

PRIVACY IN SOCIAL NETWORKING: FACEBOOK

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ABSTRACT

Loop holes, security concerns, stalking, privacy, protection, efficacy, inadequate solutions, blocking and criticism. These are the metaphors I find which are synonymous to Social networking sites. I narrowed the thought process to Facebook as it is the largest growing social networking site which generates revenue of 14 billion dollars and acquired assets worth more than 40 billion dollars. Now who would've imagined 5 ordinary Harvard drop out students: Mark, Andrew, Dustin, Chris and Eduardo created a new age empire which gave them wealth, reputation and dynasty. They sure have everything in life, but we can't ignore the fact that criticism overtakes the latter.

Keywords: Cyber crime, Facebook, Privacy, Phishing. Violation.

I.INTRODUCTION

Facebook, it is one of the foremost social networking sites with 12 million users spanning every nook and corner of God's green earth. Every little thing can't be perfect. Eventually, there has to be a flaw which thwarts the system. Privacy is the most evident flaw as it reached the top notch of criticism. In 2007, Facebook has created counter measures against privacy, but concerns still remain. Active users will know that they never feel safe to use Facebook. To create a user friendly experience, Facebook has initiated various steps to analyze disclosure of data from a computer where a user sits and operates, to the domain where the information is being shared. Protection of data was the primary objective. Now with a click of a button, anyone can access anything in Facebook. It can be a profile, can be a profile picture, and can be a video, rip it can be anything which is in Facebook. From a systems perspective, there are a number of changes that can be made in the domains, both to give the user a reasonable perception of the level of privacy protection available, and to protect against disclosure to intruders.

Facebook enables users to choose their own privacy settings and help choose who can see specific parts of their profile. The website is absolutely free to its users and generates revenue from advertising, such as banner ads. Facebook requires a user's name, a password and a profile picture (user's discretion) to be accessible by everyone. Users can control who sees other information they have shared, as well as who can find them in searches, through their privacy settings.

Facebook thrives research into security and privacy and sees it as a constant and essential part of keeping the Facebook community safe. Communicating personal and important information without any hassles is the main goal. Active research of span software engineering, usability, penetration testing, spam-prevention and detecting and responding to new online threats is quintessential. Modernization, research and development of new code languages and fire walls in the system have helped build new products while reducing the likelihood of many common web vulnerabilities such as Cross Site Scripting and code injection. More immediate challenges, such as protecting Facebook accounts from phishing and malware, require constant research.

1.1 Criticism and controversies involving privacy

1.1.1 Users violating minimum age requirements: This is a hysterical story which is very comical to hear and read. I went to my friend's place and was surprised to see a 2nd grade boy using Facebook and apparently, have more friends than me. I asked him the reason why he chose to create an account in Facebook at such an early age. His reply was "Welcome to the new age, Anna (elder brother)."

1.1.2 Accounts getting hacked: In simple terms, "I hate you, I learn hacking, I hack your account, and tarnish your image."

1.1.3 Addiction: Let's be honest, we're addicted to Facebook. We can sit hours together, just scrolling up and down the time line.

1.1.4 Impact on social being, health and most importantly, the mind: Pretty much self explanatory. The mind is affected the most. The mind is constantly revolving around your post being spread all over Facebook and people commenting on it and sharing it, surely makes it a bad experience. All lead to one thing: Suicides, especially amongst teens.

II. HYPOTHESIS

Research into security and privacy is a constant and essential part of keeping the Facebook community safe and user friendly. Young audience and users are often described as prone to live "open digital lives." Active topics of research including usability, penetration testing, and spam-prevention, detecting and responding to new online threats will positively make Facebook a vulnerable place of social networking.

III.OBJECTIVE

The main objective is "How to create a safer social networking environment in Facebook?" Facebook has over a billion active users and a reported 70k new people joining the social networking site every day. But the real question comes when how carefully do Facebook users and authorities in Facebook consider their online privacy. With Facebook privacy settings changing frequently, users are increasingly in a state of confusion about their privacy. In a security poll conducted by Forbes Magazine, 93% of Facebook's users check out the privacy settings, rather than checking in.

This led to privacy concerns. Stalking, online harassment, friends with strangers, identity thefts, depression etc have been reported over the last few years.

IV.LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the literature and reference for the research has been obtained from Facebook's help pages. Below are the two of Facebook's help pages which actually helped get an insight on the various problems. The best part is solutions are given to every problem, thus making it a bit easy to research. Diving deep is very crucial in a research, as the latter involves fact finding. The best is found in the help pages. Facebook's help pages were very useful. Almost every part of the research has been derived from the help pages.

V.RESEARCH METHOD

5.1.1 Study design

A Qualitative Sampling Method is what has been followed in this research. The aim is to understand from within the subjective reality of the study participants. This will not be achieved through simple and obvious knowledge about a large, representative sample of individuals.

I rather want to reach to a limited number of people who can share their unique slice of reality, so that when put together we can illustrate the range of variation within the study area. Hence, I chose non-probability sampling to the best approach for this research.

5.1.2 Participants and sampling

Statistically and analytically, sampling is the best way to collect information and results.

There are 2 types of sampling:

- Probability sampling
- Non probability sampling

This research qualifies to be under non probability sampling observation. Mass media researchers frequently use non-probability sampling. This is the kind of sampling where all sampling units don't have the equal chance of selection.

The various types of non-probability sampling are:

- Convenience sampling
- Purposive sampling
- Quota sampling
- Snowball sampling
- Volunteer sampling

This research qualifies to be observed under:

- Convenience sampling
- Snow ball sampling.

Why convenience sampling?

- Collection of readily accessible people for participation and study.

(Participants are Facebook friends.)

- Relative ease of access.

(Facebook friends are online and they are easy to access and communicate with. Say and it's done.)

- Exploratory research.

(This research may be used as a base for upcoming researches on the updated versions of the latter topic.)

Why Snow ball sampling?

- Started with a few people who were ready to respond within a short period.
- The participants gave names of whoever are eligible for the research and they in turn gave more names.

Kind-a-sort-of chain reaction had taken place.

Final count of respondents: 71)

5.1.3 Data Collection

5.1.3.1 Privacy Issues

What do we seldom notice?

Straight out of Facebook's Help Pages with a personal touch:

I've narrowed the observations to the most important privacy settings which help maintain privacy. The most important setting to be used is called AUDIENCE SELECTOR. The AUDIENCE SELECTOR lets you select an audience for what you share. The audience can be the whole world, or yourself. I have used capitals for AUDIENCE SELECTOR and CHOOSE YOUR AUDIENCE to mark the importance of these two.

I know that these methods are tried and tested by the best in the industry, but will these help people get a secured access of Facebook? Let's see. One reason I observe is that that many people are wary of uploading their photos or videos to a social networking site like Facebook is because they are concerned about retaining the copyright to their work. There is a major gray area as to who would own the materials that we upload. Someone who might be concerned about this might be a professional photographer or a musician or a model who might want to share their work. Uploading photographs or music is a great way to get a lot of potential friends to notice it, but you might want to think about whether the network could end up owning this material. Another controversy with Facebook is that it could be sharing your private information with third party companies. This is why you are shown a privacy statement when you install an application. The providers of these applications are third party companies and websites who could be able to access your private information such as your address or phone number. There are a number of scammers on social networks who may try to steal or use your personal information; Information that can be used for potential crime such as identity theft or fraud. There are also websites that are set up to appear to look like your favourite social networks in order to steal your password. Once someone has your password they can use it to destroy your profile or send out spam messages and viruses, which could do irreparable damage to your reputation. This is called PHISHING.

5.1.3.2 Troubleshoot Privacy issues:

Time line confusion:

1) Who can see my profile and profile picture?

A) Your profile and profile picture is public. When you add or change your profile picture, it appears in a few different places on Facebook:

- A story will be posted on your Timeline and may show up in your friends' News Feeds.
- The photo will appear in your Profile Pictures album.
- A thumbnail version of the photo will appear next to your name in different places throughout Facebook. This helps friends identify your posts and comments on Facebook.

2) How do I control who can see my contact info on my profile?

A) One can control who can see your contact info right from your profile:

1. Go to your profile and click the Update Info button
2. Find the Contact Info section and click Edit
3. Use the AUDIENCE SELECTOR to the right of each piece of contact info to adjust who you share it with.

3) Who can add me as a friend?

A) By default, anyone on Facebook can add you as a friend. If you'd like to change who can send you friend requests:

1. Click in the top right of any Facebook page and select Settings
2. Click Privacy in the left column
3. Click Edit next to who can send you friend requests?
4. Select an audience from the dropdown menu

4) When I post something, how do I choose who all can see it?

A) You'll find an AUDIENCE SELECTOR tool most places you share status updates, photos and other things you post. Click the tool and select who you want to share something with. The tool remembers the audience you shared with the last time you posted something and uses the same audience when you share again unless you change it. For example, if I choose Public for a post, your next post will also be Public unless you change the audience when you post. This one tool appears in multiple places, such as your privacy shortcuts and privacy settings. When you make a change to the AUDIENCE SELECTOR tool in one place, the change updates the tool everywhere it appears.

The AUDIENCE SELECTOR also appears alongside things you've already shared, so it's clear who can see each post. After you've shared a post, you have the option to change who it's shared with. If you want to change the audience of a post after you've shared it, click the AUDIENCE SELECTOR and select a new audience.

Remember, when you post to another person's Timeline, that person control what audience can view the post. Additionally, anyone who gets tagged in a post may see it, along with their friends.

5) How do I control who can see what's on my profile and time line?

A) Here's an overview of who can see what's on your profile and tools you can use to control what you share on your profile and Timeline.

5.1.4 Overview

- To edit things like places you've lived or your family and relationships, click About below your cover photo, then hover over the info you'd like to change and click Edit. Use the AUDIENCE SELECTOR next to this info to choose who you're sharing it with.
- Anyone can see your public information, which includes your name, profile picture, cover photo, gender, username, user ID (account number), and networks.
- Only you and your friends can post to your Timeline. When you post something, you can control who sees it by using the AUDIENCE SELECTOR. When other people post on your Timeline, you can control who sees it by choosing the audience of the "who can see what others post on your time line" setting.

5.1.5 Tools

- As you edit your info, you can control who sees what by using the AUDIENCE SELECTOR.
- Before photos, posts and app activities that you're tagged in appear on your Timeline; you can approve or dismiss them by turning on Time line review. Keep in mind, you can still be tagged, and the tagged content (ex: photo, post) is shared with the audience the person who posted it selected other places on Facebook (ex: News Feed and search).
- Set an audience for who can see posts that you have been tagged on your time line To see what your profile looks like to other people, use the view as tool.

5.1.6 Most Important settings:

1) Where can I find my privacy settings?

A) Your privacy settings page has a group of general controls for your Facebook account.

To view and adjust your privacy settings:

1. Click in the upper-right corner of any Facebook page
2. Select Settings from the dropdown menu
3. Select Privacy on the left
4. Click a setting (ex: Who can see your future posts?) to edit it

You can also quickly view and adjust some of the most used privacy settings and tools from your Privacy shortcuts at the top right of any Facebook page.

To control the privacy for posts, photos and other stuff you share on your Timeline, you can CHOOSE YOUR AUDIENCE when you post.

2) What is time line review and how do I turn time line review on?

Timeline review lets you choose whether posts you're tagged in appear on your Timeline. Keep in mind that posts you're tagged in can also appear in News Feed, search and other places on Facebook.

When people you're not friends with tag you in a post, they automatically go to Timeline review. If you'd also like to review tags by friends, you can turn on Timeline review for tags from anyone. To turn on Timeline review:

1. Click at the top right of any Facebook page and select Settings
2. In the left column, click Timeline and Tagging
3. Look for the setting Review posts friends tag you in before they appear on your Timeline? and click Edit to the far right
4. Select Enabled from the dropdown menu

Only me setting? :

Only Me: The best way to maintain privacy. Sometimes you might want certain posts visible only to you.

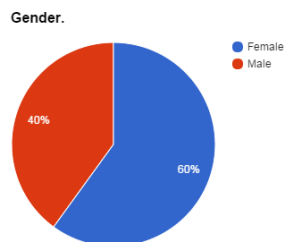
Posts with the Only Me audience will appear on your Timeline and in News Feed but won't be visible to anyone else. If you tag someone in an Only Me post, they will be able to see the post.

5.1.7 WHAT DOES FACEBOOK DO TO KEEP MINORS SAFE?

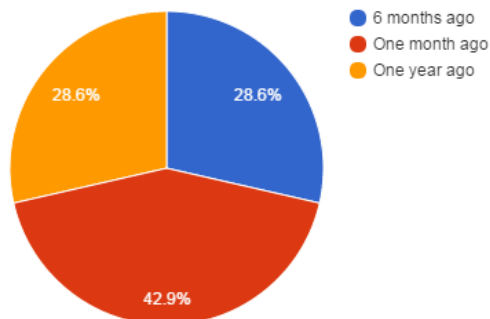
We know that children are likely more advanced than adults and research analyses that a child is more active in Facebook than an adult due to obvious reasons. Facebook worked hard to help keep people on Facebook safe. For minors, they've designed many features to remind them of who they're sharing with and to limit interactions with strangers.

For example, Facebook provides minors with specific education about what it means to post publicly. They also protect sensitive information, such as minors' contact info, school and birthday, from appearing in search to a public audience. Additionally, Facebook takes steps to remind minors that they should only accept friend requests from people they know.

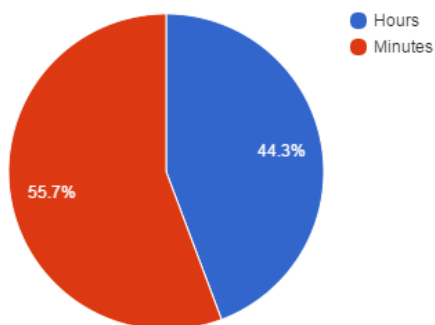
VI. STATISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND DATA ANALYSIS



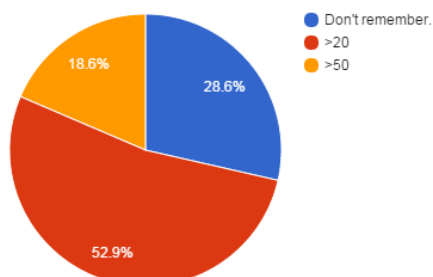
When was the last time you've changed your privacy settings on Face book?



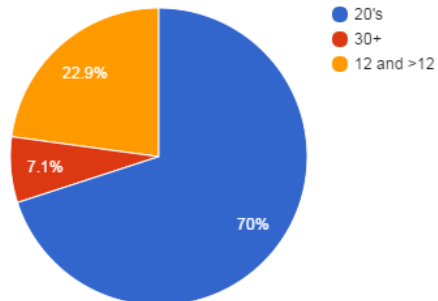
How much time do you spend on Facebook?



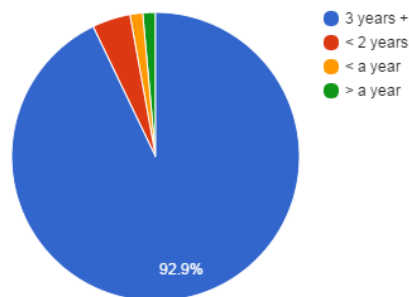
Among your friends on face book, how many have you added without knowing them?



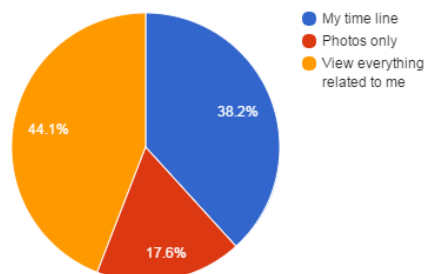
What is your age?



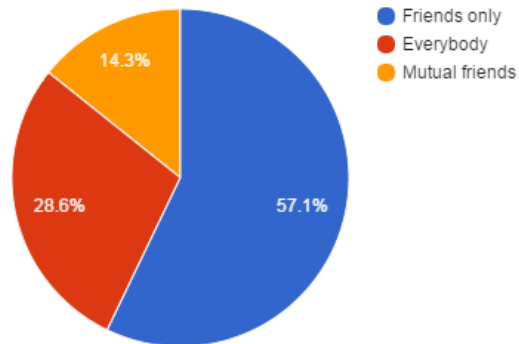
How long have you been a user in face book?



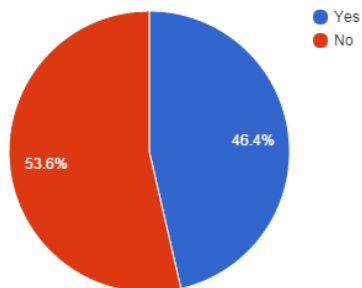
Which privacy settings have you marked as "To friends only"?



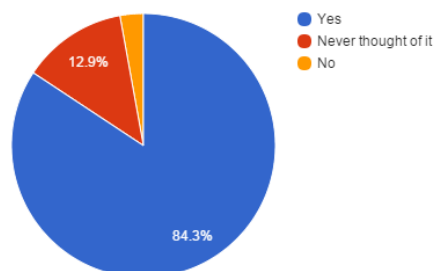
Who are you okay with looking at your face book profile?



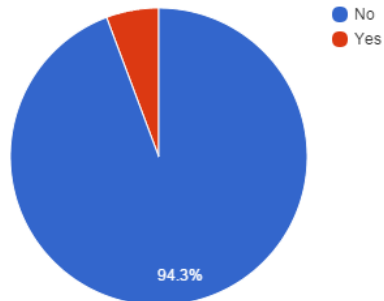
Do you feel safe using face book with the rising cyber crime?



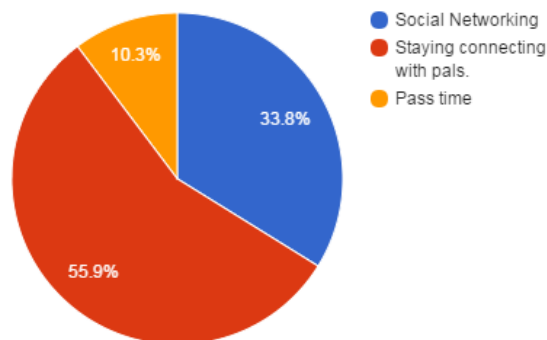
Are you the same personality in real life as you are in face book?



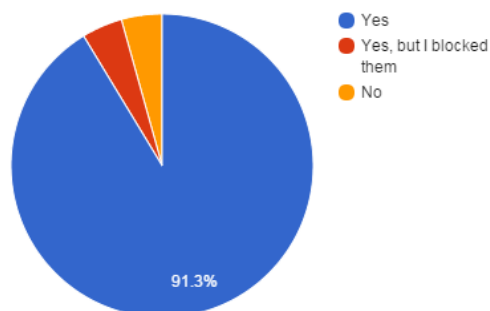
Do you have multiple accounts on face book?



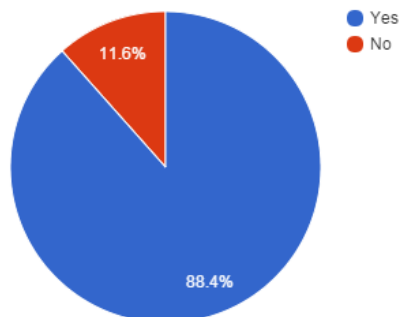
Why did you create a face book account in the first place?



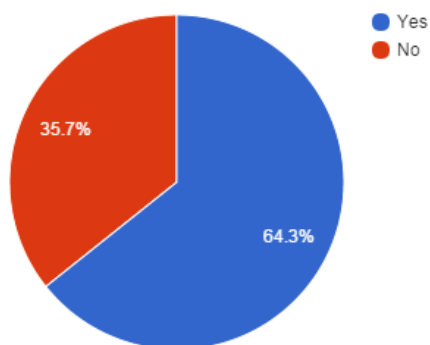
Are you friends with your family members on Face book?



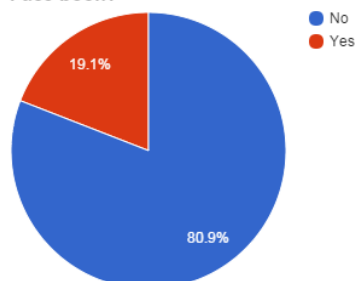
How do you feel about fb's privacy policies?
Are they working well for you?



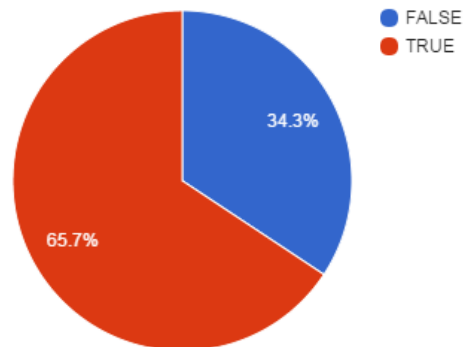
Are relationships growing in face book?



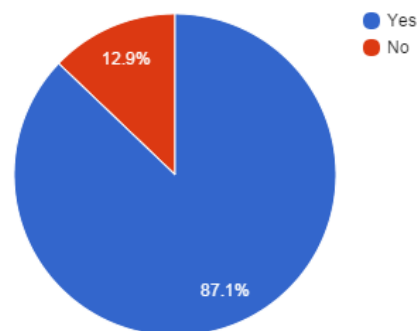
Have you been a victim or witnessed an individual being a victim of 'cyber bullying' over Face book?



Student life without Face book is almost unthinkable. True or false?



Do you ever look at other users Face book profiles?



6.1 Conclusion of the Analysis

With the analysis seen from the pie diagrams, we see that 60% of the respondents are women. 92.3% of the respondents have been active members on Face Book for 3 and more than 3 years.

The research is mainly aimed to find out the loop holes in the privacy section of Face Book. Below are few most important questions and analysis acquired.

Q1) what does the analysis say about “Who are you okay with viewing your profile?”

- 57.1% say “Friends only”

Q2) which privacy settings have you marked to “Your friends only?”

- 44.1% says “Everything related to me.”

Q3) what’s your age?

- 70% are in their 20’s.

Q4) Do you feel safe using face book with rise in cyber crime?

- 53.6% answered “**No.**”

I asked one liners on how to what is their opinion to improve privacy settings in Face Book. The best answers are:

- To view profiles only if they are a friend. 0 stalking.
- Profile pictures that are put “Only Me” should not be visible to others.
- Photo download should be blocked.
- More privacy settings.

After analyzing the results of the analysis, I can conclude by saying that there are privacy settings which are good to curb privacy. But sure are many loopholes in the system too. I hope the analysis paves way for results to curb privacy.

VII.CONCLUSION

In light of the growing popularity of internet among the youth, especially teens and 20's who favour social networking in Face Book, this study provides an overall view about how to safeguard the rising privacy concerns in Face Book. The main objective and question is “How to create a safer social networking environment in Face book?”

Narrowing down and implementing the most important privacy settings like Audience Selector, getting to know the updated Cyber Laws, and using the latest update of the Privacy team in Face Book, the Blue Dinosaur will really help create a safe environment in Face Book, period

The questionnaire survey helped gain good and significant results. Not all are victims of privacy and its concerns. I asked few questions which actually made me understand that not everybody are victims of privacy concerns. For example: 11.6% feel that Face Book's privacy policies aren't working for them. 19.1% have been a victim or witnessed online harassment and cyber bullying. 53.6% don't feel safe using Face Book with the rising cyber crimes.

This research is for those 11.6% and 19.1% people. They certainly have had a bad experience with Face Book and its privacy concerns. The percentile proves that not everyone are attacked and become victims of privacy. But when they do, it leaves a mark on them and their lives, which is a vicious circle.

A penny for my thoughts, the updates by the privacy team at Face Book is the best thing since sliced bread. Making the best of both worlds of Privacy settings, let's make Face Book a secure place of social networking.

VIII.ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my sincere gratitude to the College management, especially the Principal and the Vice Principal for giving me an opportunity to work on this project, thereby enriching my knowledge.

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I also extend my gratitude to others who were directly or indirectly involved in helping me in completing the project.

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