little bit

I don't talk to strangers online

I only accept friend requests from people I know in real life

I block people I don't want to talk to

I take breaks if I'm not having fun online

I don't share personal information online

I don't post pictures of myself online

I post pictures of myself online, but nothing private

I don't trust people I only know from the Internet

I don't meet up with people I only know from the Internet

Can you think of any other boundaries you have online?

Public & Private

Public means places that anyone can go or something that anyone could see. Private means that only some people can go to a place or only some people can see something. Places, information, and activities can be public or private. You can choose to have more privacy.

Public Places are:

Places where anybody can go
Places with open doors
Places where people can come and go as they please

Public Information is:

Information that anybody can know
Information that is easy to find
Information that you share with lots of people

Public Activities are:

Activities that you can do anywhere
Activities that you can do with lots of other people

Private Places are:

Places where you can be alone
Places with doors that lock
Places where nobody can come in if you do not want them to

Private Information is:

Information that only some people should know
Information that is hard to find
Information that is kept secret

Private Activities are:

Activities that you do in a private place
Activities that you do alone or with only a few people



Public

Private

Examples of Public & Private

Public Places are:

- Store
- Library
- School
- Work
- Park



More Private Places are:

- Home
 - Public bathroom
- ## The Most Private Places are:
- Bathroom at home
 - Bedroom



Public Information is:

- Bus schedules
- Store locations
- News
- Books



Private Information is:

- Your home address
- Photos of people's faces
- Phone number
- Medical information



Public Activities are:

- Going for a walk
- Playing sports
- Eating
- Working



Private Activities are:

- Talking about private information or feelings
- Changing clothes
- Sexual activity



Privacy



The internet is public. When you post something on the internet, anyone might see it. There are ways to make things on the internet less public, but there is no way to be sure that you will have privacy.

Here are some examples about why the internet is public.



You send an email to your friend that has a secret in it, that you only wanted them to see. Your friend sends that email to all of their friends without you knowing. Now, lots of people know your secret.

You post a photo of yourself on social media. Now, anyone can see and comment on that photo. It is a fun picture, but you do not want your boss or your teacher to see it.





Private Information

The internet is a public place. Just like all public places, some parts of the internet are more public than others. Everything that you do online could become public, but email is more private than a social media post. It is safest to keep private information private online.

What is private information?

- email
- full name
- address
- phone number
- birthday
- medical information
- social security number
- credit card number
- bank information
- passwords
- photos, especially sexual ones
- where you work or go to school



More About Privacy

If you do things like making friends or shopping online, you might end up wanting or needing to share some private information. Your online friends might ask what you do for work or how old you are. You might want to send them a picture of you and your dog. If you buy something online you will need to use your debit card or other type of payment. You will need to tell the shop your address for shipping.

How do you know when to share private information?



There are many times that you might want to share private information online. If you are thinking about sharing private information, answering these questions can help you decide what to do. You can also talk to someone you trust.

What are your boundaries online?

Who do you share information with?

Are there things that you don't talk about online, even with close friends?

Is this a scam? (More information about scams is on page 17.)

Is this person who they say they are?

Do I trust this person? Why or why not?

How long have I known this person?

Who do I want to see the things I post online?

What would happen if my family members or boss saw this picture or post?

Here are ways to make the internet more private:

Adjust your
privacy
settings

Turn off
location
sharing



Turn off
personalized
ads

Use email, DMs,
or messaging,
instead of making
a public comment
or post

Use an internet
browser that
doesn't track you,
like Firefox, Safari,
or Brave

Make social
media
accounts
private



Do not
share
passwords

Use secure
passwords

Remember: the internet is public.

Privacy Tools

Let's look at how some privacy tools work.

Use Secure Passwords

A secure password is longer than 12 characters and has numbers and letters. Use a different password for every website.

Make Social Media Accounts Private

A private social media account, usually means that it is harder for people to find your account and that people who look at your account cannot see your content. Content is all of the things that you put online, like photos, text, or videos.

Turn Off Personalized Ads

Some website and browsers, like YouTube or Google Chrome, use a computer to track what you look at. The computer will use that information to show you ads that are interesting to you. If you do not want websites to collect this information, you can turn off personalized ads in the settings for accounts you have and use a web browser that does not track you.



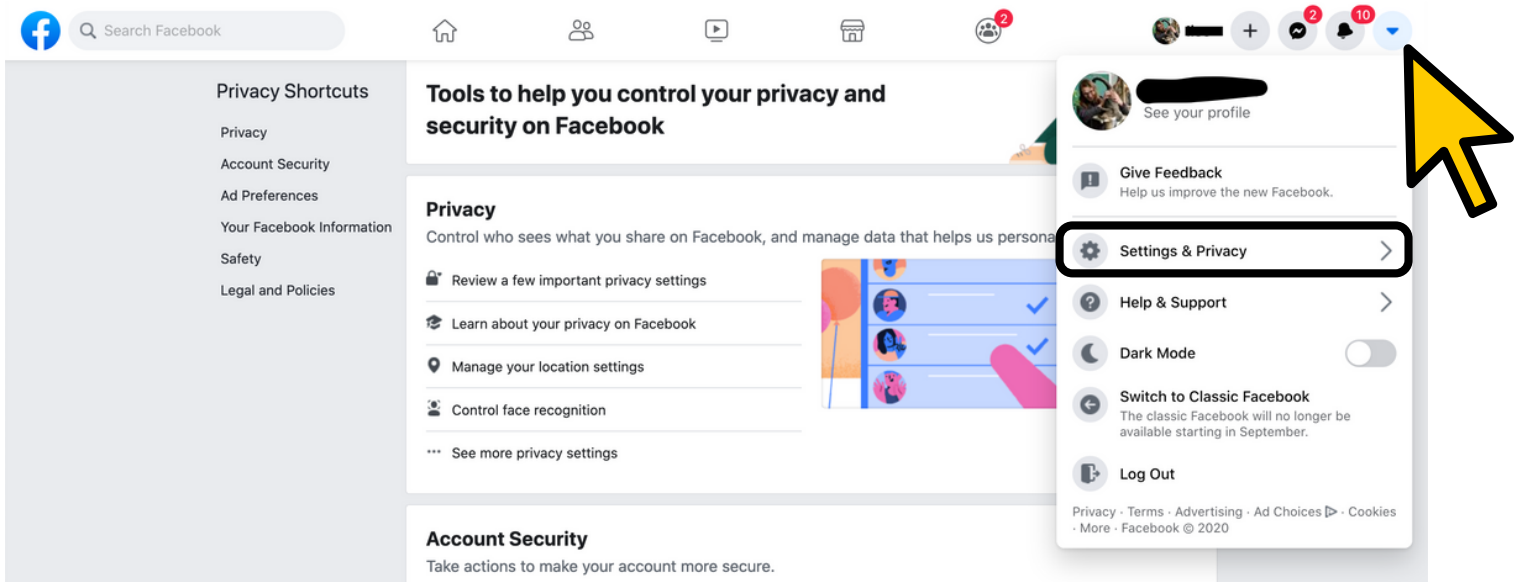
Turn Off Location Sharing

Location sharing tells companies or other users of a website where you are. This is how maps on your phone work. It can be very useful. Sometimes you do not want other people to know where you are. You can turn it off in your phone's settings or web browser.

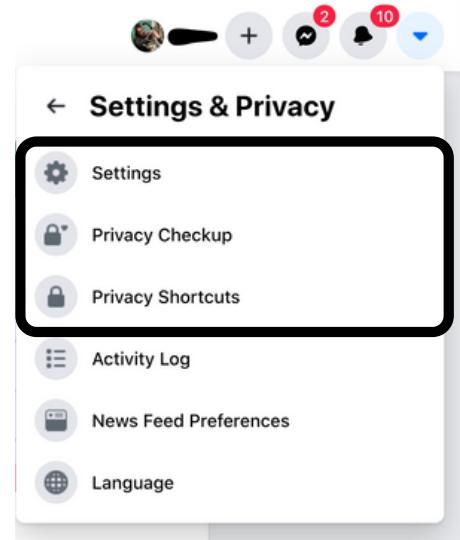
Privacy Tools on Facebook

Adjust Your Privacy Settings

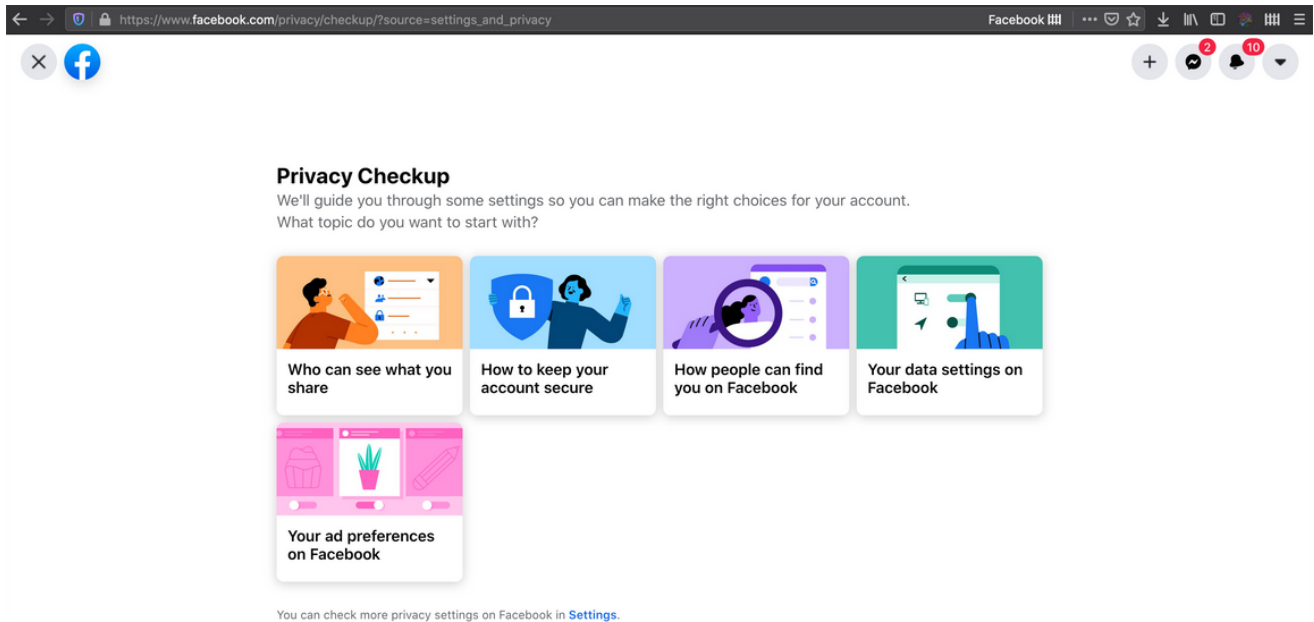
You can adjust your privacy settings on Facebook by going to the little down arrow in the top right of the screen. Then click on Settings & Privacy.



After you click on Settings & Privacy, you will have a lot of options. The Privacy Checkup is an easy tool to look at a lot of settings. If you want even more details, you can look at Settings or Privacy Shortcuts.



Facebook's Privacy Checkup



This page lets you change a lot of things about privacy on Facebook.

The topics are:

- Who can see what you share
- How to keep your account secure
- How people can find you on Facebook
- Your data settings on Facebook
- Your ad preferences on Facebook.

Privacy on Other Sites

Most social media websites allow you to change your privacy settings. Try looking under your profile, in account settings, or on the help page to find out how.



Five Types of Risk Online

Using the internet is fun, but there are also risks. Risks are ways something can be dangerous. Let's look at five of the most common risks and learn how to be safer online.

Scams

False
Information

Extremism

Harassment

Exploitation

Scams

A scam is when someone lies to you or tricks you in order to get money or information.

Some common scams include:

- Emails asking for money
- Emails asking you to give someone a little money, and they will give you more money later
- Emails asking you for passwords, your credit card number, or other private information
- Selling something, but never sending it
- Selling something cheap, but saying it is expensive
- Pop up ads
- Fake social media profiles
- Messages from strangers asking you to click a link



Sometimes it is hard to tell what is scam and what is not.

Let's look at an example of a scam. This is a phishing email. It's called that because they are "fishing" for your money or information. What clues are there that something is wrong?



From: UITS Help Desk <surpport@email.arizona.edu>
Reply-To: "upgrading8@gmail.com" <upgrading8@gmail.com>
Date: Wednesday, November 28, 2012 12:22 AM
Subject: Dear Account Owner!!

Dear Account Owner,

This message is from the UITS® University of Arizona Service to all our account owners. We are currently upgrading our data base and e-mail center. We are deleting all unused Account to create more space for new one.

To prevent your account from closing you will have to update it below so that we will know that it's a present used account.

Confirm Your Email Account Below,

NetID:

Password:

Re-type Password:

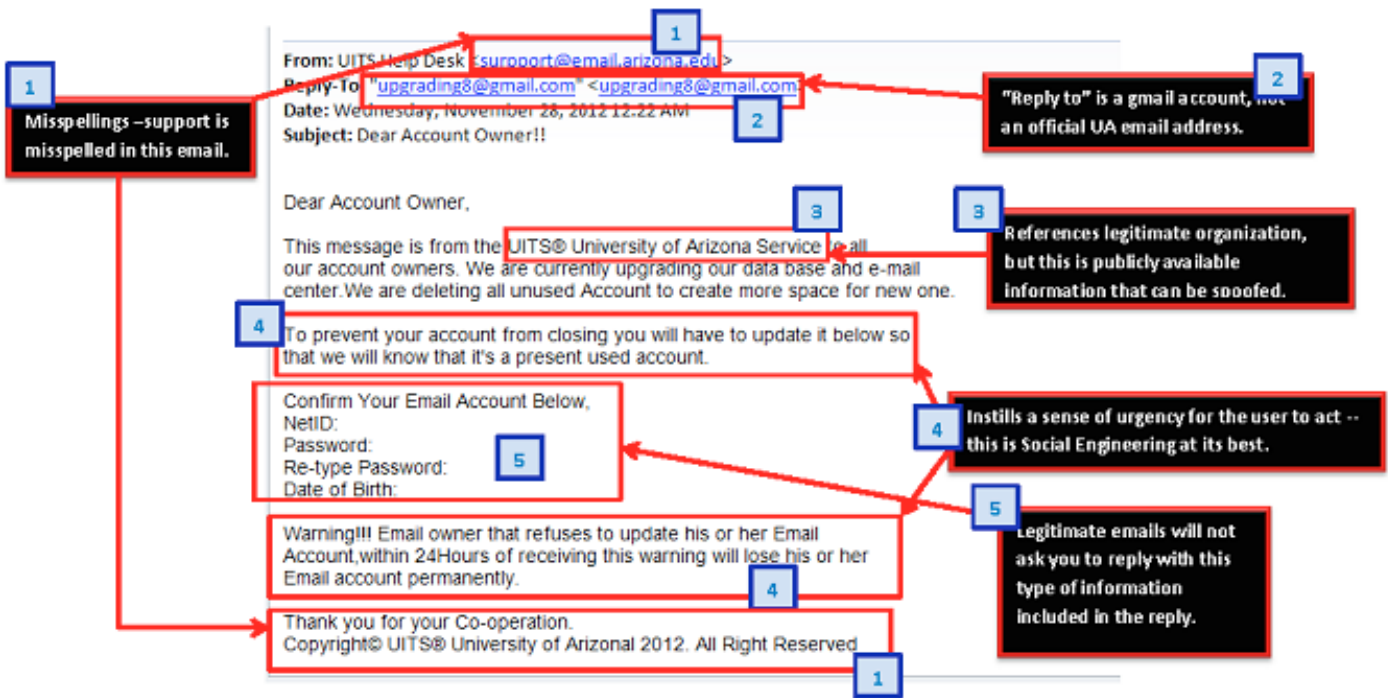
Date of Birth:

Warning!!! Email owner that refuses to update his or her Email Account, within 24Hours of receiving this warning will lose his or her Email account permanently.

Thank you for your Co-operation.

Copyright© UITS® University of Arizonal 2012. All Right Reserved

This example is from the University of Arizona.
<https://security.arizona.edu/content/phishing-and-fraudulent-email-illustrated>



This image shows 5 things to look for.

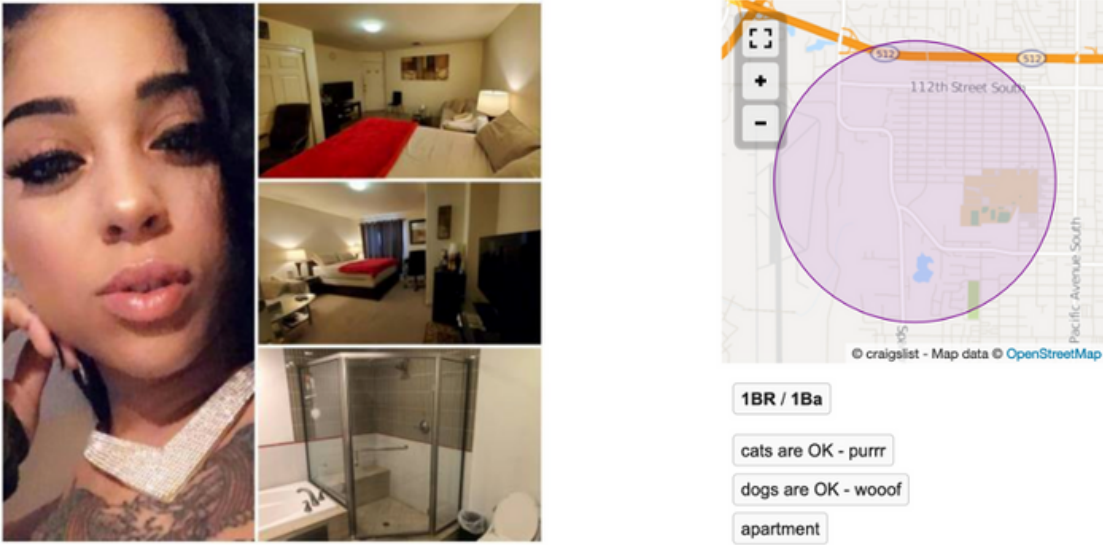
1. **Misspellings:** Support is misspelled in the sender’s email address, as are several other words.
2. **Wrong Email Sender:** This email should be sent from a University address, but it’s a Gmail address. Gmail is usually used for personal emails, not businesses.
3. **Pretending to Be A Real Organization:** Phishing emails are often pretending to be an organization or company that you trust, like a school, bank, or service.
4. **Urgency:** The email will try to tell you that this is an emergency. If you are rushed, it is harder for you to think about why this might be a scam.
5. **Asking for Personal Information:** You should never email someone your password, Social Security Number, or credit card information. You might need to put those things into a secure form, but never an email.

This example is from the University of Arizona. <https://security.arizona.edu/content/phishing-and-fraudulent-email-illustrated>

Now let's look at a scam for a housing situation. What's suspicious about this ad?

[reply](#) [favorite](#) [hide](#) [flag](#) Posted a day ago [print](#)

\$435 / 1br - Friendly roommate inquiry - Live here with friendly professional femal

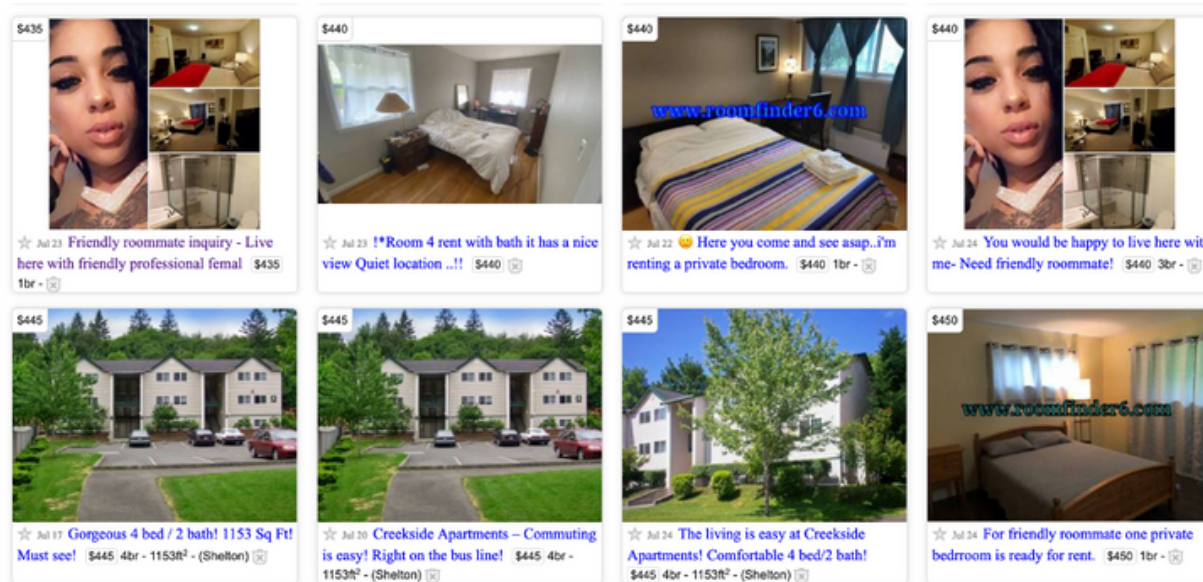


I'm Erika very sober hard working business wo.man. I'm super easy going, looking for a 420 friendly roommate who is fun and chill. Like to keep the place clean and organized. Any age or gender is welcome. It's a pet friendly house. Previous roommate had to move out of state so just lookin for someone to room with. Low monthly cost !

[1BR / 1Ba](#)
[cats are OK - purrr](#)
[dogs are OK - woof](#)
[apartment](#)
[w/d in unit](#)
[attached garage](#)

^^You can see all pictures of this place and feel free to contact me just go to= > <https://www.myroomie69.site>

Here is an extra hint from the page where this ad was posted. One way to spot fake posts is if there are many of the same post with the same images. It's very likely that all of these posts are scams.



\$435 Friendly roommate inquiry - Live here with friendly professional femal \$435 1br - [👁](#)
 \$440 **!*Room 4 rent with bath it has a nice view Quiet location ...!!** \$440 [👁](#)
 \$440 Here you come and see asap..i'm renting a private bedroom. \$440 1br - [👁](#)
 \$440 You would be happy to live here with me- Need friendly roommate! \$440 3br - [👁](#)
 \$445 Gorgeous 4 bed / 2 bath! 1153 Sq Ft! Must see! \$445 4br - 1153R² - (Shelton) [👁](#)
 \$445 Creekside Apartments - Commuting is easy! Right on the bus line! \$445 4br - 1153R² - (Shelton) [👁](#)
 \$445 The living is easy at Creekside Apartments! Comfortable 4 bed/2 bath! \$445 4br - 1153R² - (Shelton) [👁](#)
 \$450 For friendly roommate one private bedroom is ready for rent. \$450 1br - [👁](#)

reply favorite hide flag Posted a day ago print

\$435 1br - Friendly roommate inquiry - Live here with friendly professional femal **2**

1

3

4

I'm Erika very sober hard working business wo.man. I'm super easy going, looking for a 420 friendly roommate who is fun and chill. Like to keep the place clean and organized. Any age or gender is welcome. It's a pet friendly house. Previous roommate had to move out of state so just lookin for someone to room with. Low monthly cost!

1BR / 1Ba
cats are OK - purrr
dogs are OK - woof
apartment
w/d in unit
attached garage

^*You can see all pictures of this place and feel free to contact me just go to= > <https://www.myroomie69.site> **5**

Did you find them all?

1. **Very Cheap:** Sometimes you can find a good deal online, but if it's too good to be true, it's probably a scam.
2. **Misspellings:** It's common for things to be misspelled in a scam post.
3. **Photos:**
 - a. **Beautiful Women:** This is an ad for a room, so the photos should be of the room. Scammers will pretend to be a beautiful woman, so that people are more likely to fall for the scam.
 - b. **Poor Images:** The only image is a collage. It's hard to see the inside of the rooms.
4. **The Content of the Post:**
 - a. **Grammar mistakes or typos**
 - b. **Contradictions:** Erika is "very sober" but wants a "420 friendly roommate." 420 is slang for marijuana. A sober person would not use marijuana.
 - c. **Unlikely story:** It's unlikely that this person's roommate just moved away.
5. **Suspicious Links:** Most websites end in .com, .org, or .edu. It's suspicious that this site ends in .site. The link is also called "myroomie69," which contains slang for sex. This is not normal for a housing ad.

How to Spot a Fake Social Media Profile



- Does the account have a profile photo?
- Is the profile name real?
 - Common but unfamiliar names can be a sign of a fake profile. (Ex. Mark Williams or Kate Harbor)
 - Sometimes fake names are unusual. (Ex. Pizza 4Free or Meg786242 or Holiday Alligator)

- Is the account more than just a few months old?
- Does the account have more than a couple dozen friends or followers?
- Does the account post different types of content?
- Does the message sent to you make sense?

If the answer to these questions is yes, that's a good sign. Lastly,

- Are you already friends with the person on social media? If you are already friends, then it's likely a fake profile.

Adapted from Corcoran, Dan. "Dark Side of Social Media: How To Spot Fake Profiles." NBC Connecticut, NBC Connecticut, 7 Feb. 2020, www.nbcconnecticut.com/investigations/dark-side-of-social-media-how-to-spot-fake-profiles/2219041/.



Job Scams

Job hunting is super stressful and many people look for a new job online. Here are some common scams that you should avoid when searching for work.

Get Rich Quick!

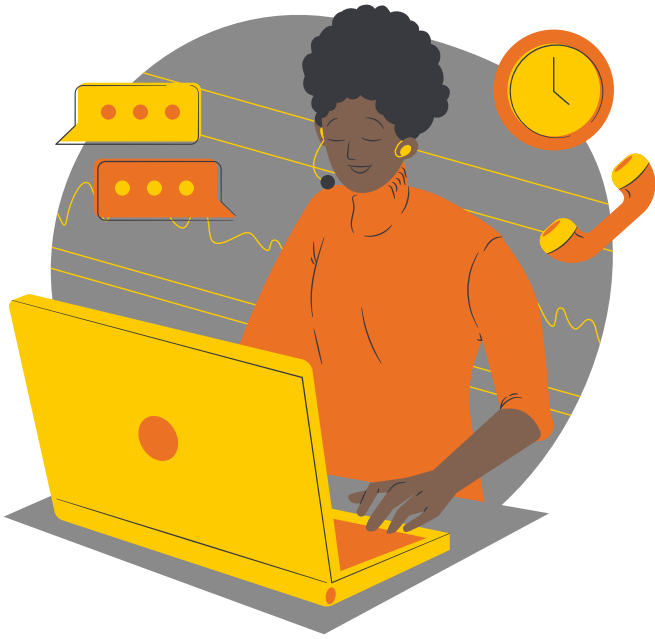
Anyone who promises easy money is lying. It's not possible to earn millions without working hard or inheriting it.

Pyramid Scheme or Multi-Level Marketing

These companies will pay you to sell a product or recruit other people to sell a product, but you have to buy lots of the product first. This is a scam. It is set up to take your money and it is hard sell the products.

Pay to Get Hired

Some people will ask you for money so they can set you up with a job or get you an interview. This is a lie. Sometimes people will try to sell you training materials for a job you want. Do not buy them. Your employer should pay for your on the job training.



More Job Scams to Avoid

Scam Emails

If you did not apply for a job, it is unlikely that someone that you do not know would email you with a job offer. Any email promising a job before an interview is a scam. Emails from a job board site about a new posting or from your job coach are more likely to be real.

Promising a Job

No one can promise you a job. Everyone has to apply for jobs to make sure that it is a good fit.

Bad Contact Info

Always research a company before applying for a job. The contact information on the job post should match the information on the company website. The best way to know if a company is hiring is to look at their website.



How to Stop Scams

- Do not click on links or reply
- Report them
- Get help from a trusted adult
- Delete the scam message
- If you buy things online, make sure it's a real business.
- Don't send money to people you don't know online. If you want to help someone in need, talk about it with a trusted adult to make sure it's not fake.



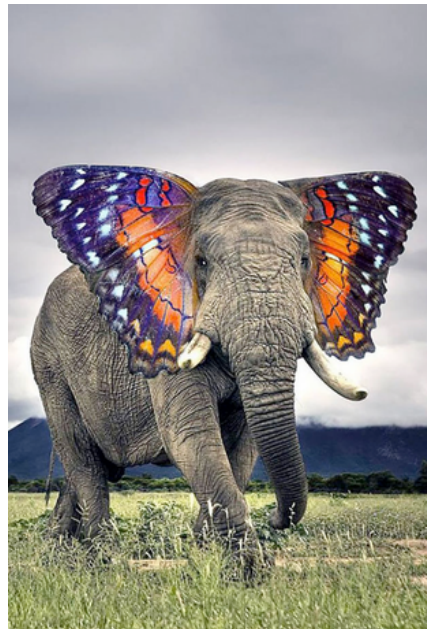
False Information

Sometimes people lie on the internet. Sometimes it's something cute, like these hybrid animals or funny like a prank. Sometimes the information might be dangerous or confusing.

These images were made by artists, who combined different photos to make these animals.

If you believed that the rabbit with antlers was real, nothing bad would happen. If you believe fake news about a politician, it could change who you vote for. If you believe fake news about COVID-19, vaccines or other medical information, you might get sick or even die.

That's why we are going to learn some skills to identify false information or fake news.



HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS



CONSIDER THE SOURCE

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



READ BEYOND

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?



CHECK THE AUTHOR

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



SUPPORTING SOURCES?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



CHECK THE DATE

Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.



IS IT A JOKE?

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



CHECK YOUR BIASES

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



ASK THE EXPERTS

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

Parody & Satire Sites

Some websites are parody or satire sites. Parody sites look like news sites, but all the stories are made up to be funny or to make an argument. One of the most famous parody sites is *The Onion*.

Below is an example of a parody article. It's about a serious subject, quarantine and COVID-19, but it is applied to a hurricane, which is absurd. Hurricanes don't get sick and definitely can't quarantine.



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of The Onion website with links to various sections like 'THE ONION', 'THE A.V. CLUB', 'DEADSPIN', 'GIZMODO', 'JALOPNIK', 'JEZEBEL', 'KOTAKU', 'LIFEHACKER', 'THE ROOT', 'THE TAKEOUT', and 'THE INVENTORY'. Below this is the site's logo and tagline 'America's Finest News Source.' and utility icons for search, shop, subscribe, and user profile. A secondary navigation bar includes 'HOME', 'LATEST', 'POLITICS', 'SPORTS', 'LOCAL', 'ENTERTAINMENT', 'THE TOPICAL' (highlighted), 'OPINION', and 'OGN'. The main content area features the article title 'U.S. Requires Hurricanes To Quarantine For 2 Weeks Before Traveling To Other States Along Coastline' under the 'THE TOPICAL' category. A sub-headline reads 'Today 8:49AM • SEE MORE: ONION PUBLIC RADIO'. Below the title is a social media sharing bar and a large image of a hurricane with the text 'The Topical' overlaid. A caption below the image states: 'The NOAA is ordering all tropical cyclones to storm in place for a minimum of 14 days before moving on to destroy other parts of the country.' To the right of the article is a 'Recent Video' player showing a video titled '5 Common Workout Mistakes' with a green background and a white leaf logo.

Fact Checking Websites

The purpose of these websites is to inform people about the truth. You can also use a search engine, like Google, to do more research about a topic.



The definitive fact-checking site and reference source for urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors, and...

The definitive Internet reference source for researching urban legends, folklore, myths, rumors, and misinformation.

 Snopes.com



FactCheck.org

A Project of The Annenberg Public Policy Center

 FactCheck.org



What Do You Think?

- Where do you get your news?
- Do you trust those people, websites, newspapers, tv hosts, podcasts, or radio programs?
- Why do you trust them?
- Do you get your news from more than one place?

Think about your own answers, then talk to a friend, family member, or someone else you trust. What do they think? Do you agree or disagree?

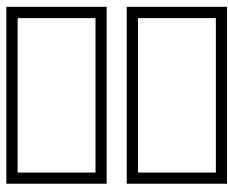




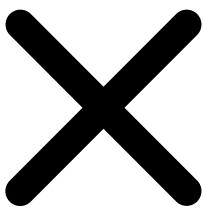
Harassment

Harassment is similar to bullying. Harassment is when someone does something hurtful to you because of who you are. Harassment is usually lots of hurtful actions over a long time, but sometimes it only happens one time.

If someone is bullying you online, there are ways to stop them. If the person is harassing you on social media, there are several tools that you can use.



Unfriend/Unfollow



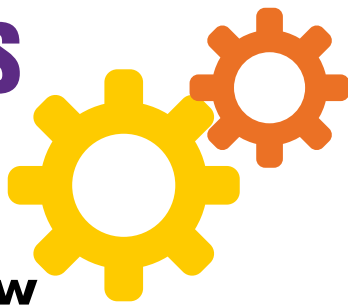
Block



Report



Safety Tools Explained



Unfriend/Unfollow

This is usually the first step to take if someone is posting things that you do not like online. If you are following someone, you can see what they post. If you are friends, you can both see each others posts and profiles. If you unfriend or unfollow a person, the website will not show you their posts anymore. You can still message each other and see each other's public information. This is a good option if you don't like someone's hobbies, if they post too much, or if you aren't interested anymore. The other person can see if you have unfriended or unfollowed them.

Blocking

Blocking is useful when someone is harassing you. Blocking someone stops them from messaging you, and from seeing what you post. On some sites, it also stops you from messaging them or commenting on their posts. The other person cannot see if they are blocked.

Reporting

Reporting is for when someone breaks the rules. Every social media site has Terms of Service. When you use the site, you need to follow the rules in the Terms of Service. On most social media sites you cannot harass people, threaten to hurt people, or say racist, sexist, ableist, or other offensive things. When you report someone, you tell the website that person broke the rules. They might get their post removed or their account deleted. The person will know that they were reported, but not who reported them.



Social Media



Lots of people use social media sites. Social media is a great way to connect with people, share ideas, and learn new things. Here are some examples of common social media sites. Which ones do you use? Are there other social media sites that you like?



Facebook



TikTok



Instagram



YouTube



Twitter



Reddit



Snapchat

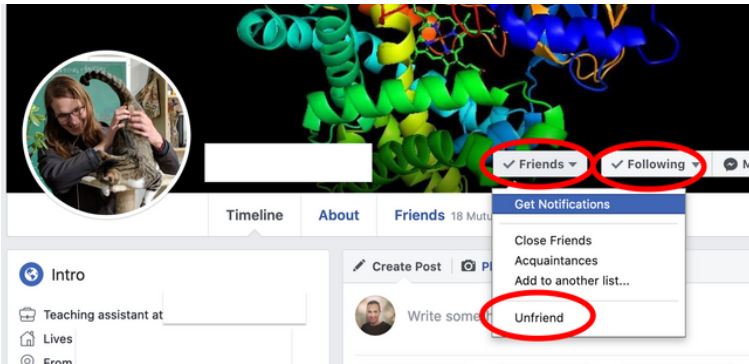


WhatsApp

Next, we will look at how to use some of the safety tools on these sites.



Facebook

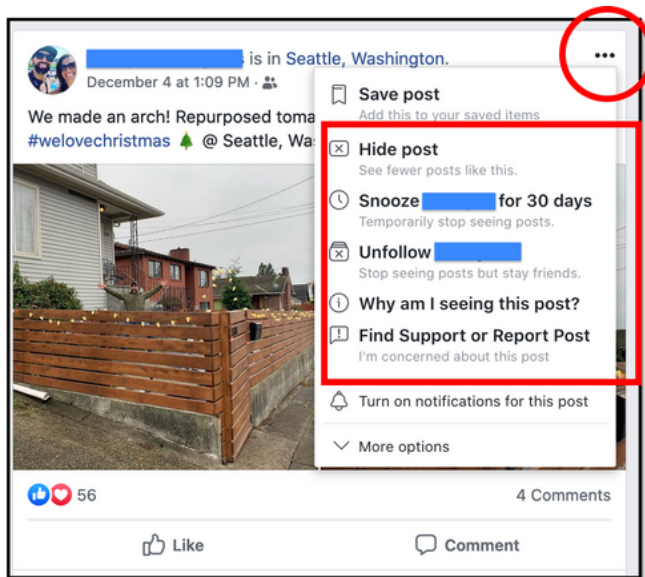


Unfriend/ Unfollow on a Profile

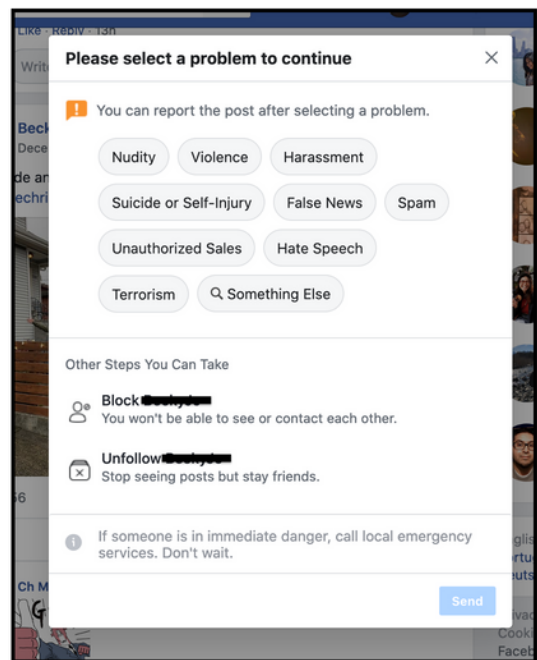
Facebook has lots of tools.

Hide: Facebook won't show you this post or as many posts like it.
Snooze: Temporarily stop seeing content.

Unfollow: Stop seeing posts but stay friends.

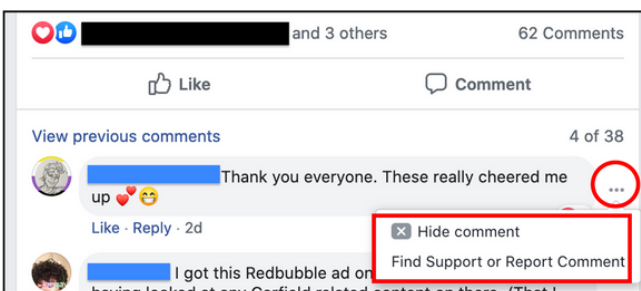


Tools on a Post



Reporting & Finding Support

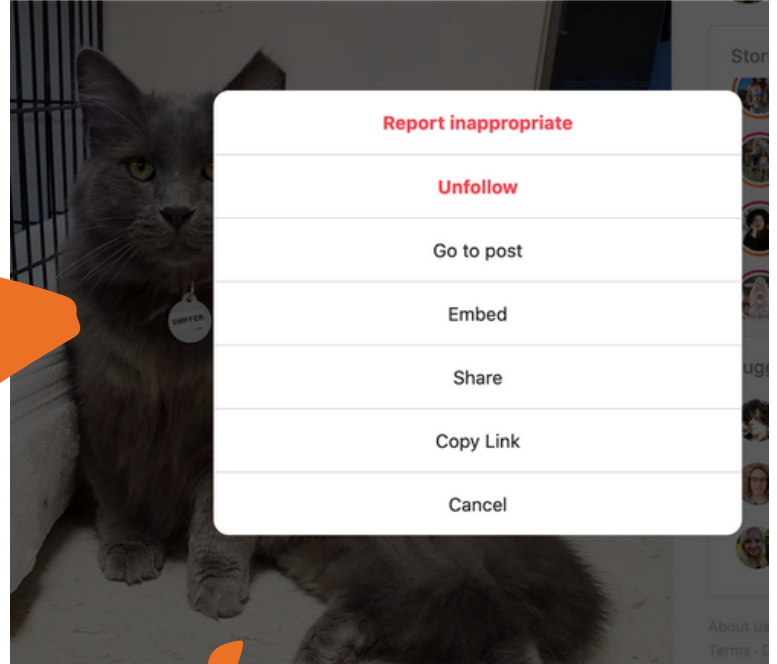
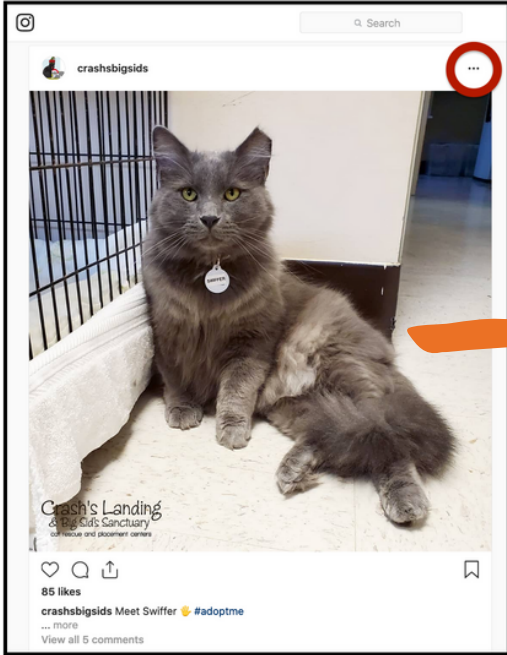
On Facebook you can report someone for nudity, violence, harassment, false news, spam, unauthorized sales, hate speech, terrorism. If someone is posting about hurting themselves, it might be an emergency. Tell a trusted adult.



Tools on a Comment



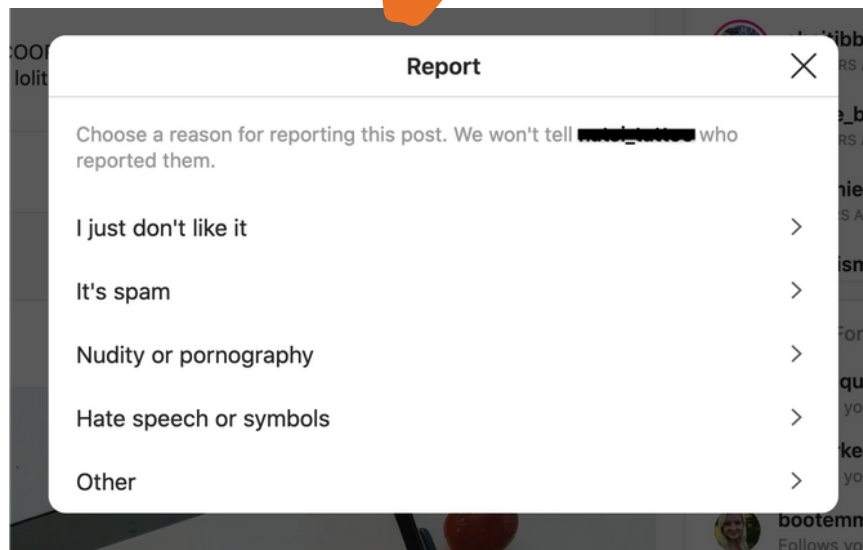
Instagram



Safety Tools on a Post

Click on the three dots in the upper right corner of the post.

Report or Unfollow

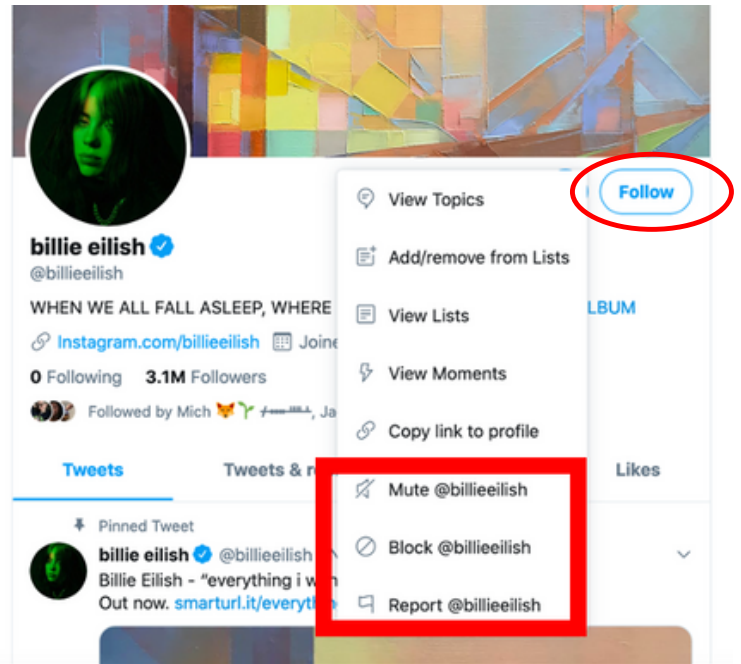


Reporting

You can report things that are spam, nudity or pornography, hate speech or hate symbols, or that you just don't like.



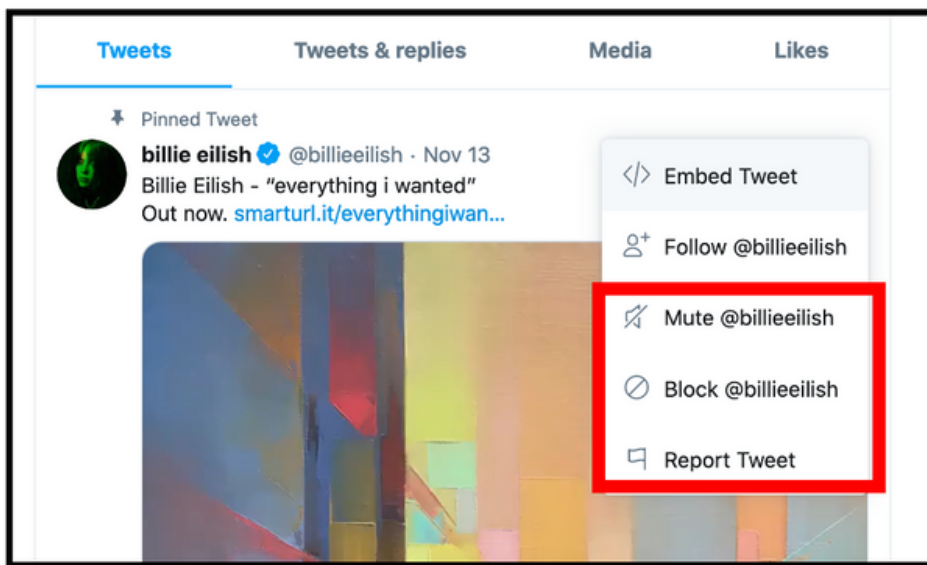
Twitter



Finding Safety Tools

Click on the three dots next to the follow or unfollow button on someone's profile or click on the small down arrow to the right of a tweet.

Safety Tools on a Profile

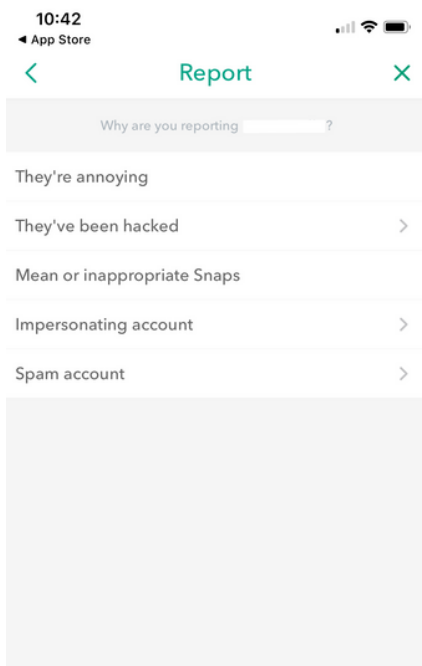
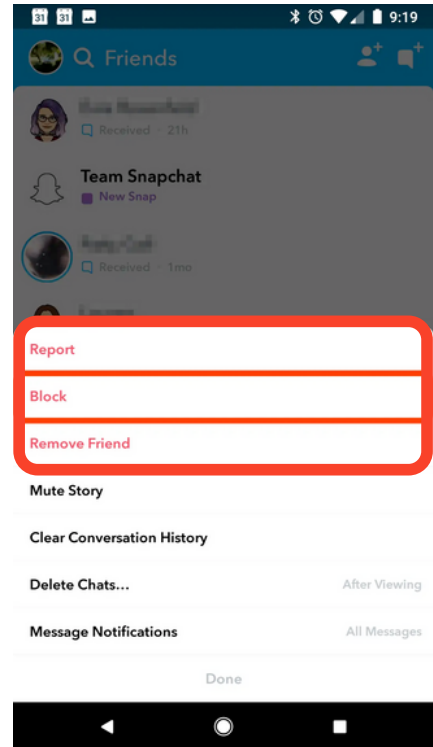
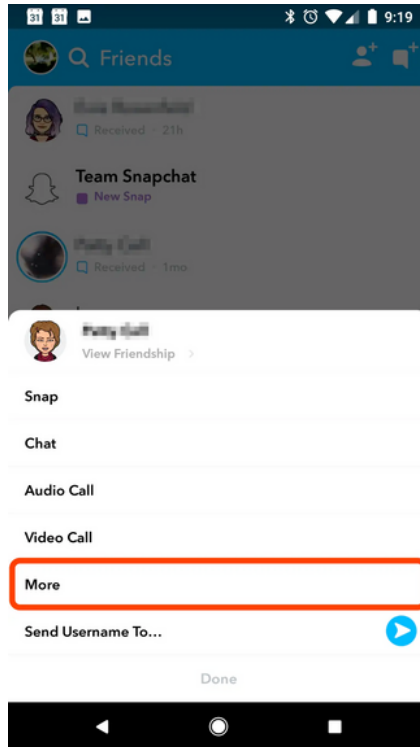
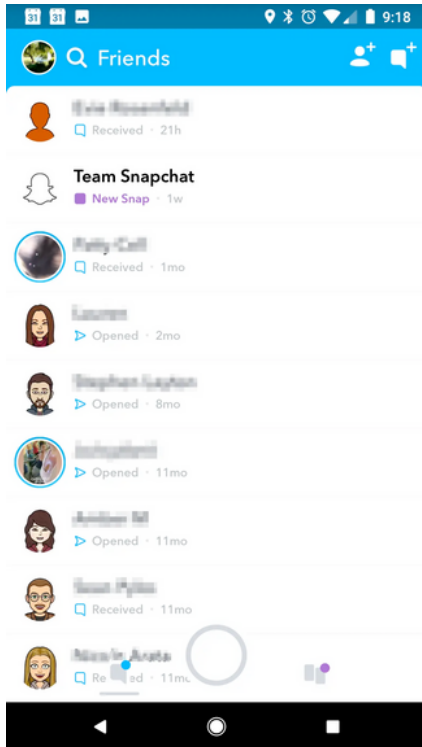


Safety Tools on a Tweet

On Twitter you can mute, block or report. Mute makes it so that you won't see that person's tweets on your timeline. The other person won't know that you have muted them and you are still following them.

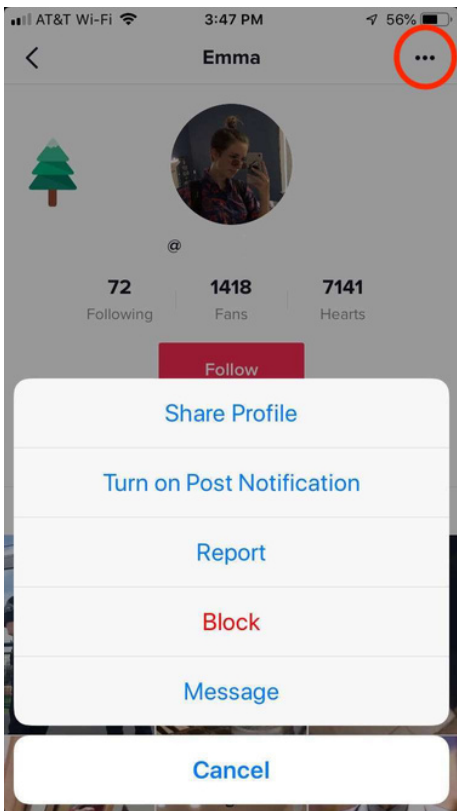
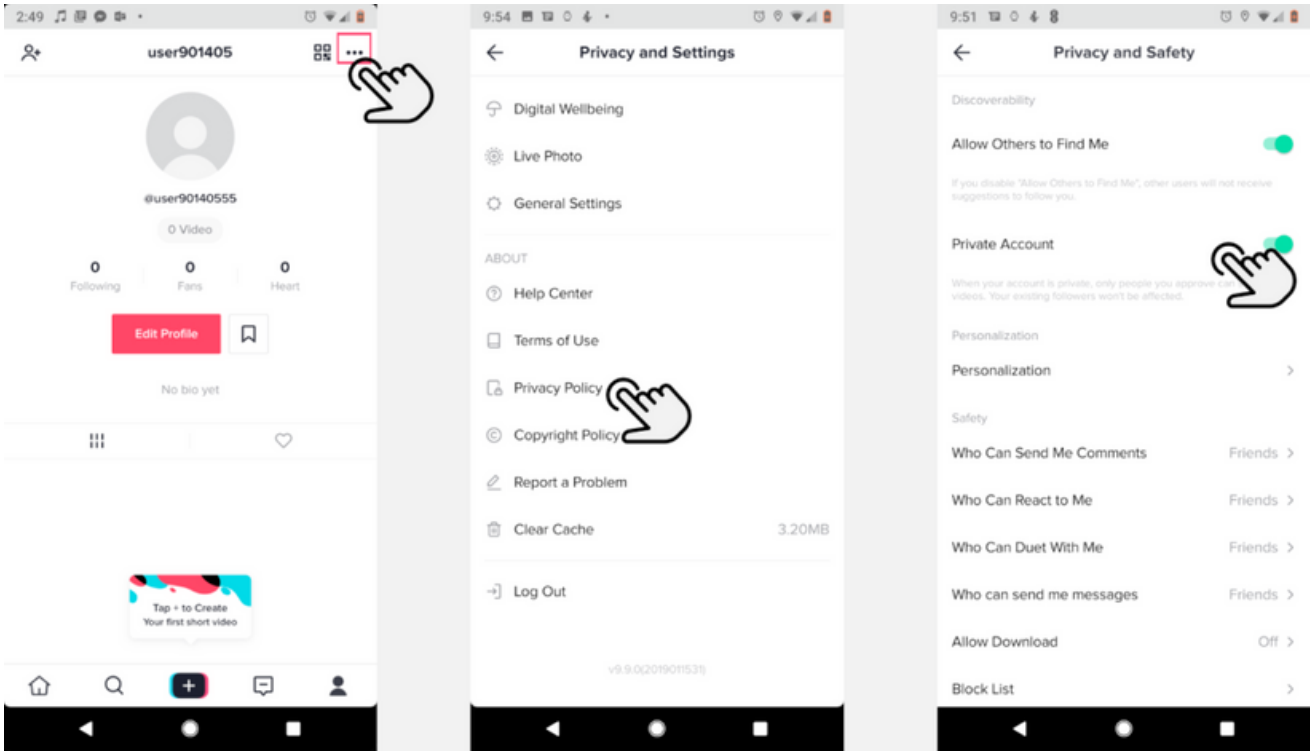


Snapchat



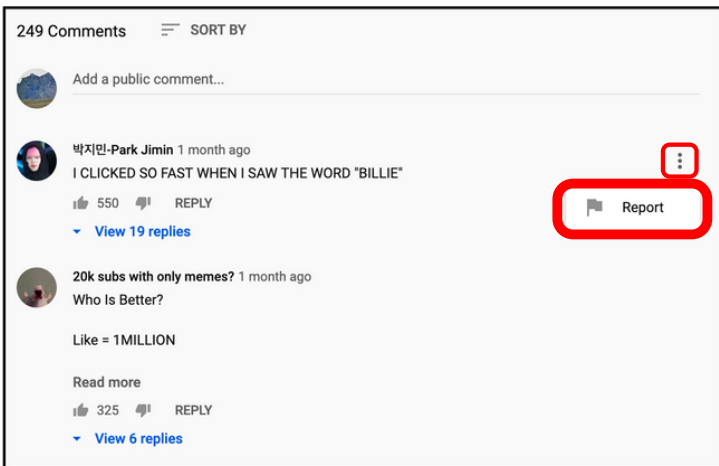
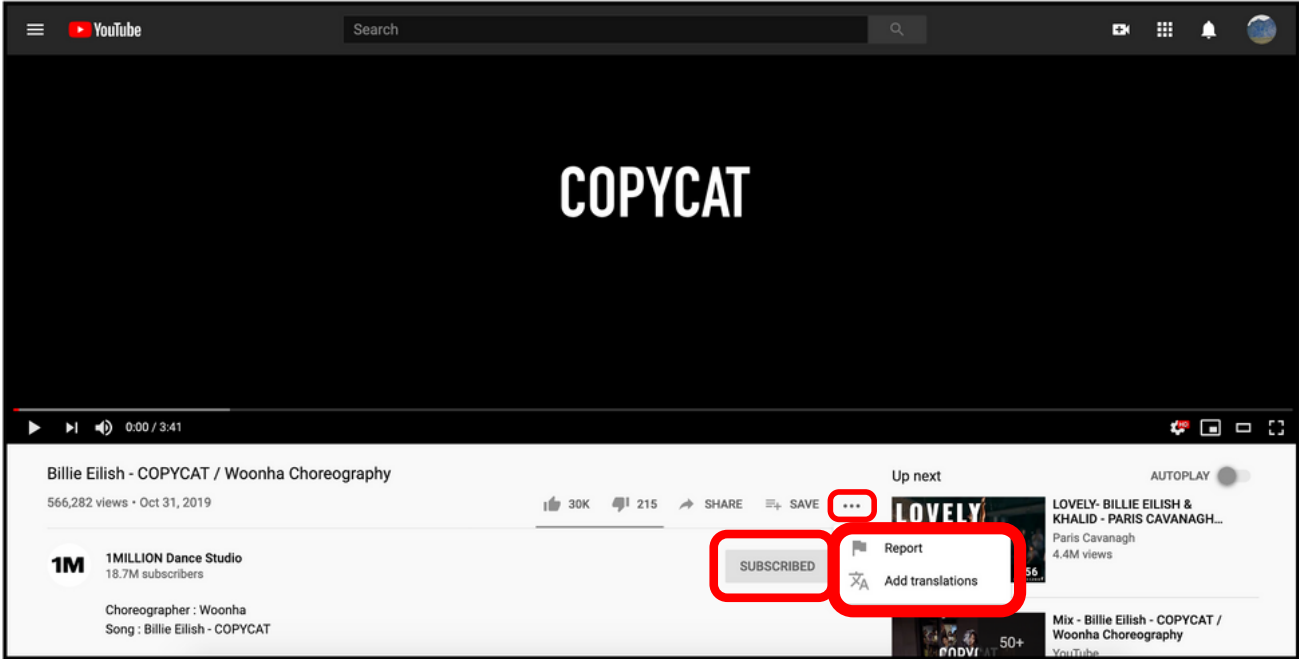
On Snapchat, you go to your contacts to find the safety tools. Press and hold on the person's name, then select more. You can report, block, or remove friend.

When you report someone, you are asked to give a reason. The choices are: they're annoying, they've been hacked, mean or inappropriate snaps, impersonating account, or spam. If someone's been hacked, it means that someone else has stolen their account from them and it using it without their permission. Impersonating an account means that someone is pretending to be someone else on purpose to trick people.



On TikTok, you can change your privacy settings from your profile page. Press the three dots at the upper right, then privacy policy, then change them to what you want. A private account makes it harder for other people to see the videos you post or find your account.

You can also go to a person's profile to unfollow, report, block them.



On YouTube, you can unsubscribe from a channel if you do not want to see their videos anymore. You have to go the channel page to unsubscribe. You can also report a video or comment for being inappropriate. Click on the three dots near the subscribe button to report a video.



Reddit

↑ 28.2k ↓

r/AskReddit · Posted by u/Atlas_is_my_son 7 hours ago 🏆 2

What's something small you can start doing today to better yourself?

6.2k Comments Share Save Hide Report 94% Upvoted

Log in or sign up to leave a comment [LOG IN](#) [SIGN UP](#)


SORT BY BEST ▾

[View discussions in 12 other communities](#)

↑ ↓ mallowmonster 9.8k points · 7 hours ago
Donating/throwing out/selling old stuff you no longer use. Also, cleaning out your fridge.


↑ TMFK-Ryan 3.7k points · 3 hours ago
↓ Just cleaned out my fridge, turns out I had 5 jars of pickles and no real food. Also, lots and lots of sauce.

↑ awanderingsinay 1.0k points · 3 hours ago
↓ We've all been there.



u/mallowmonster

Just a woman who loves marshmallows. And pizza. So, hello!

Karma 8,590 Cake day 

[FOLLOW](#)

[SEND MESSAGE](#)

[REPORT USER](#)

[FEWER OPTIONS](#)

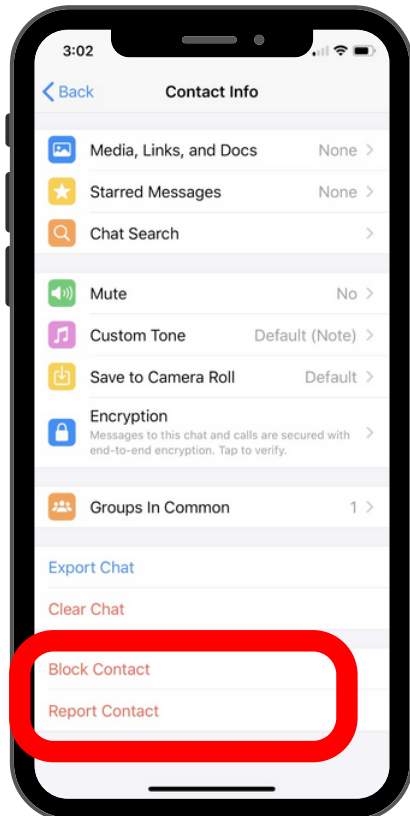
If you do not like a post on Reddit, the first thing that you can do is downvote it. A downvoting moves the post down the page, so fewer people will see it.

You can also hide or report. Hiding a post means that you will not see it anymore.

If you have a problem with a specific user, you can go their page and report them.



WhatsApp



On WhatsApp, you can block or report someone by tapping on their name at the top of the chat.

That takes you their contact information page. Then scroll all the way to the bottom.

If you are unsure about how to use these safety tools, you can look for updated information about reporting or blocking online. Most websites have a help section. You can also talk to a trusted adult.



Your Boundaries

What are your boundaries?

How do you like to be treated?

What is the difference between a disagreement
and harassment?

What websites do you use?

What tools do those sites have to stop
harassment?



Reminders for Healthy Relationships Online

You don't owe someone an explanation for your existence or your opinions.

Some people want to pick a fight, ignore them.

Taking a break is a good idea.

If you are scared, get help!



Extremism

When you are reading or watching videos online, it's important to be on the lookout for extremism. Extremism is when someone has religious or political beliefs that are extremely different from most people and those views are hurtful or hateful to a group of people. Extremist groups are also called hate groups.

Extremist groups can include political parties, religious groups, or social groups. Nazis are one example of an extremist political party from history. Unfortunately, there are still Nazis and other hateful people in the world.



Extremists often blame all of their problems on a different group of people. Some common people to blame include women, Jewish people, Black people, immigrants, Mexican people, Muslim people, LGBTQ people, or other minorities.

All of these groups of people are already treated unfairly by society. They certainly are not to blame for your problems or the problems of the whole county. Any person from any background can do good things and bad things. Race, religion, or culture do not automatically make someone a good person or a bad person.

Is This A Extremist Group?

There are some common signs that extremist groups share. If any of these things are true of a group that you belong to, talk to someone you trust who is not in the group.

- You can't ask questions, learn about different ideas, or have a different opinion.
- You are isolated from your friends or family.
- You cannot leave the group. If you do, no one still in the group will talk to you.
- There is secret knowledge or one right way to do things that only group members know.
- You have to believe and follow everything the leaders say.
- A different group of people is evil, bad, or your enemy.
- You feel like you can never be good enough.



If you have more questions about hate groups or extremism, the Southern Poverty Law Center has many resources on their website at

<https://www.splcenter.org/>



SPLC
Southern Poverty
Law Center

Avoiding Extremism

Extremist groups often target people who are lonely or feel hurt by society. You might watch a video from an extremist group and feel like they understand how hard it is to be lonely or to be treated unfairly.



There are lots of ways that having a disability can be very hard. Society is not always kind to people with disabilities. You might not be able to do everything that you would like to do. It might seem like a good idea to blame other people because you are angry or hurt, but if you believe these lies, people can get hurt.

Extremist groups are very good at making people feel welcome. At first you might not even know that the group has extreme or hateful beliefs. If you feel like you belong, it can be hard to leave an extremist group.

If you realize that you are part of a extremist group, you can leave. There are lots of accepting and inclusive communities. Try joining other people who are promoting the rights of disabled people or groups based on shared interests. Groups that focus on respect and helping people will be more rewarding than a sense of community based in hate.

Who Does Hate Hurt?

If you spend a lot of time being angry at people on the internet, it can hurt a lot of people. If you post mean things about women, people of color or immigrants, it can hurt those people. You might not ever know the person you hurt, but your words online can have a big effect. It can also hurt you and your family or loved ones. Let's think about some questions.

Who sees what you post online?

Would you say the same thing to that person face to face?

How would you feel if someone said something similar to you?

What would your friends, family, loved ones think about the things you read or post online?

What would happen if your boss saw your post? Would you lose your job?

How do you feel after being online?

Do you feel angry, tense, overwhelmed, or sad?



Exploitation

What is Exploitation?



Exploitation is about **power** and **control**.

Exploitation is...

- taking advantage of you
- using you unfairly and selfishly
- taking away your choices
- threatening you

Exploitation has lots of ways that can hurt people.

Examples of Exploitation

- taking credit for your work
- not paying you for your work
- lying to you to change your choices
- stopping you from making choices
- threatening you if you don't do what they want (also called blackmail)
- forcing you to do things you don't want to do
- tricking you into doing something you didn't want to do

How Does Exploitation Happen Online?

Some people are willing to hurt other people to get what they want. Those people can use the internet to help them find people to exploit.

One way that people will try to get power over you is to get your personal information or money. They might also pretend to be someone or a company that has power and try to take your money or information. This is how a lot of scams work. Scams are a type of exploitation.

Once someone has your information, they might try to blackmail you. One common threat is "I will tell your secrets unless you do what I want." They might also harass you by sending you threats.

People who are looking for romantic relationships online are also at risk for exploitation. Sometimes it is a beautiful woman asking for money, or someone pretending to be a beautiful woman asking for money. Another common form of exploitation is to ask for naked pictures and then blackmail, or threaten, the person. When looking for romantic or sexual relationships online, take extra care to make sure the person is trustworthy. Being betrayed by someone you love is a very painful way to have your heart broken.



How to Stop Exploitation

Report It

Exploitation is illegal. If someone is exploiting you, tell a trusted adult. You can also report exploitation to the police. It is not your fault if someone is exploiting you. There are things that you can do to make it harder for people to exploit you.



Use Your Safety Tools

We already talked about scams and harassment. You already know how to stop scams, so use those skills. People who are exploiting you will often harass you. You can use the report and block tools to stop harassment.

Privacy

One of the best ways to prevent exploitation is to keep your private information private online. It is hard for someone to exploit you if they don't know much about you.



Things to Remember About the Internet

Anything that you post online is public.

It is very hard to remove something from the internet forever.

It is easier for people to lie to you online.

The things that you do online can have consequences offline.

**You deserve to
be happy and
have fun online**



You get to chose how you use the internet.

If someone is hurting you, it is not your fault.

Just like in person, you can get help.

Online Friends

The internet can be a great place to connect with people about your interests or specific life experiences. It can also be hard to find people to befriend online and it is easier for friendships to end. Here are some helpful hints to for online friendships.

Shared Interests

Many social media sites have groups that your can join based on what you like to do, like video games or art. Try joining a smaller group of people and reply to people's posts. Add your own posts and stay active in the group for several weeks. You will start to know the other people and they will begin to know you. If you notice a few people who you want to talk to more, you can message them privately about your shared interest.

Example: You love making pottery. You join the group "Quirky Pottery Lovers." You reply to other people's photos of their pots with the heart reaction ♥, "awesome glaze," and "I've been wanting to try that technique." You also post some of your pottery and links to your favorite potters. Soon you notice a couple people who really like what you have to share.



Adapted from How to Make Friends Online - The Ultimate Guide, February 27, 2019, Viktor Sander B.Sc., B.A.
<https://socialpronow.com/blog/make-friends-online/>

Getting to Know Someone

Once you know that you have a little bit in common, you can start chatting more often and asking more questions. Often, it's a good idea to send a private message if you want to talk just to one person in a group. Some groups also have in person meetings where lots of people meet up. These can be a great, safer way to meet your online friends. It is important to always tell a trusted adult where you are going, and only meet up with online friends in a public place, like a park or coffee shop.



Example: A group of people from "Quirky Pottery Lovers" is going to an art show in your area. You could attend the art show with someone you already know and meet up with some of your online friends too.

Example: After talking about pottery, you message your new friend Sammy about what tv shows they like. You discover that both of you love anime. You share your favorite anime and plan to watch a show together online.



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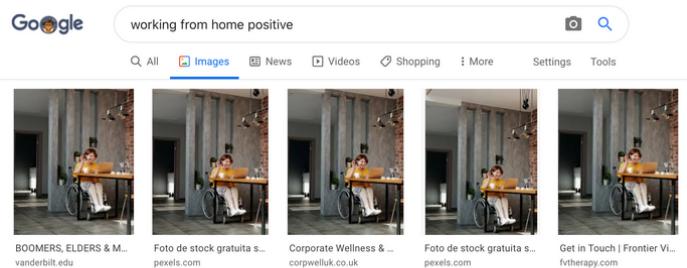
Meeting Online Friends

If you want to meet up with a friend you made online, you can take these steps to be safer:

- make sure that other person is real
 - reverse image search their pictures
 - video chat before meeting in person
- don't share too much personal information
- if you meet up, do so in public, with a friend or family member
- share your boundaries for meeting up and ask the other person about theirs
- trust your feelings, If something feels bad, don't meet in person

Reverse Image Search

A reverse image search allows you use an image that you already have to see where else it is online. You paste or upload the image into the image search engine and press enter. The search engine will then show you other websites with the same image. This can help you find out if some one is using a picture of someone else on their profile. This means they are pretending to be someone else.



Conversation Tips

- Talk to a few new people at once. That way it will be less upsetting if one friendship does not work out.
- Match the other person's interest. If the other person sends one message a day, also reply once or twice a day. If the other person send you lots of long messages, you can send them lots of long messages back. Both people should be sharing about the same amount about their lives. Both people should start conversations.
- Give the other person space. It's normal to take several hours or days to reply to a message. If you do not hear back for a week, it is possible that the other person is not interested in being friends.
- Do not pressure them to meet up in person. Try talking for a while before asking to meet up. If the other person says no or maybe later, do not ask again. Wait for them to ask you to meet in person.
- Share about your life, but not everything. Talk about yourself and ask the other person about their life. Do not share your secrets with someone online.
- Try asking about the other person's thoughts or feelings. If you ask someone where they live, try asking what they like about living there.



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<https://socialpronow.com/blog/make-friends-online/>

Rejection

Not every friendship will work out. Sometimes people just do not want to be friends. It's okay for you to decide not to be friends. It's okay for someone else to decide not to be friends.

If someone stops replying to your messages, do not keep messaging them. If someone is not replying to you, it is because they do not want to or they are busy or they forgot. It can be really hard to leave them alone, but that is the best plan.

Rejection can be sad, disappointing, and even angering. Be kind to yourself when a friendship doesn't work out. You will find friends. Strong friendships take lots of time to build, so be patient.

A Good Friendship Has...

Freedom

- You chose to be in the friendship because you like your friend and have fun with them.

Commitment

- You can trust that you will be friends for a long time. You and your friends will be there for each other when life gets hard.

Intimacy and Trust

- You feel comfortable sharing your dreams, hopes, and fears. Your friend also shares those things with you.



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<https://socialpronow.com/blog/make-friends-online/>



**Now go use the internet
more safely!**



And most importantly...



have fun!

