

# What you need to know about FACEBOOK:

## 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 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 are not monitoring Facebook; however, if information or pictures on a student's account that violate policy are brought to their attention or are reported to them, they will follow up and investigate further.)
- Students are being **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) 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. Instead of a handshake or a “what’s up?” students are now “poking” each other. 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 one’s 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 is a GREAT 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 its 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, 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](http://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 has become 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.
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2006 - Creighton University  
2500 California Plaza  
Omaha, NE 68178

For more information, contact:  
Kathleen McCabe, Director of Peer Education, [kmm17923@creighton.edu](mailto:kmm17923@creighton.edu)