

SOCIAL MEDIA: Are we safe?

Written by Editorial Staff

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People are friendly by nature. We want to connect and meet others - it is in our genetic makeup. In today's tech-friendly world, social media has become the gathering place for the masses. Social media brings people together. It opens conversations. It gives you a voice.

Social media can also be a very dangerous platform. And it is getting worse every day.

With the popularity of computers, online bill paying and other technological wizardry, people are becoming more and more cautious in protecting their personal information. We go to great lengths to hide our bank account information and shield our social security numbers from prying eyes.

While protecting that information is certainly a smart thing to do, what about protecting ourselves? This is where we fail miserably.

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, are fabulous ways to stay connected to friends and family and to reconnect with long-lost buddies. But these electronic meeting places also make users vulnerable.

Anything you post on a social media website could potentially be made public. Once you upload a picture or type in a description of last weekend's events, that information belongs to the social media website. Users have lost control. And, with the sophisticated search engines and malicious data-stealing Trojans, even the most trusted and secure social networks are vulnerable.

Even scarier, your information is not all that is at risk. A recent report on the Dallas NBC affiliate, KXAS, detailed just how easy it is for someone to track your every move — and find your exact location — by hacking into a Facebook or Twitter upload. After a KXAS reporter posted to her Twitter account, it took another reporter mere seconds to discover she was sitting in a local restaurant. It is a stalker's paradise.

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For those who dabble in the social media world, it is worth your time to visit www.icanstalku.com, where the website authors detail stalking concerns and show how easy it is to find someone - and how to protect yourself.

Social media isn't going away anytime soon - and neither will the dangers. It is time we all pay attention.