

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Facebook: Social skills 101

Introduction

Facebook is where my son reads about his beloved K9 dogs and where he follows posts from our local police force. Facebook Messenger.app is how he chats with friends, including some he hasn't seen for years. It's where he keeps up on our family news — and watches what I say about him.

He likes Facebook, but Facebook can be a tricky neighborhood. Many neurotypical teens are familiar with pornography, but most aren't going to share it with their grandparents. Facebook's standards for acceptable adult content are broad, and few Facebook users know how their Facebook activity is shared and who can see it. Although the risks are hard to estimate, every Guide worries about sexual predators. Both Guides and Explorers may find themselves spending too much time checking Facebook on their phone.

Facebook videos can also use a lot of phone data. Facebook isn't as data-hungry as YouTube or Snapchat, but it can be expensive for an Explorer on a low capacity data plan. As a general rule, if an Explorer does not have WiFi at home, they need to have at least 1GB of data a month in their phone plan and, even then, they should be careful about video use.

For all of these reasons Facebook use is a big step for an Explorer. The minimum age for Facebook use in the US is 13 years old, but for Explorers will likely be several years older before they start. They'll also have passed through the first three stages of smartphone use, from using calendars and notes on a very restricted device to doing messaging and email and more (See A five level scale). Facebook use is a level 4 step, just one step before unlimited web access.

Facebook has its risks, but these days it's the establishment social network. Most users are over 25, and Facebook is increasingly careful about how it does business. Facebook's money now comes from the same big advertisers that dominate network TV, and they don't like controversy. Facebook is much easier for a Guide to monitor than most alternatives. If an Explorer is going to do a social network with Guide assistance, Facebook is the best choice. Facebook is one way an Explorer can

develop essential skills with a Guide's assistance.

In this chapter I'll review about ways to make Facebook somewhat safer for an Explorer to use. I won't go into the details of using Facebook though — that's the subject of many books and Facebook's own tutorials and online help. Please know that Facebook changes all the time, anything I write here will be partly incorrect when you read it.

Facebook Social versus Facebook Messenger

Facebook became popular as an advertising supported service that did three things on a personal computer web browser. It supported sharing stories and images among Friends and family, it allowed users to subscribe to Page updates from businesses and celebrities (Likes), and it let non-Friends correspond in Groups.

Facebook has evolved since then. When the iPhone and Android phones came along Facebook went from a web application to a "native" app running on smartphones. These days Android and iPhone is where Facebook's heart is.

Facebook has long supported private messages between individuals, but in the past few years they've emphasize use of a separate product called Facebook Messenger. For an Explorer using an iPhone or Android phone Messenger.app and Facebook.app act like two different products. An Explorer with a Facebook account can use Messenger.app alone, Facebook.app alone, or both of them. For the purposes of this book I'll use Facebook to refer to the traditional service and Messenger.app to refer to the texting application. In this chapter I'll discuss Facebook the social application, I discuss Facebook Messenger in Messaging: The Facebook Way.

Facebook - Predators and Porn

Social media is risky for everyone. Many professionals either abstain from Facebook, use a pseudonym, or read but never interact. So why are you reading a chapter about Facebook use?

You're reading this because many teens and adults want to use Facebook, and it's easier to help an Explorer with Facebook than most alternatives. Facebook is also hard to avoid; it's the primary way many of us learn about community news, events, and social activities. For many users Facebook is their main source of local and national news.

Facebook is also a social experience. For most Facebook users it's only one of many social experiences, but many Explorers have more limited social opportunities. For an Explorer Facebook's social connections can be particularly powerful.

Facebook can be an opportunity to learn social interactions with a Guide's help.

Especially if an Explorer uses pseudonym (see below) an Explorer can make social mistakes that a Guide can help manage. Many Explorers only learn through experience, including making mistakes.

Assuming an Explorer is going to use Facebook, what are the risks to watch for in addition to the social traps that every Facebook user experiences?

I know of two related risks that can be a special problem for Explorers and other vulnerable users: sexual predators and pornography.

I've been unable to find any academic or police data on sexual predator activity on Facebook. A 2012 Reuters article¹ tells us we have read that Facebook uses AI type software to detect predator activity and that "The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children processed 3,638 reports of online "enticement" of children by adults last year, down from 4,053 in 2010 and 5,759 in 2009." Although only a fraction of incidents are likely reported the downward trend is encouraging. Facebook is probably relatively risky territory for predators, though even one can do a lot of damage². Every Guide will need to measure this risk for both male and female Explorers, but as social networks go Facebook is likely safer and easier to monitor than most.

Pornography is a more complex problem. Facebook's March 2016 terms of service³ say "You will not post content that: is hate speech, threatening, or pornographic; incites violence; or contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence." In practice Facebook relies entirely on investigating complaints, it doesn't actively seek exceptions. I've seen Facebook investigators decline to act on (closed) Group content that flagrantly violated the terms of service. I'll say a bit more about the challenges of "Closed Groups" below.

Whatever Facebook may claim, as of 2016 anyone actively seeking pornography on Facebook will find it, often by information exchanged at school and through Facebook itself. Of course most teens and adults won't bother, if they have unrestricted web access they will find a vast array of pornography elsewhere. Facebook pornography is really only a problem for users with Facebook access but restricted web access, including children and many Explorers.

Some Guides will, because of personal values or Explorer issues, want to monitor and block extended access to Facebook pornography (there's no way to prevent initial access). Other Guides and Explorers may not be concerned by pornography alone. Unfortunately there are two related problems that favor monitoring and restriction.

One problem is that Facebook shares a lot of data among Friends, including an Explorer's Friends, Groups⁴, and Likes — not to mention their posts and comments. An Explorer may unwittingly share Facebook pornography with grandparents, siblings, employers, case workers, and friends.

Another problem is that nobody creates pornography as a charitable enterprise. Facebook pornography has to make money, and since it's technically banned it can't rely on the usual advertising or game revenue. Facebook pornography has

only a few ways to make money, including inducing Explorers to install ransomware⁵ and other forms of malware.

Until an Explorer advances to unrestricted web access, it's probably a good idea to monitor for pornography delivered through Facebook Groups, Friends, and Pages and to work with an Explorer to remove the offending items. A Guide may choose to report issues to Facebook, though the results can be disappointing.

Creating an Explorer's Facebook account

The first step in setting up an Explorer's Facebook account doesn't involve technology. The first step is getting informed consent and setting expectations. Unless an Explorer is already at Level 5, and a Guide is only providing technical support, an Explorer should know that their Guide will be monitoring Facebook use. As I'll describe below, that monitoring can be more or less invasive. Depending on an Explorer's temperament and understanding this may also be a time to talk about risky behaviors and things to watch for, but for many Explorers learning will happen with experience. I like to send my Explorers a summary of these discussions as email. It helps most people, Guides and Explorers, to both hear and read this kind of information.

Once the ground rules are understood, it's time to do the technical work.

Facebook makes it easy to setup a new account, particularly for Messenger.app alone. A user can launch Messenger.app, enter their smartphone number, and follow the prompts. Many Explorers can do this on their own; I've seen an Explorer who lost Facebook access simply setup a new account using their smartphone number.

For the our purposes however I recommend a Guide setup an Explorer's Facebook account using a web browser like Chrome and not provide a phone number. I'll explain why below.

Before the Guide begins, they'll need to know five things: the Explorer's first and last name, a birthdate, gender, password and an email address. The birthdate and gender are straightforward. The password should be unique and "strong", as described in Credentials: usernames and passwords. Be sure to save these credentials in a safe place. Unless an Explorer is moving to full independence (Level 5) they should not know this password. They can use Facebook on their smartphone without knowing, and they are not going to resume a password or give it to someone if they don't know it.

The name(s) and email address take more consideration.

I recommend that most Explorers use an alias (pseudonym) rather than their real name. It's easy for an Explorer to make a public mistake on Facebook. If an Explorer has a distinctive real name it may be easy to trace that mistake back to them.

There's a problem with this recommendation - Facebook's policy document says: "The name you use should be the name your friends call you in real life". Facebook doesn't approve of aliases; if Facebook learns a customer has an assumed name they may shut the account. If for some reason you need to recover an account that's been stolen, you won't get much help if it uses an alias.

Even knowing of these problems I still recommend an Explorer use a pseudonym or alias. It should be something they like and it shouldn't be too distinctive. For some Explorers a first and middle name may work well. I think the safety features of an alias outweigh the disadvantages; just be aware that Facebook will not approve.

The next decision is what email address to use. Facebook uses email addresses for two things. It sends email notices of activity to the email address and it uses the email address to manage password changes and security notices. The activity emails aren't very useful given mobile app notifications, so I recommend turning off email notifications (see below). That leaves password changes and security notices. Do you want them to go an email address the Explorer uses, or an address that the Guide uses for the Explorer?

I reviewed this question in You may want to add another email address. Whoever owns the email address will have control over the Explorer's Facebook account. If an Explorer is "Level 5" (full independence) they may manage these emails. For most Explorers however I recommend use of an email address that's managed by a Guide on behalf of an Explorer. This means that a Guide can cut-off an Explorer's Facebook access by changing their password, even if the Guide does not have access to the Explorer's smartphone. In a worst case scenario ownership of this address means a Guide can close an Explorer's Facebook account without their consent.

Most Explorers learn by direct experience rather than imagining future consequences. It would not be surprising if a Guide had to cutoff Facebook access a few times before an Explorer learns their way around. For many Explorers this will be part of the experiential journey towards independence.

Configuring an Explorer's Facebook account

You've created your Explorer's Facebook account. Congratulations! Now you're ready to configure your Explorer's account. The standard settings are too public, you're going to want to tighten things up. For this work you'll be working with Facebook settings using Chrome or another web browser and you'll use an Explorer's Facebook credentials.

Facebook rearranges it's user interface fairly frequently, but it's kept the same address for settings for many years. You can enter www.facebook.com/settings in your browser to go to settings. Just login using the Explorer's credentials.

I recommend the following settings. Facebook changes these options every few months, but the general principles haven't changed for years:

General

Email: Remove Facebook email routing. This is a little used feature and there's no real point to having this extra email address.

Security

Trusted Contacts: These are people who can help with access to account - most do 3. Guide and 2 others.

Legacy Contact: Guide or family member with account control in the event of death or disability.

Privacy

Who can see my stuff? Limit to Friends. Periodically limit past posts to Friends to eliminate any Public posts.

Who can contact me? Either Friends or Friends of Friends.

Who can look me up? Friends look up by email address or phone number, no search engine links.

Timeline and Tagging

Who can add things to my timeline? Friends.

Who can see things on my timeline? Friends.

How can I manage tags people add and tagging suggestions? Review tags On and Friends.

Manage Blocking

Only as needed - can block persons and apps including messages here if necessary.

Notifications

Disable all Email except account related notifications. As discussed above security and account related emails will go to an address managed by a Guide on behalf of the Explorer.

Followers

Friends only. This is a rarely used and advanced feature.

Apps

Apps, Websites and Plugins: Disabled.

Apps Others Use: Uncheck all.

After this Setup work the next step is to add Friends, usually the Guide will be a Friend but also include trusted friends and family. Until an Explorer has learned their way around Facebook it's best to choose people who will tolerate mistakes. A Guide may also add an Explorer to a few Groups and "Like" a few Pages of interest.

Installing and configuring Facebook.app on iPhone and Android

Creating and configuring an Explorer's Facebook account takes some work. The good news is that it's relatively simple to install Facebook.app from the Apple or Google (Play) App stores

After installation the Explorer's credentials need to be entered. For most Explorers a Guide will do this by launching Facebook.app and entering data when requested (see iPhone variation below). The typical Explorer does not need to know their Facebook password, Facebook.app will connect for them.

Beyond initial setup there are many customizations that can be made to Facebook either using Facebook.app or Facebook on a web browser. Most Facebook users never touch these but there three worth looking at.

In Facebook.app's "More" screen choose Settings then Account Settings. Now inspect the Videos and Photos, Sound and Location settings. *Videos and Photos Autoplay should be set to "On Wi-Fi Connections Only" to reduce data use.* Location should be set to "While Using" and there's no need to keep Location History or Nearby Friends enabled. Under Sounds you can turn off In-App Sound if you like.

If your Explorer has a limited data plan you may need to disable Facebook use over cellular — though if they also don't have easy Wi-Fi access then Facebook isn't very useful. On the iPhone this is done in Cellular Settings and on Android it's done in _____

There's an optional additional Facebook setup step on the iPhone. In iPhone Settings there's a place to enter Facebook username and password. This can bring Facebook Events and Contact information into the iPhone. If an Explorer's credentials are entered here before Facebook.app is installed the app is supposed to use them, but this has never been very reliable. For most Explorer's this extra complexity is a nice to have feature that can be enabled if desired.

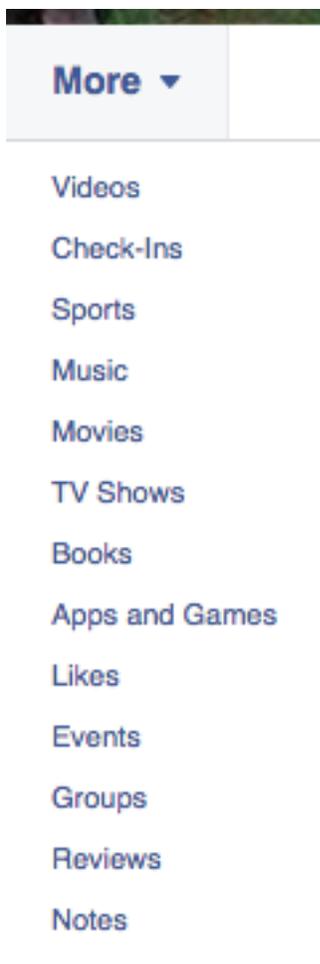
Monitoring an Explorer's Facebook use

For most Explorers a ten minute weekly review is enough — though if problems are found it will take more time. There are two ways to do a review - one is a light review that any Friend can do, the other is an in depth review that requires logging into Facebook with the Explorer credentials. Both kinds of reviews are most easily

done using Chrome or another web browser.

The **light review** can be done by a Guide who has a Friend relationship to an Explorer. A typical light review will include:

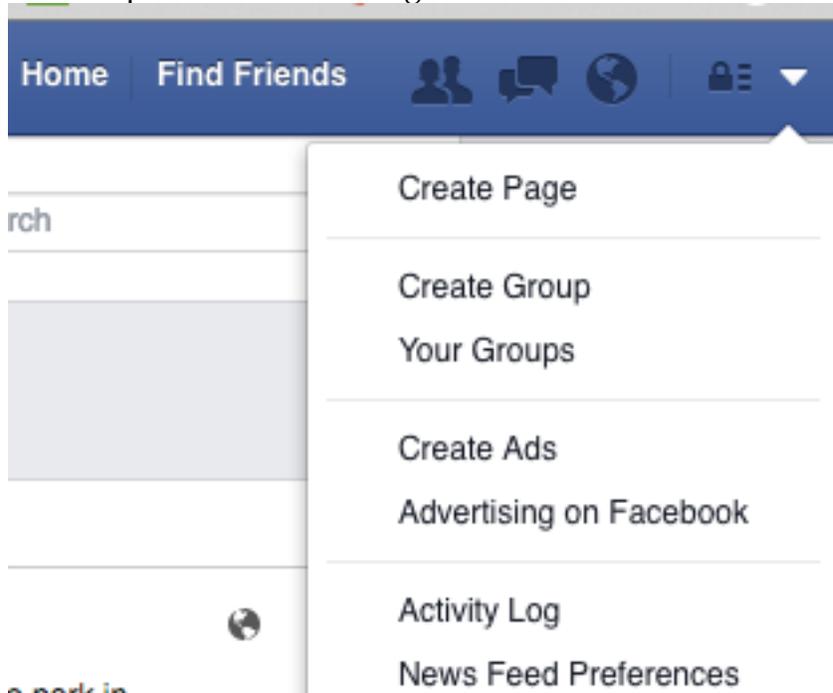
1. Review Explorer's "home" page Timeline including the posts that appear there.
2. Review Friends — looking particularly for unexpected images. The "Recently Added" view of Friends is good for an update. An unrecognized Friend may require further investigation.
3. Review Photos for any inappropriate shared images.
4. Review a selection of items in the "More" menu, particularly Groups (will only show Public Groups), Likes, Videos and Check-ins. Explorers may accumulate thousands of "Likes" though, so that review will be limited.



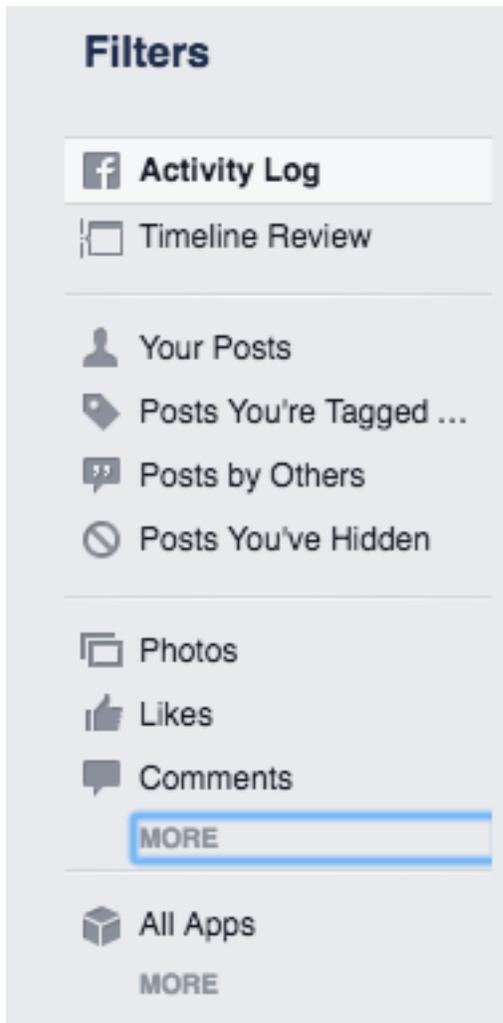
The **Detailed Review** requires a Guide to login to Facebook using the Explorer's credentials. This is easiest if an Guide is using Chrome's People menu as described in Guiding with Chrome browser user switching.

The Detailed Review is invasive. It's even more of an intrusion than monitoring an Explorer's email. If it's needed it should be done respectfully.

Once a Guide is using Facebook with the Explorer's credentials a detailed review begins with the Activity Log (we discuss Facebook Messenger review in Messaging: The Facebook Way). In March of 2016 the Activity Log is found in a subtle drop down from the right side of Facebook's control menu as seen below.



From this Screen you'll see the Activity Log, click it to see a screen with items to review, and if you click the MORE item you'll see, well, more things:



Between this screen and the “MORE” items a full review will typically include:

1. Activity Log: Shows all activity. Scan this quickly from current back to activity you’ve already reviewed.
2. Timeline Review: This is usually empty, it only shows posts that are waiting to be approved. I only mention it because it can be confusing. A Guide will directly view an Explorer’s timeline in a later step.
3. Your Posts, Posts You’re Tagged ... Likes ... Comments: Reviewing all of these typical takes a minute or two.
4. MORE menu items: Friends, Videos Watched, Following, Groups, Search, Saved: Most of these items take a few seconds to review. Groups is special though, and it deserves a mention of its own.

Groups are a particularly important part of an invasive review. Groups are usually “Closed”, people must apply to join and only members can see posts and members. Sometimes Groups are “secret”, they can’t be found by searching Facebook. Groups are often used by sports teams and other organizations, but Groups are also used for illegal activities and pornography.

Groups need an extra review step. In addition to the Activity Log view a Guide

will want to switch to the Explorer's Groups screen⁶ Pay particular attention to Discover⁷, at this time there's no way to hide Facebook's "discoveries"⁸ but it's good to know what's being suggested.

A full detailed review takes around 10 minutes.

Managing Facebook use: time caps and pulling the switch

Many Explorers will get into some kind of trouble using Facebook. Maybe they've shared too many private details, or they're harassing a friend, or they're spending too much time on the phone, or they're sending money to someone, or even interacting with a potential predator.

Some trouble isn't all bad. Trouble is how most of us, both Guides and Explorers, learn things. Sometimes trouble is an educational opportunity. Sometimes trouble is why Explorers have Guides.

Sometimes trouble requires an intervention. Guides should be used to working with Explorers, including work on problem behaviors. The full range of educational and behavioral responses to Explorer issues is the topic of many books. I'm not going to try to cover all the ways Guides help Explorers with behavioral issues, but I will discuss some of the technical options relevant to the smartphone in general and Facebook use in particular.

The first thing to know is that a Guide can't restrict use of Facebook features, with Facebook is an all or nothing proposition. A Guide may increase monitoring frequency and review privacy settings (see Configuring an Explorer's Facebook account), but they can't limit an Explorer's access to Closed Groups or block comments to public Pages.

So if an Explorer is in Facebook trouble, and educational interventions are either ineffective or inappropriate, the Guide may need to pause Facebook use, or even permanently delete a Facebook account.

There are 3 ways to temporarily disable Facebook use. If a Guide has physical access to the Explorer's phone they can delete Facebook.app. Of course an Explorer can then simply restore the app, or even use Facebook's app-free web interface on the smartphone. It may be necessary to step back from Level 4 (Facebook, some app installation, some web access) to Level 3 (no app installation, limited web access) as described in Safety and the smartphone and Restrictions, Controls and Password management.

A second method works if an Explorer does not know their Facebook password and the Facebook password reset email address goes to the Guide. In this case a Guide can use Chrome to log into the Explorer's account and change the Explorer's Facebook password while also choosing the 'logout on all devices' option. That will end Explorer access. When it's time to try Facebook again a Guide can switch back to the prior password. A Guide will often have to reenter this password on the

Explorer's phone to get things working again. As always, write these passwords down.

The third approach to disabling Facebook use isn't very practical, but I'll mention it to be complete. A Guide, working with a legal Guardian, can cancel mobile services for the Explorer's phone. This is obviously a drastic and not very useful measure, but it's good to keep it in mind.

In some cases a Guide and Explorer may choose to start over with a new Facebook account and perhaps a new name. In Facebook Security Settings⁹ there's an option to deactivate an account. In time Facebook will remove the Explorer's data, but it will become invisible immediately.

Facebook - the key points

Facebook is a Level 4 to Level 5 item. It's a big step for most Explorers, but it's also a learning opportunity. Although Facebook is complex, most people don't see that. They just use it.

Facebook is more "Guide-Compatible" than many competing social networks and online communities. It helps that it can be used with a desktop web browser like Chrome.

For a Level 4 Explorer I recommend that a Guide create and configure the Explorer's Facebook account. A Guide will own the email address associated with the Explorer's account and most Explorers will not know the account password. In most cases, contrary to Facebook policy, an Explorer should not use their real name.

A Guide can monitor Facebook use through a "light" review available to all Explorer Friends, or with an "detailed" review that uses the Explorer's credentials.

Over time many Explorers will move to full independence and take ownership and responsibility for their credentials and account.

¹ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-internet-predators-idUSBRE86B05G20120712>

² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/9275731/Facebook-sex-predator-jailed-and-banned-from-using-the-site.html>

³ <https://www.facebook.com/terms>

⁴ In theory only Public Groups. In practice information on closed groups can leak out as well.

⁵ Ransomware encrypts a user's storage device and demands cash to make user data available. As of 2016 it's a very profitable business.

⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/?category=groups>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/?category=discover>

⁸ There used to be a way to disable “Suggestions”, but at time of writing that’s gone. Perhaps it will return.

⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/settings?tab=security>