TERMS OF SERVICE

When you sign up to a social networking site like Facebook, YouTube or Twitter, you have to agree to the Terms of Service. Here are some important things you should know about what you're agreeing to.

Age of the User

Users of Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have to be at least 13 years of age. If you are under 13 years of age, you are not covered by the Terms of Service at all. This may also mean that you don't get any of the protections or rights specified in the Terms of Service.

You cannot submit copyrighted content

You cannot submit anything as content that you don't have the rights to. For more information about copyright, see our fact sheet on copyright.

You must provide correct information.

Facebook requires that all your information be up to date and accurate. Twitter and YouTube doesn't specifically state this but all three websites have rules against pretending to be other people, and/or having multiple accounts.

Who owns the content you post?

Technically, you still own everything that you put on Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. However, by agreeing to their Terms of Service, you have granted them license to do whatever they want with your content. This means that agreeing to the Terms of Service gives them (and sometimes other users) the right to copy, modify, and publish your content.

The websites reserve the right to censor or remove your content whenever they want.

Who has access to your information?

Your information may be visible to anyone.

The default setting for Facebook, YouTube and Twitter is to have content made public. This means that unless you change your privacy settings, all the content or comments you post will instantly be able to be seen by anyone on the internet.

On Facebook, anything that you publish as "public" will be available to the whole world, even to people who aren't using Facebook.

Even if you don't publicly publish your content, the social networking sites and third parties can anonymously look at the content, your online behavior, and your personal profile information. All three websites analyse your private data and usage habits. Sometimes this is done to provide you with "targeted ads," which advertise specific products and services that are more likely to be interesting to you.

Your information remains online for a long time

Facebook now allows for the deletion of your Facebook page. This is different from deactivating it, which only temporarily makes it inaccessible. For all three websites, even after you've "deleted" your account, there's no guarantee that all your content disappears—copies of it could exist on backups, or might already have been downloaded by other parties.

Banned behaviour

All of the websites have rules that ban cyber bullying, pornography and illegal activities.

This information was last reviewed on 10 April 2012. This factsheet provides information about the law in NSW. It does not provide legal advice. If you need advice, or if you would like information about the law in a state or territory other than NSW, please send us a Lawmail at http://www.lawstuff.org.au

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