## When you register for social networking sites

- Read the privacy policy to find out how the site will handle your personal data.

- Avoid providing excessive personal data. When you create a new account, assess the genuine need to provide each piece of personal data and whether supply of the data is obligatory *(e.g. why should you provide your day and month of birth when the site only wants to impose an age limit on users?)*

- If you want to avoid others to collate information about you from different social networking sites, consider creating different account names. People may easily track you down if you register using the same account name or email address across multiple sites.

ID: stylish guy

ID: handsome guy

ID: gorgeous guy
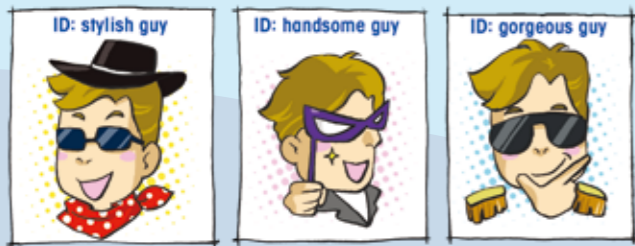
Privacy setting

- Find out how your personal data will be shared in the social networking site. In particular, they may allow multiple levels of sharing which may result in your personal data being revealed to unintended parties. Make sure you understand how it works before posting your data.

- Some sites often change their privacy settings. Keep checking the privacy setting pages to see what kinds of personal data are being shared.

- Do not accept people you do not know, or are unsure of, as your friends.

- If available, set up friend groups to control the access to your personal data by different people.

- Some social networking sites offer third-party applications to users. These applications have different privacy settings and will access different types of personal data from your profile and pass the data to third parties. Make sure you understand the implications before accepting any application.

Your personal data will go public - think before you post

- Once disclosed online, your personal data may be kept permanently and you will no longer have control over who can read it. Do you want any information you may regret later to be available online forever for all to read?
  Think before you post

- You may not want everyone to read your postings. Think what may happen if someone (e.g. for youngsters, potential employers or university admission office) in the future reads things you post today.
  Think before you post

- Picture tells a thousand words – they may be embarrassing or contain information you do not intend to share (company logo in the background or uniform that identifies where you work/study, even name tags or tickets that may give your name away).
  Think before you post

- Treat others the way you would like to be treated. You should seek consent of others before posting their pictures or identifying them in your posting (think about the long term impact on children who cannot give an informed consent now).
  Think before you post

- Even if you only leave fragmented information about yourselves in each site, collectively you may have left a lot of information about you. Others may find ways to collate all those information about you without your knowledge.
  Think before you post

- Social networking sites are not entirely virtual. If you leave too much information of you or your friends (such as your whereabouts), people could find you in the physical world.
  Think before you post

How to protect your personal data – data security and personal safety

- Social networking sites provide a convenient tool to get in touch with one another but are full of malicious links or files. Make sure your anti-virus programme and its virus definition files are up-to-date.

- Social networking sites provide test ground for all sorts of new ideas. Often the privacy side has not been well-considered. So, use new features with cautions.

- Remember to remove accounts in sites that you no longer use or are interested in to reduce the fragmented information you leave in the Internet. Keep a list of accounts you have created so you can remove them later.

- It is difficult to verify information provided by others in the Internet including their true identities, think twice before meeting others you get to know in the Internet, or acceding to their request for information, money or help.

Protecting Online Privacy –
Use Social Networking Sites Smartly

香港個人資料私隱專員公署
Office of the Privacy Commissioner
for Personal Data, Hong Kong