

HANDOUT ...**Privacy Considerations When Posting Content Online**

From: National Network to End Domestic Violence, Safety Net Project
http://www.nnedv.org/docs/SafetyNet/NNEDV_PostingContentOnline.pdf

The Internet is full of opportunities for us to share things about ourselves, whether it's a blog entry, updating our Facebook or MySpace status, or posting videos on sites like YouTube or Metacafe. We post information to share our lives with our friends and family, but this information also becomes viewable by millions of other people as well. Some people may not care that the things they share about themselves can be viewed by anyone, but other people may be more concerned.

For those who want to be more protective of their online information, here are some questions to consider when posting content online.

Who Will See This Information?

Sometimes we don't realize how far and wide our information is shared; especially when we think we're just posting updates about ourselves to our friends. With the Internet and search engines (like Google, Yahoo!, Bing and others), everything online is indexed and searchable. Even sites where you think only members can see the content could be public or seen by others who aren't members, anywhere in the world.

What Are You Sharing?

From a privacy perspective, the kind of information you share can reveal a lot or very little about you. Sometimes we share personal information about ourselves without even realizing it. Landmarks in a picture or even blogging about a great restaurant can indicate where you are or have been. Consider if what you are sharing is okay for others to know.

Are you sharing information about others, and if so, do you have their permission? Be careful when sharing information about your friends and family because you may reveal something that they don't wish others to know.

What Is the Site's Privacy Policy?

Do you know what the owners of the website do with the information you give them? Even if the information you share isn't posted online, it may be shared with advertisers or third-parties. Many sites have privacy policies that spell out what they do with the information you give them.

Is the Information You Share Illegal or Against the Content Policies of the Site?

If you want to share information online, make sure you comply with laws (such as copyright and fair use, etc.) and with site policies. Many sites don't allow violent or discriminatory content; some sites will remove "banned" content or even close the related account. Sometimes, posting false information, harassing or harmful content can even result in civil or criminal legal action. If you aren't sure, find out about the relevant laws and policies first, before you post.

How Much Control Do You Have Over The Information That You Share?

Some people believe that because it's content you posted, you own it and can control it. However, you really don't have much control because once it's out there, others can share it, talk about it, and even change it. If you originally posted it on your personal website, blog, or social network page, you could take down the original post. However, it will likely be difficult for you to have it removed once it's on someone else's website.

What can I do to increase my privacy?

- Be thoughtful about what you share online.
- Be careful about what you post about other people.
- When creating online accounts read the instructions carefully. Often-times this is when you can opt out of the site owners collecting and sharing your information.
- Browse the web more safely by running antivirus and anti-spyware software on your computer.

**Safety Net Project: Online Privacy & Safety Tips
National Network to End Domestic Violence**

- Check out the privacy settings and make sure it's set to the level of privacy you want. Keep in mind that even if you set your social network page to private, it doesn't guarantee that your information is completely private.
- Don't forget that your friends may be able to see your other friends' posts and pages even if they're not friends with each other.
- Be thoughtful about who's on your friend list when you post or link to certain things.
- Read the social network's privacy policy and find out who else has access to your information, such as advertisers, third-parties, etc.
- Talk to your friends and family about what they can post online about you.
- Don't forget that employers, churches, sports teams, and volunteer organizations that you are a part of may share your personal information online.
- Periodically delete history, cookies, temporary internet files, and saved forms and passwords from your web browser.