Facebook Security Setting

Facebook is great for many different reasons: sharing information with friends and family; keeping in touch with overseas relatives; meeting new people and much more.

But the problem with being so open is that your information is publicly visible for anyone to use as they wish. For the most part this is completely harmless, but as with anything in life there are those people who are up to no good.

Since Facebook regularly changes its security settings you need to check them fairly regularly. The five minutes it takes to complete the steps below can save you hours of stress and worry caused by an encounter with a Facebook criminal--or even a well-meaning but misinformed friend.

Get to know the inline audience selector *(the section on you timeline)*
To open Facebook's privacy options, click the drop down arrow next to the Home button in the top-right corner of any Facebook page and choose Privacy Settings. Three big buttons are labeled Public, Friends, and Custom.

The Friends option is selected by default, but this is misleading because this setting applies only to posts and photos uploaded from Facebook apps that don't have the inline audience selector, such as Facebook for BlackBerry. The audience selector appears below the status window and photos you're about to post; it retains whichever setting you used previously (probably Friends).
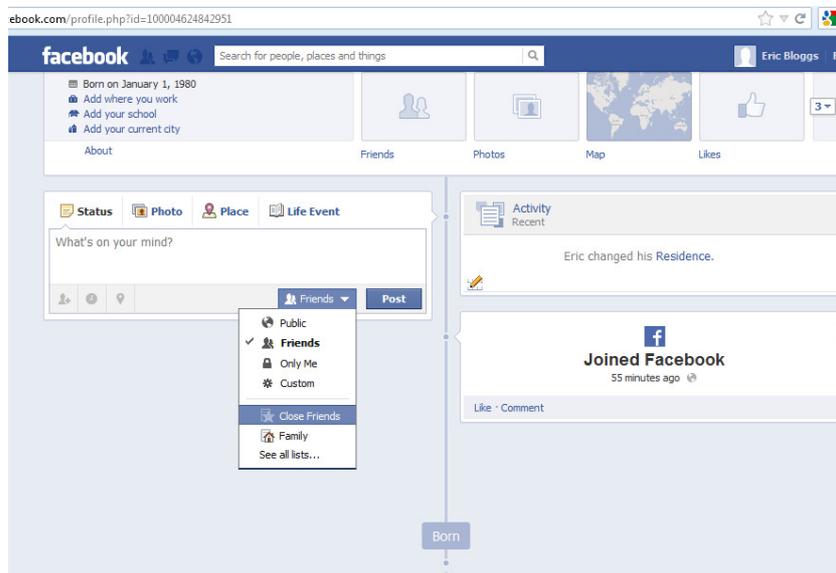
The inline audience selector that appears below status and photo windows you're about to post determines which Facebook users you're sharing with.

The audience selector is shown as a lock on the iPhone Facebook app and as a gear in the service's iPad app. Perhaps Facebook users know about and use this setting, but just as with the service's privacy options, I'll bet a small number of Facebook users are aware of these options, and even less use them.

A look at Facebook's default privacy settings.

Of course Facebook wants you to be easy to contact. The more friends you have, the more money Facebook makes. The fact that some of these "friends" are total strangers does not seem to matter to many users. But it should matter to you.

My social networks -- personal and professional -- are limited to people I have met face-to-face, with two or three exceptions for people I know by reputation. You don't need to go to this extreme to restrict who can contact you on Facebook though.

To prevent total strangers from trying to contact you on Facebook, click Edit Settings to the right of Home button. The default is to let everyone look you up by profile name, e-mail address, and telephone number; and to allow all users to send you friend requests and Facebook messages.


By default Facebook allows <u>everyone</u> to look you up by profile name, e-mail, and phone number, and to send you messages and friend requests. To restrict contacts, change the settings to Friends or Friends of Friends.

Since I'm careful about who I wish to talk to on Facebook, I've changed these settings in my personal account to friends only.

See your profile as others see it

Whether you share your Facebook information with everyone or only friends, it's a good idea to know exactly what you're sharing. The only way to know is to view your public profile. To do so, go to your profile page by clicking your name at the top of the screen, and then click View As.

To change what's on view in your profile, return to the Privacy Settings and click Edit Settings to the right of Timeline and Tagging. You can share posts with everyone or just friends. More options are available for who can see what others post to your profile and posts you're tagged in.
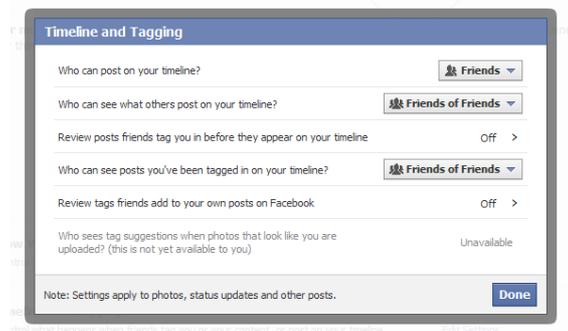
Decide who can view posts others add to your profile and those you're tagged in via Facebook's Profile and Tagging options.

Even if you share only with Friends, Facebook defaults to allowing the friends of the people you tag in a post or photo to view it as well. To prevent the friends of the people you tag from seeing the posts or photos, choose Custom in the drop-down menu next to "Who can see what others post..." and "Who can see posts you've been tagged in...."

In the Custom Privacy window, uncheck "Friends of those tagged" and click Save Changes.
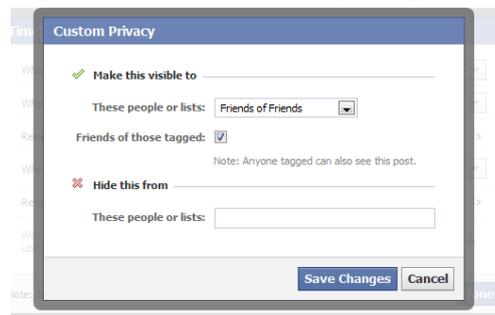
Prevent friends of the people you tag in posts or photos from viewing the material by unchecking "Friends of those tagged" in the Custom Privacy settings.

Review your Facebook app settings

The last three categories on the Privacy Settings page let you manage ads, apps, and sites; block access to your past posts; and block specific people and apps. The first blocking option converts all posts you've shared with the public and friends of friends to friends only (with the exception noted above for friends of the people you've tagged).

To block a person, click Manage Blocking, next to 'Block people and Apps', and enter their name or e-mail address. You can also block app and event invitations from specific people or add them to your restricted list, which shows them only the posts you designate as public. The last setting allows you to prevent an app from contacting you or getting non-public information from you.

Then again, you may simply want to dispose of an app you no longer use. To delete apps, click Edit Settings next to Ads, Apps, and Websites, choose Edit Settings again next to your list of apps, and click the X to the right of the app's listing.

Select Edit to the right of the app to restrict the information the app can access, the audience for the posts the app adds to your wall, and whether the app is able to send you notifications.