

An introduction to social media

You've probably heard the term social media. What does it mean? It's a collective term for apps or websites that allow registered users to share photos, videos and thoughts with each other.

What is social media?

We use the term **social media** to describe any website or smart device app that people can use to easily share information. That information can include:

- text, such as comments, or even **posts** of your own stories
- photos or other pictures
- video, and
- sound recordings.

Social media is still quite new, but the major social networks have become extremely large. Facebook, for example, has more than two billion active users. Some of the other major social media networks are YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest and WeChat.

The benefits of social media

Social media has become popular because so many people find it useful. Some of the main benefits offered by social media are:

- You can connect with others from all around the world, even using real-time video communications.
- You can **share** information that's important to you with your friends and acquaintances. You can share information such as photos, videos, text messages, news articles and links to websites.



You can Share and Like information posted on social media

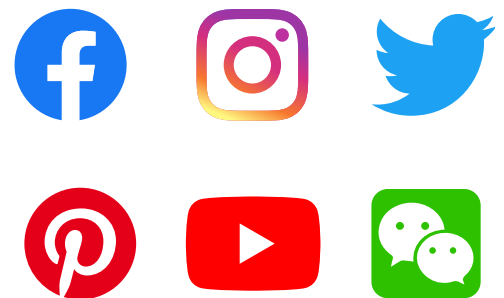
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- You can read similar information from your own friends and others, and react to them by **Liking** or **Commenting** on the things that they have shared.
- Often you can keep up with the news – many social media platforms pass on breaking news faster than even TV stations.

The social media platforms

While social media platforms work in a similar way, they each have a different speciality or purpose.

- **Facebook** is the world's most popular social media platform. You can use it to share just about anything, but mostly your thoughts, photos, videos and content from other sites.
- **YouTube** is for video sharing. Owned by Google, it features everything from the most amateur work through to high quality content from professional producers.
- **Instagram** is designed for sharing photos and video on mobile devices. You can make your account public, or private in order to share your photos with only your friends.
- **Twitter** is for sharing short texts of up to 280 characters in length. Many people use it for following news from the established media.
- **Pinterest** is used to share photos and design ideas.



Social media platforms share text messages, videos, photos and other content

Safety tips for using social media

You should always be careful when using social media to ensure your safety. Here are a few tips:

- Don't share much personal information. Remember, on most platforms millions or even billions of people can see what you've shared, so any private information you share can easily fall into the wrong hands.

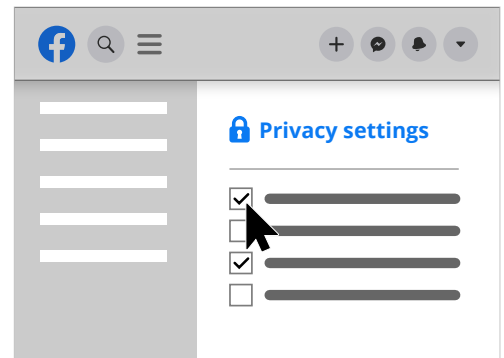


Personal details

Be careful about the information you share

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- The best rule is to never share anything online that you wouldn't want complete strangers to know about you.
- Check the **privacy settings** of your social media accounts to control who can see your posts and what personal information is displayed.
- Watch out for **scammers**. They try to find people's personal information – such as date of birth or home address – on social media and use it to try to create dummy online accounts or even open fake bank accounts.
- There are all kinds of scams, including **Romance** scams or **catfishing**. This is when someone tries to form a relationship with you over social media in the hope of gaining your trust. When they have, they will fake some need for money, drawing on your sympathy.
- Always be a little wary. And never send money to anyone you've met online.
- If you see something suspicious, you should report it to the social media platform that you're on.
- Find out more by visiting the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission's **Scamwatch** website at www.scamwatch.gov.au.



Privacy settings help control who sees your personal information