



## Social Media Safety

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### Facebook

As more and more youth participate in social media networks, counties and clubs may consider expanding communications to that arena, as well. Facebook is one of the most popular social media platforms among youth, and a good way to connect with older 4-H members, volunteers and families who may not be engaged by traditional newsletters and email.

Many counties in Wisconsin are already using Facebook pages to post meeting dates, share agendas and notes, get quick feedback from older members, families and volunteers and promote events taking place in the county. Facebook can also be an excellent place to link to news articles about your county or club and post about the successes and achievements of groups and members in your county.

However, Facebook (or other social media sites) should not be your only outlet for club or county 4-H information. Keep in mind that youth need to be at least 13 years old to create Facebook accounts, and some parents may not allow their children to access social networking sites. Also, many families around Wisconsin may not have the resources—computers, or consistent access to high-speed internet—necessary to use Facebook frequently. Facebook should be used as a supplement to your current communication strategy.

If you're interested in creating a Facebook presence for your club or county, be sure to keep these safety and privacy guidelines in mind as you get started.

### Pages, Groups and Profiles

There are a few options for creating outreach sites on Facebook: profiles, groups and fan pages. Each form works well for communicating with older members, families and volunteers, but there are some key differences between them. Administrators are encouraged to choose whichever option best fits their needs.

- Profiles
  - Created for an individual, not a group or organization.
  - Many counties around Wisconsin have created individual profiles for their 4-H programs (for example, "Chris Clover Jackson" and "Chris Clover Monroe" are the personal profiles for Jackson and Monroe County 4-H programs.) Creating these profiles means you don't have to include as much personal information about yourself.
  - Profiles can be used as the primary means of communication—you can "friend" members of your county or club programs.
    - When you "friend" 4-H members or volunteers, all of their activity will show up on your Facebook home page and you will be able to see all the information they include in their profiles. This is not necessarily a problem, but may give you access to more information than you're comfortable with.
  - Giving more than one person access to a profile requires sharing your email address and password.
  - Individual profiles, whether personal or "Chris Clover", are required to create, update and monitor Facebook groups and fan pages.
- Groups
  - Groups are meant to act as a forum for people to keep up with and share news about an organization or common interest
  - Default settings allow group members to post comments, photo and video to the group's page, but administrators can change settings to restrict the amount of access members have.

- One of the biggest downsides of creating a group is that members have to navigate to that page to see updates, whereas with fan pages the updates show up in each fan's Facebook home page.
- Groups have security levels: Private, Closed and Open. It is up to the administrators to decide which is appropriate for them.
  - Private groups: people request membership and are approved or denied by administrators; nonmembers cannot see any group content.
  - Closed groups: people must request membership, and administrators may approve or deny; group information is visible to nonmembers.
  - Open groups: people can join the group without permission; nonmembers can see all group content.
- Fan Pages
  - Fan pages can be created for communities, businesses, nonprofits, musicians and more.
  - Default settings allow fans to post comments, photos and video to the fan page, but administrators can change settings to restrict the amount of access members have.
  - Updates to a fan page show up in each fan's News Feed, on the Facebook home page.
  - Pages can have unlimited administrators without sharing emails or passwords, but each administrator must have a personal profile.

No matter which type of communication (page, profile or group), anything created under the name of Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development must adhere to the 4-H name and emblem policies, which can be found here: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h/resources/policies/symbols.cfm>.

It is also a good idea to include behavior guidelines on your page, including consequences for breaking them. Consulting with members and adult leaders to come up with behavior rules for the page (for example, no foul language, no bullying, do not tag members in photos without permission) sets up a system for self-monitoring and also educates users about appropriate use and online decision-making.

## **Administration**

Every Facebook page must have an administrator, someone in charge of adding content, updating information and monitoring page activity. Administrators can be added or removed at any time. When creating a page for a club or county, keep these suggestions in mind:

- Choose administrators who will be reliable, update frequently and take the page seriously.
- Having more than one administrator can help share the responsibility and make the job of keeping the page updated a lot easier. Multiple administrators also reduce the risk that communications will be interpreted as inappropriate.
- Administrators are responsible for monitoring content—including photos, videos and comments posted on the page's wall—and potentially deleting anything inappropriate. This means no nudity, profanity, references to drugs or alcohol, violence, or mean or derogatory comments.
- In order to create or update a Facebook page, administrators must first create personal profiles. Choose people who will be comfortable with linking their personal profiles to the page, and also who do not have any objectionable material on their profiles.

## **Information: How much is too much?**

Parents can sometimes be wary of allowing their children to create online profiles, and understandably so: posting personal information online increases your chances of being involved with a range of negative online behaviors, from identity theft to cyberbullying. But rather than keeping youth away from technology, 4-H Facebook pages can be used to teach responsible, cautious, courteous online behavior.

While it is up to users to decide what to include in personal profiles, there are some pieces of information that make you more vulnerable to online risks: full names, phone numbers, addresses, birthdays (with year), instant messenger screen names and email addresses can be risky. But rather than staying away from social networking sites entirely,

consider changing your profile's privacy settings so only trusted friends can see personal information, or don't fill in some of these fields.

### **Photos and videos**

- Only post photos or videos of youth and adults who have SIGNED PHOTO RELEASES.
- Don't include identifying information in captions
  - Do not include last names, ages, schools and locations
- Do not tag youth members in Facebook photos or videos
  - It is advisable to restrict users' ability to tag themselves and others in photos or videos.
- All photos and videos posted to Facebook must be clean and appropriate: no nudity, profanity, questionable hand signs, real or implied violence, drugs/alcohol or derogatory comments.
- It is recommended that you restrict users' ability to post photos and videos directly to your page and instead encourage people to send them to the page's administrator for approval.
  - The administrator can then choose whether or not to post the photo or video (with credit for origin) to the page. When deciding whether to approve photos, keep in mind that any youth must have a signed release before his or her likeness can go up on the page.

### **Comments**

Facebook page users will be able to post items to the page's wall and comments in response to other posts. On occasion, "spam" comments will show up on a page; they should be deleted. Page administrators need to be prepared to delete offensive or inappropriate comments and posts when necessary. Sometimes a member may post an honest criticism, something that doesn't shine the best light on a program but is a real concern; while instinct may be to delete that comment, it can sometimes be helpful to post in response with information on what you are doing to address the issue. Ultimately, the decision whether to delete or keep and respond to a comment is up to the administrator; do what is in the best interest of the program.

For more information on Facebook safety, visit [www.facebook.com/help/safety](http://www.facebook.com/help/safety). Wisconsin 4-H can be found on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/wisconsin4h](http://www.facebook.com/wisconsin4h).