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## Facebook Privacy: 10 Settings Every User Needs To Know

Facebook's privacy settings are extremely detailed, giving you the ability to fine-tune the privacy aspects of almost every little part of your Facebook account. Unfortunately, for most users, this level of micromanagement makes Facebook's privacy settings a convoluted mess.

Even worse, these settings change often; you may think you know everything there is about them, only to be greeted with a completely different layout and a bunch of new options the next time you visit the dreaded Facebook Privacy Settings page.

So, what do you do when you've got over 170 options to choose from? You focus on the most important ones. We've entered Facebook's maze of privacy options and came out on the other side bruised, battered, but with 10 essential settings in our hands. Disregard them at your own peril!

### 1. Sharing on Facebook

Account >  
Privacy Settings  
> Sharing on  
Facebook

	Everyone	Friends of Friends	Friends Only	Other
Your status, photos, and posts				*
Bio and favorite quotations				*
Family and relationships				*
Photos and videos you're tagged in				*
Religious and political views			*	
Birthday			*	
Permission to comment on your posts			*	
Places you check in to [?]				*
Contact information				*

Controlling  
how you  
share content

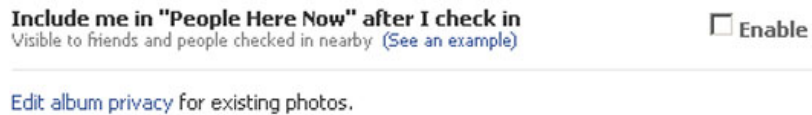
is quite complex and will probably make your head hurt, but it's essential that you take a good look at the settings and decide for yourself what you want to share and with whom.

Facebook gives you the easy way out: You can share content with Everyone, Friends of Friends, or Friends only. However, if you're using lists (see item number eight on this list), you might want to customize the settings and set a certain type of content to be visible to the people on some of your lists, and invisible to others. For example, only my close friends can see all my photos, while business associates can see just a few.

It's important to note the "Preview my Profile" option that lets you see your profile as someone else would. Setting all the options just right can sometimes be tricky. When in doubt, defer to this option.

## 2. Existing Photos

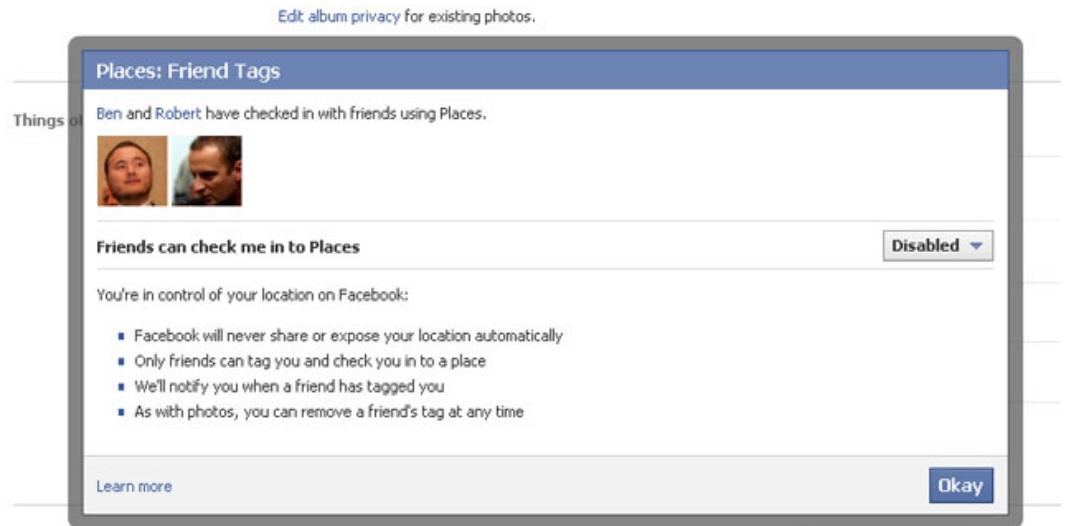
Account > Privacy Settings > Sharing on Facebook > Customize Settings > Edit album privacy for existing photos



Settings for sharing content on Facebook can be treacherous as they don't always apply to all your existing photos. With this setting, you can go through your old albums and change the privacy setting for each one, including your Wall Photos.

## 3. Checking In to Places

Account > Privacy Settings > Sharing on Facebook > Customize Settings > Friends can check me in to Places



Another setting under Sharing on Facebook often goes unnoticed, and it can be very important, as it lets your friends check you in to Places. Having someone else telling the world where you are can be unpleasant and even dangerous in some cases. If you want to avoid it, disable this feature.

## 4. Connecting on Facebook

Account > Privacy Settings > Connecting on Facebook








Privacy settings for sharing content on Facebook are separated from the settings for connecting, which basically means sharing information about you: Your photo, gender, age, education, hometown etc.

Furthermore, these settings determine how people can find you on Facebook. Can they do it simply by searching for your name? Can anyone add you as a friend, and send you a message?

Choose Your Privacy Settings > Connecting on Facebook

[← Back to Privacy](#) [Preview My Profile](#)

Your name, profile picture, gender and networks are visible to everyone ([learn more](#)). We also recommend setting the other basic settings below open to everyone so friends can find and connect with you.

 <b>Search for you on Facebook</b>	This lets friends and family find you in Facebook search results. Set this to Everyone or you could miss friend requests.	<a href="#">Friends Only</a>
 <b>Send you friend requests</b>	This lets you receive friend requests. Set this to Everyone to avoid missing out on chances to connect with people you know.	<a href="#">Friends of Friends</a>
 <b>Send you messages</b>	This helps you make sure you know people before adding them as friends.	<a href="#">Friends of Friends</a>
 <b>See your friend list</b>	This lets you connect with people based on friends you have in common. Your friend list is always available to applications and your connections to friends may be visible elsewhere.	<a href="#">Everyone</a>
 <b>See your education and work</b>	This helps you connect with classmates and colleagues, and discover new professional opportunities.	<a href="#">Friends Only</a>
 <b>See your current city and hometown</b>	This helps you get in touch with neighbors and old friends. Note: you can separately control how you share places you check in to on the main privacy page.	<a href="#">Everyone</a>
 <b>See your likes, activities and other connections</b>	This lets you express your interests and experiences, and connect with people who like the same things you do.	<a href="#">Everyone</a>

Here, you can change those settings to Friends Only, Friends of Friends, Everyone or — in some cases — customize them. For example, if you get pestered by too many anonymous messages, you might consider letting only your friends send them. Be careful: If you set everything to the strictest available privacy setting, people may have a harder time finding you on Facebook.

## 5. Apps You Use

Account > Privacy  
Settings > Apps and  
Websites > Apps You  
Use

This is another painful setting as it usually means wading through dozens of apps and either removing them or editing the privacy settings for each of them individually.

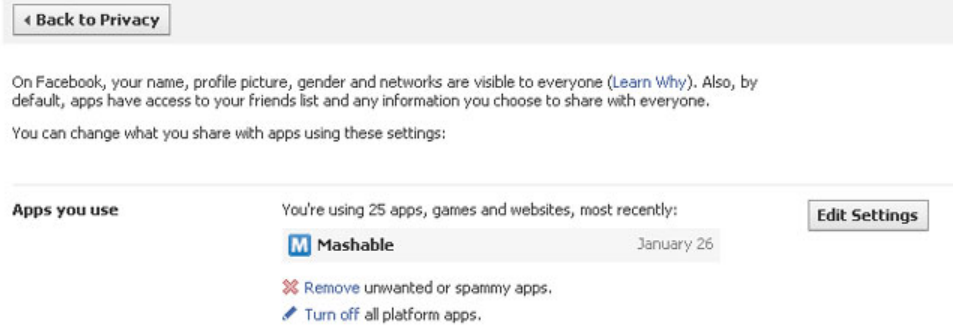
We suggest removing all of the apps you're not using (hint: If you can't remember what it is, you probably don't need it), and carefully reviewing the permissions you've given each individual app. For example, some apps like to post on your Wall even though they don't require the option to function.

## 6. Instant Personalization

Account > Privacy  
Settings > Apps and  
Websites > Instant  
Personalization

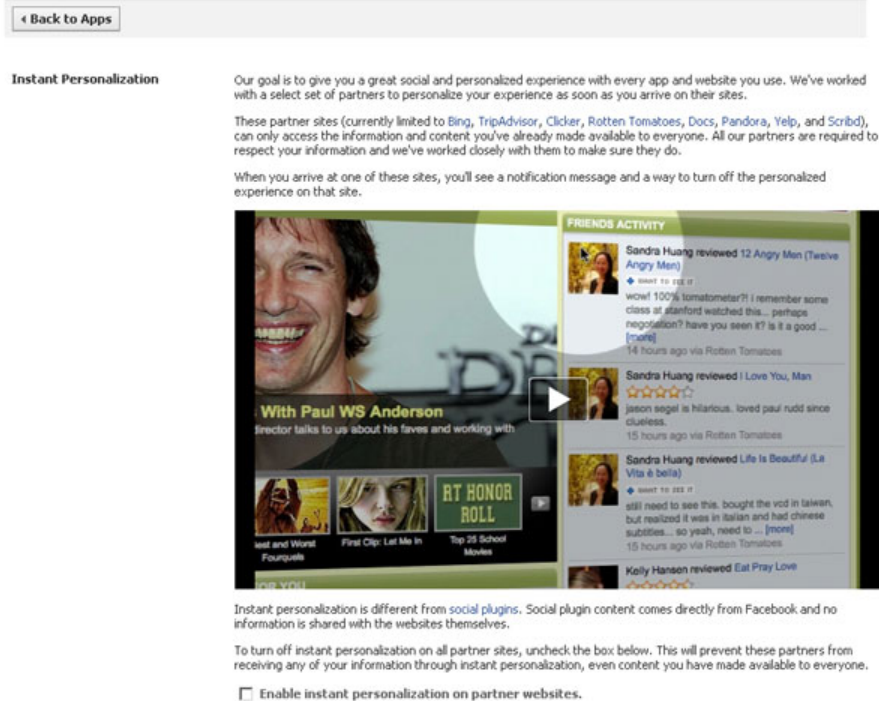
We've covered this setting in-depth before. For detailed info on what it does, check out this article. Essentially, it lets third-party websites personalize your experience, which can be nice, but it also allows access to your personal data.

### Choose Your Privacy Settings > Apps, Games and Websites



Facebook interface for 'Apps You Use' settings. At the top is a 'Back to Privacy' button. Below is a heading 'Apps you use' and a sub-heading 'You're using 25 apps, games and websites, most recently:'. A list shows 'Mashable' as the most recent app, used on 'January 26'. Below the app name are two options: 'Remove unwanted or spammy apps.' and 'Turn off all platform apps.'. An 'Edit Settings' button is in the top right corner.

### Choose Your Privacy Settings > Instant Personalization



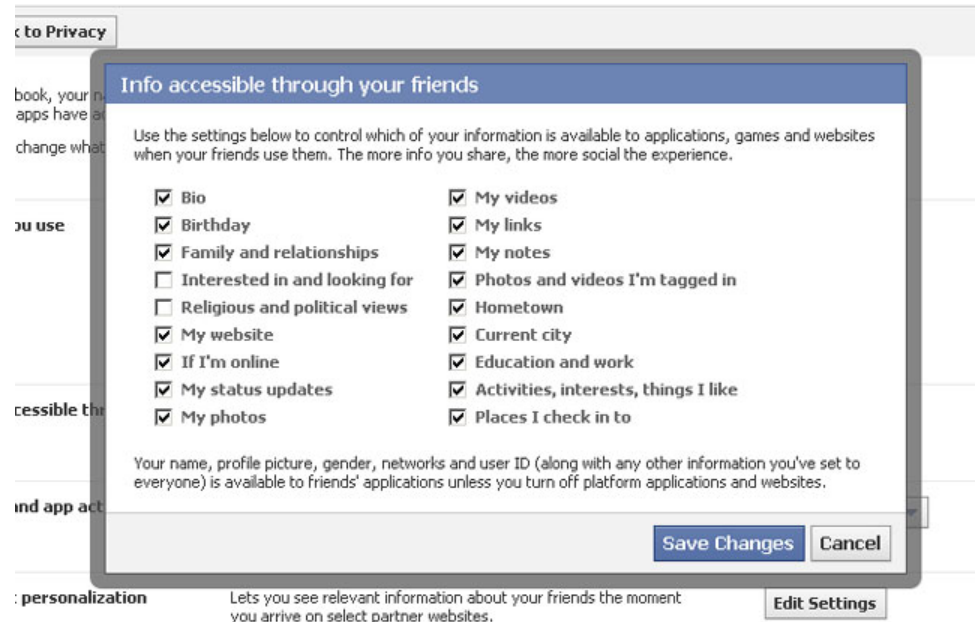
Facebook interface for 'Instant Personalization' settings. At the top is a 'Back to Apps' button. Below is a heading 'Instant Personalization' and a paragraph explaining the goal: 'Our goal is to give you a great social and personalized experience with every app and website you use. We've worked with a select set of partners to personalize your experience as soon as you arrive on their sites.' Another paragraph lists partner sites: 'These partner sites (currently limited to Bing, TripAdvisor, Clicker, Rotten Tomatoes, Docs, Pandora, Yelp, and Scribd), can only access the information and content you've already made available to everyone. All our partners are required to respect your information and we've worked closely with them to make sure they do.' A third paragraph states: 'When you arrive at one of these sites, you'll see a notification message and a way to turn off the personalized experience on that site.' Below this is a screenshot of a Facebook news feed showing a post about Paul WS Anderson and a 'FRIENDS ACTIVITY' section with reviews from Sandra Huang and Kelly Hansen. At the bottom is a checkbox: 'Enable instant personalization on partner websites.' with a note: 'Instant personalization is different from social plugins. Social plugin content comes directly from Facebook and no information is shared with the websites themselves. To turn off instant personalization on all partner sites, uncheck the box below. This will prevent these partners from receiving any of your information through instant personalization, even content you have made available to everyone.'

You can opt-out of Instant Personalization on individual third-party websites, such as Pandora, simply by clicking on “No Thanks” when asked about it. However, on Facebook you can completely disable it by leaving the checkbox before “Enable instant personalization on partner websites” unchecked.

## 7. Info Accessible to Your Friends

Account > Privacy Settings > Apps and Websites > Info accessible through your friends

This is where Facebook’s privacy settings get really tricky, and most users don’t realize it. No matter how tight your privacy settings are, you’re still sharing some of your content and info with a group of people, even if it’s only your closest friends. However, what you share with them doesn’t necessarily end with them, especially if *their* privacy settings are lax. In the end, your friends might be sharing your info with third-party services, which is precisely what you want to avoid.



With this setting, you can set exactly what information is available to apps and websites if your friends use them.

## 8. Public Search

Account > Privacy Settings > Apps and Websites > Public Search

When someone searches for you on a search engine, they might get a preview of your public profile which, in some cases, can be very revealing. If you don’t want that to happen, you should turn this option off.



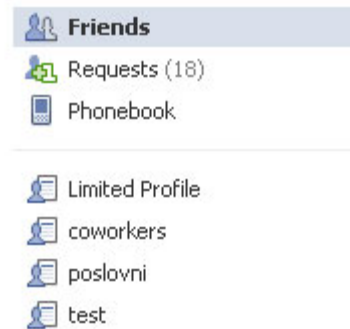
## 9. Friend Lists

Friends > Edit Friends > Create a List

If you're a typical Facebook user, you have 130 friends, and it's very likely that you don't want to share every detail of your life with all of these people.

This is where Friend Lists come into play. By creating lists of — for example — your family members, close friends and business acquaintances, you can finely tune the details you want to share with each list (as explained above).

Creating lists can be a bit dull at first, especially if you start doing it when you already have hundreds of friends, but once you set them up, it's easy to add each new friend to a particular list.

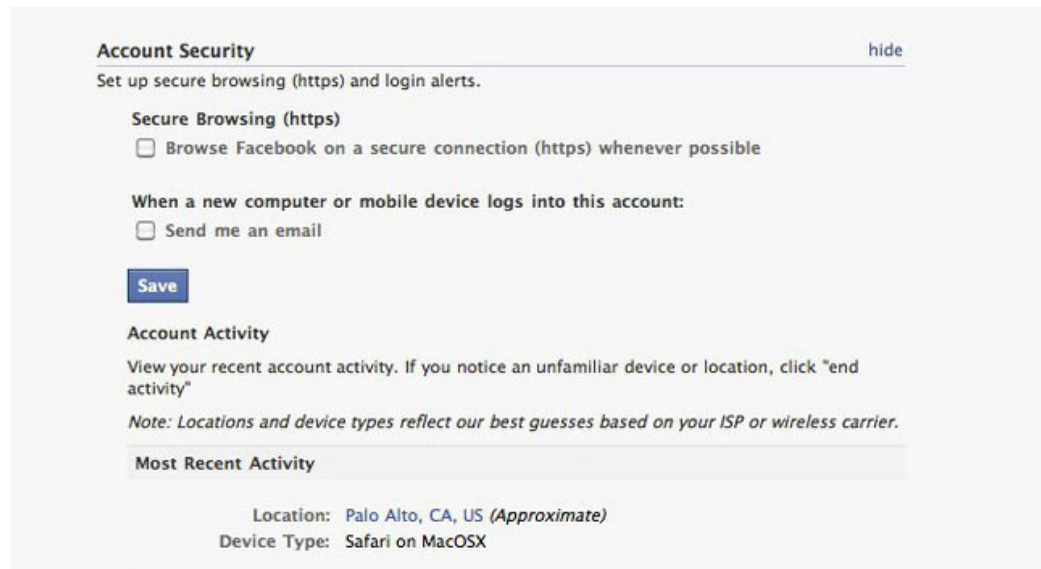


## 10. Enabling HTTPS

Account >  
Account Settings  
> Account  
Security >  
Secure Browsing  
(HTTPS)

The last setting we'd like to highlight has more to do with security than privacy. However, if someone hacks

into your account or sniffs your data (which can be easily done with an app like Firesheep), all the privacy settings in the world won't help you protect it.



Recently, Facebook started introducing HTTPS support, which makes it a lot harder for someone connected to the same network to sniff your password and other data. It makes Facebook a bit slower, and certain features don't work yet, but we highly recommend it as HTTPS is essential to online security on all web services, not just Facebook.

If the option isn't available to you just yet, don't worry. Facebook promised it will gradually roll out the feature in the following weeks.

**Source:** *"Facebook Privacy: 10 Settings Every User Needs To Know"*  
by Stand Schroeder, published on Mashable.

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