

Safe FACEBOOKing

Some of the DANGERS

- The .edu access to the Facebook site may give students a **false sense of security**.
- There are hundreds of thousands of active .edu email addresses of current students and alumni in just the United States and many of them can gain access to your site.
- Some colleges and universities will grant free email addresses to alumni; however, they do not always follow-up to check whether the individual is an actual alumni. Therefore making it relatively easy to create false .edu accounts on Facebook and gain access to the site.
- **Other social networking sites** such as: myspace.com, friendster.com, and xanga.com offer even less security and protection because they have complete public access and are open to ANY person.
- Students can be **stalked** by strangers (or even acquaintances) because of the detailed and specific information students post on Facebook (i.e. phone numbers, addresses, class schedules, social plans, etc.)
- Students across the country are **getting in trouble with University administrators** for incriminating and inappropriate information or pictures on their Facebook profiles that are violations of school policy or the code of conduct. (note: Administrators typically do not monitor Facebook; however, if information or pictures on a students account that violate policy are brought to their attention or are reported to them, they are likely to follow up and investigate further.)
- Students have been known to be **turned down by employers** for jobs, internships and even interviews because of the information employers are finding out about students on their Facebook accounts.
- Compromising and inappropriate pictures, statements or other information on student Facebook accounts can hurt students chances to gain (or even be considered for) on-campus and off-campus employment. Employers take the images that students are portraying on Facebook very seriously as a reflection of personal character.



Some of the BENEFITS

- Facebook is considered a social **networking site** and, if used as such, can be a good way to make connections with people with similar interests and goals. Facebooking can be a way to connect with or meet people that a student may not have had the opportunity to before including other students, staff, faculty and even alumni.
- Thanks to Facebook, meeting someone in person has become a thing of the past. Poking has become the new handshake. Making friends is as easy as Facebooking.

It can create new friendships and renew old ones. Thus, meeting people and **staying connecting with classmates and friends** is a major benefit of Facebook.

- Facebook offers campus surveys, party or event listings and other information that communicates the pulse of a campus culture. Therefore, Facebook can be a great way to understand and **stay connected to ones campus community** as a whole.
- Facebook offers **advertising** to its subscribers. Whether a student creates a party for an upcoming event or pays the \$5 for 10,000 hits for an ad, Facebook can be a very cost effective way to advertise as a student organization, club, Greek chapter, team, etc.
- Most importantly, Facebook offers students the opportunity to **create a positive self-image**. Facebook profiles gives students a chance to create the image of themselves that they want people to see by putting their best qualities out there. This shows that a students care about their reputations and (to a certain extent) what people think about them whether it is their peers, University faculty and administrators, or future employers.

Helpful Hints to STAY SAFE and BE PREPARED

- Evaluate your Facebook account and postings. How do you feel about your employers seeing what you have posted? How about your parents or grandparents?
- Do not post private information such as: cell phone, campus or home address, class schedule, social plans, etc. UNLESS you are prepared for anyone to find you/track you down, any time of the day or night.
- Utilize the Privacy settings on your Facebook account you can adjust your privacy settings so as to control who has access to your personal information.
- Google yourself to see how your name or identity is being used.
- Subscribe to pubsub.com to keep track of your name and identity on the web.
- Be prepared to answer questions about your Facebook account in job interviews. It is becoming more common for interviewers to ask applicants "Are you on Facebook and What is on your Facebook profile?". BE PREPARED to either decline the question or answer honestly because employers will most likely look at your Facebook account themselves or already have.

For more hints on being web savvy:

http://www.stedwards.edu/counsel/web_savvy.htm

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