Social Media Privacy

The Monthly Security Awareness Newsletter for You

Overview

Most people would never consider walking into a crowded room and loudly broadcasting to total strangers all the details of their private life—from their health issues to their family and friends' names, ages, jobs, or school locations. But often these same individuals won't think twice about posting that same information on social media. The ramifications of sharing too much can have an impact not only on your personal and professional life but also the lives of your family and friends.

Social media is a great place to reconnect, share, and learn. However, just ensuring that your social media privacy settings are strong isn't the only way to protect yourself. Once you post anything online, you have lost control of it. You need to understand what is being collected and how it is being used. Here are some privacy concerns you should have when using social media:

Privacy Settings: Carefully create and frequently review privacy settings for all of your social media accounts, especially when changes in terms of service and privacy policies take place. Remember that even if you have secured your settings for who can view your postings, all of your information is being collected, mined, and stored on the social media platform servers—perhaps forever.

Privacy Tree: Social media settings can't protect you from friends, relatives, and co-workers who view your postings and then have the ability to share those postings with their circle of friends and so on.

Family Sharing: Everyone loves to talk about their friends and family. But posting silly birthday cake pictures or health and behavior problems can lead to bullying, especially for those who are younger, and could impact their personal lives.

Information Sharing: If a service is "free," then you are the product. Investigations have found that what you are doing online may be sold to others.

Location Services: Check-in data can be added to other personal data to create a profile of your life and habits, which can lead to stalking and open you to other harassing events. In addition, be aware of any location information included in any pictures or videos you post.

Artificial Intelligence: AI, social media, and marketing are the perfect combination. Marketers now use information gathered from your habits online to feed you ads focused on your last search or purchase, and thereby continue to learn even more about you.

Digital Death: When a person dies, their online presence becomes more vulnerable to malicious individuals if their accounts aren't being maintained or eliminated by their survivors. The privacy of an individual is not just about that person alone; it also can impact extended family and friends.

Unintentional Disclosure: The information you post about yourself may reveal much of your personal history, and thus the answers to your online secret security questions.

Privacy is far more than just setting the privacy options in your social media accounts. The more information you share, and the more others share about you, the more information that is collected and used by corporations, governments, and others. One of the best ways to protect yourself is to consider and limit what you share and what others share about you, regardless of the privacy options you use.

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Guest Editor

Cathy Click has over 14 years of experience in developing a security awareness program for a Fortune 500 global company. Cathy loves taking complicated technical topics and translating them into easy-to-understand language to help people increase their online safety.

Resources

Digital Inheritance:	http://www.sans.org/u/Z2G
Scamming You Through Social Media:	http://www.sans.org/u/Z2L
Got Backups?:	http://www.sans.org/u/Z2Q