

# Facebook: friend or foe?

*“They will share your personal information with third parties”*

**F**ifty million people use Facebook. Yet, as **ANNA KOSMANOVSKI** found out, a seemingly harmless online habit can have widespread ramifications.

Please don't make the mistake of thinking that Facebook is just some harmless fun.

To be specific, let's look at Facebook and your career. These two words may not seem inextricably linked: after all, what would Facebook have to do with your career, unless you're aspiring for a grad job at the Facebook head office?

Yet, my dear friend, you should be aware that your information on Facebook is not as secure as you think.

For example, should you want to get rid of your account, as I did, you will realise that this process is not as easy as you may think.

For starters, there's no such thing on Facebook as deleting your account. You can only de-activate it. Simply, Facebook will de-activate, suspend or even 'put to sleep' your account but your account will always still

be there.

People find this out many ways. I know that when I 'deleted', or so I thought, my account I was shocked to realise that my photographs and things relating to my account were still online.

Another thing that can happen, as I found out, is that you can go through the whole de-activation process, in which Facebook laments that, "we'll be sad to see you go" only to realise that this process is nothing more than smoke and mirrors.

Should you 'accidentally' sign into your account you will realise that it still signs in like you never left and everything on there is still exactly the same. Facebook freezes your life, presuming that your departure will not last long.

Facebook has 50 million users, hardly any option for deleting your account permanently and they are blatant about the fact that they will share your personal information with third parties, usually advertisers.

Facebook, for uni students, should be considered with caution. One Oxford university dean has admitted




using 'spies' to look at the profiles of potential student intakes.

Another reason why Facebook can actually be problematic relates to the issue of identity theft. Some people seem to make it even easier for potential culprits, volunteering their full name,

date of birth, photograph, email address, place of birth and so on.

A wise funk singer called Narls Barkley has some good advice for students who post incriminating material on Facebook in his great song *Crazy*. Simply, "Think twice... That's my only advice."

That is my advice too, dear reader. Think twice before posting that boozy weekend picture on your profile that may be cemented forever in internet search engines, and cookies and caches. Think twice before calling in sick for work because of a cheap drinks night at an Irish pub

where images of blazing drunken glory are tagged of you. Think twice, seriously I think, think twice before even creating a Facebook page, if you're in the fortunate position to have never made on. 



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