

## Social Media

While social media like *Facebook*, *LinkedIn*, *Twitter*, and much more are important tools for connecting and staying current with friends, it goes against the number one Internet rule – **protect yourself from identity theft**. Participating in online social networking sites leaves a trail of personal information that can make stealing your identity a lot easier. Each of us should take responsibility for protecting ourselves. Here are some tips that you, as parents, can use to help protect your family.

1. Protect yourself from sharing **Too Much Information**. Never share your social security number, your birth date, home address, or phone number. Protect all of your passwords, PIN numbers, bank accounts, and credit card information. Never share the state where you were born. Do not enter information you do not want shared with others.
2. Check out the settings and configuration of privacy sections on the social networks. Customize your information so it's harder to break.
3. Network sites can be falsified and hide someone's identity online. Check out the site you are joining to see if it is honest.
4. Avoid accidentally sharing personal details on the social network site. Be aware of what information you share that might make you a target for others who read your site.
5. Learn how network sites can use your information. Social network sites are free to use. This means they are making their money by advertising to you. This also means they are collecting information about you.
6. The person with the most 'friends' on Facebook is not the winner of the social networking contest. Many of the people you 'friend' can be strangers who now have access to your information. Before you 'friend' someone, check them out.