



Defence Youth Safety Fact Sheet

Safe Social Networking

Online forums, messaging, and social media sites are great for socialising with friends and family, sharing photos and videos, and expressing yourself and being creative. However, there are some risks meeting people online, especially if you do not know them in real life. When you share things online you may be sharing with random people you do not know or trust. Once a message, photo or video has been shared, you will lose control of where it ends up.

What are the risks of social networking?

The risks in using social networking sites include:

- **Anonymity:** it can be easier to say and do things online that you might not do offline.
- **Cyber bullying:** includes abusive or hurtful text, emails, messages or posts.
- **Trolling:** where online users anonymously abuse or intimidate others.
- **Failing to protect your personal information or sharing too much information:** account details and location information can be used inappropriately by others to find you or access your online accounts.
- **Treating online friends as real friends:** it is easy for people to lie online, including those who are seeking children and young people for more than just a social relationship.

Social Networking Guidelines

- ✓ **Think first.** Review your content before you post it. Remember that you are responsible for your actions. Consider the impact your activities could have on yourself and/or the program. Use common sense and best judgement and protect your own reputation and the reputation of Defence youth programs. ***If in doubt, leave it out!***
- ✓ **Be respectful.** Be courteous and polite. Be sensitive to diversity. Avoid arguments and do not make personal attacks. Do not post obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful content.
- ✓ **Protect and respect privacy.** All social networking sites have their own version of 'default' privacy and security settings. It is important that you know how the site works and how to change the settings to protect your personal information.
- ✓ **Consider intellectual property.** Always get permission to use words, images or materials online that you do not own.

Further Information

If you have any further questions, contact the Directorate of Youth:
defence.youth@defence.gov.au

