The

SCOTTISH
adoption

Guide to Facebook Privacy

child and family centred approachable
lifelong caring Safe hands
accessible non-judgemental/accepting
professional dynamic personal

Facebook and your Families Privacy

Scottish Adoption has assembled this comprehensive guide to each part of Facebook's Privacy Settings page (accessible via the menu that drops down when you select the downward arrow at the top right of your Facebook page) to help you navigate your way through various options. Using this guide will help you understand the settings and what you are sharing with whom.
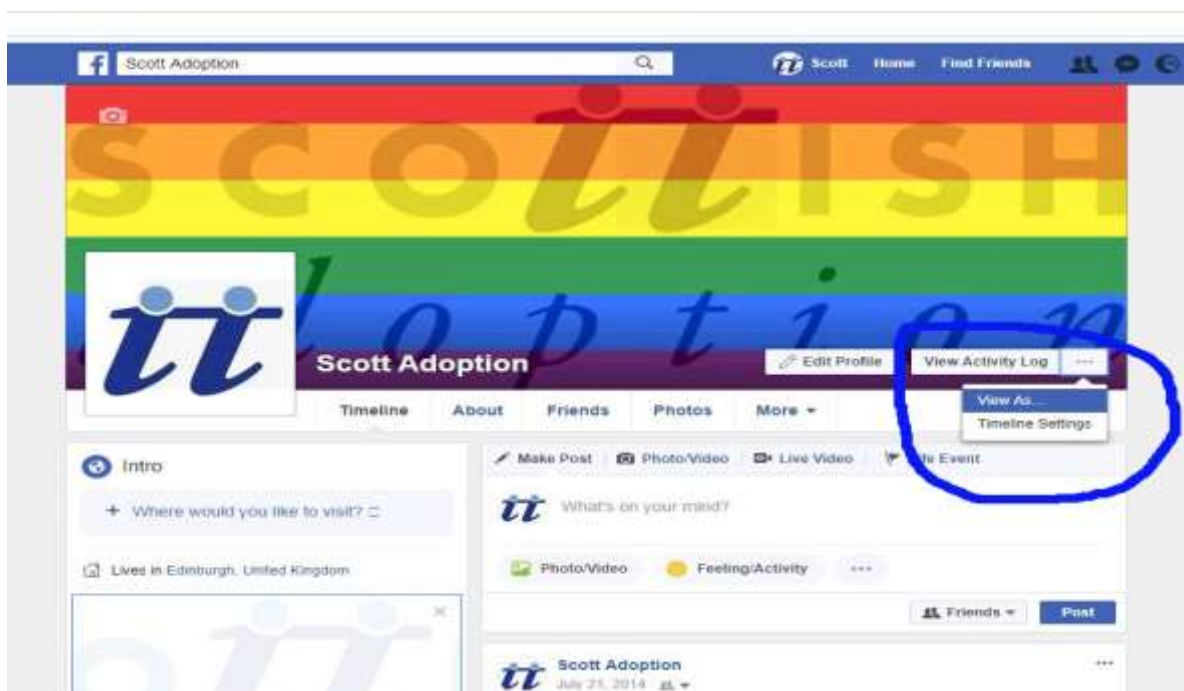
Facebook's privacy settings are confusing by design, often hiding similar settings in different menus and defaulting to unnerving levels of sharing. *Anyone joining Facebook will only share their posts with friends and family, unless they explicitly choose to make their information open to everyone online. This new change will **not** affect its existing account holders so if you have set up an account before May 2014, you will need to check your settings.*

Ensuring that you share the right information with the right people can be difficult. Luckily, you can take control of your own privacy quickly once you know what you are looking for.

In this guide, you will find a reference for each section of Facebook's Privacy settings with a brief description of what to look for, along with notable settings that you should be aware of.

Although there is no consensus on how much privacy websites offer their users, this much is reasonably clear: for the most part it is the users themselves who are responsible for their own privacy.

To see what information from your profile can be seen by others click on the three dots next to 'View Activity log' on your profile page and go to 'View As'. This will show you what people can see when they search for your profile. It will also let you be aware of what needs to be changed with your own privacy settings. We recommend you do this weekly/fortnightly to keep on top of any changes facebook has imposed.

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How your Information Becomes Public

Facebook user information is available to those looking for it in one of two ways:

1. Publically posted information accessible by anyone with a computer and an Internet connection.
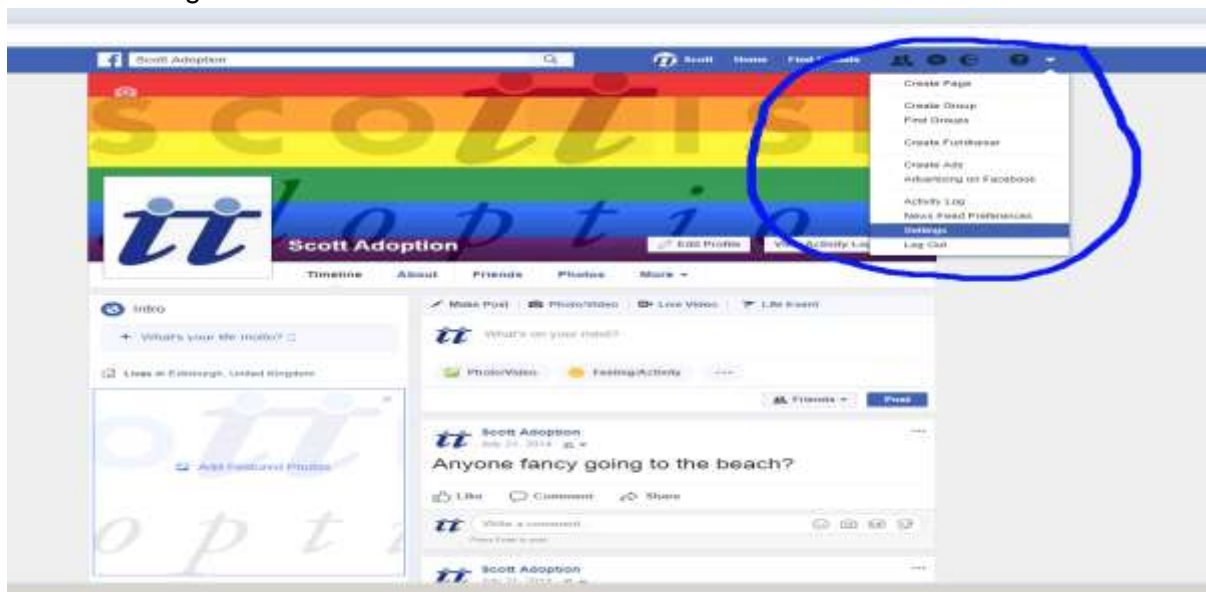2. Private information you allow access to when you sign up for certain apps or services.

Any post or profile information you choose to share with the public on Facebook is out there for anyone to look up. If you think this sounds harmless, think again. It is possible to collect info you have made public using different social networking sites to construct a precise, almost real-time data stream about places you visit and your activities.

Every profile and cover/banner image that you upload to Facebook becomes available to the public regardless of your privacy settings. This is important to remember. Every time you add a profile or cover photo to your page it is automatically stored in an album with the previous profile and cover photos that you have used and all of these can accessed by the public. To prevent this it is recommended that you delete the photographs from these albums every time you add a new profile or cover image and always be aware of who is also in the profile or cover picture, they may not want their image made public either.
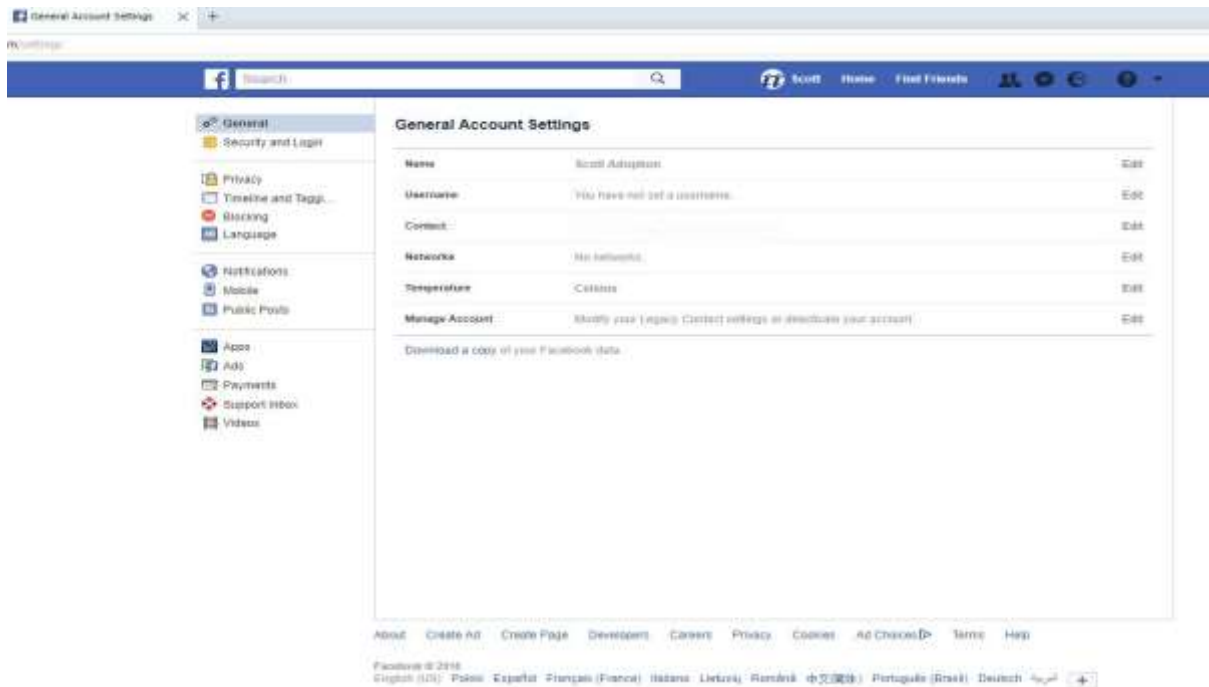
Facebook believe that the better you understand who can see the things you share, the better your experience on Facebook can be and we believe this is the case. **Keep secure online and you can enjoy social media.**

Facebook state on their website that "We continue to strive toward three main goals: "bringing controls in context where you share, helping you understand what appears where as you use Facebook and providing tools to help you act on content you don't like."
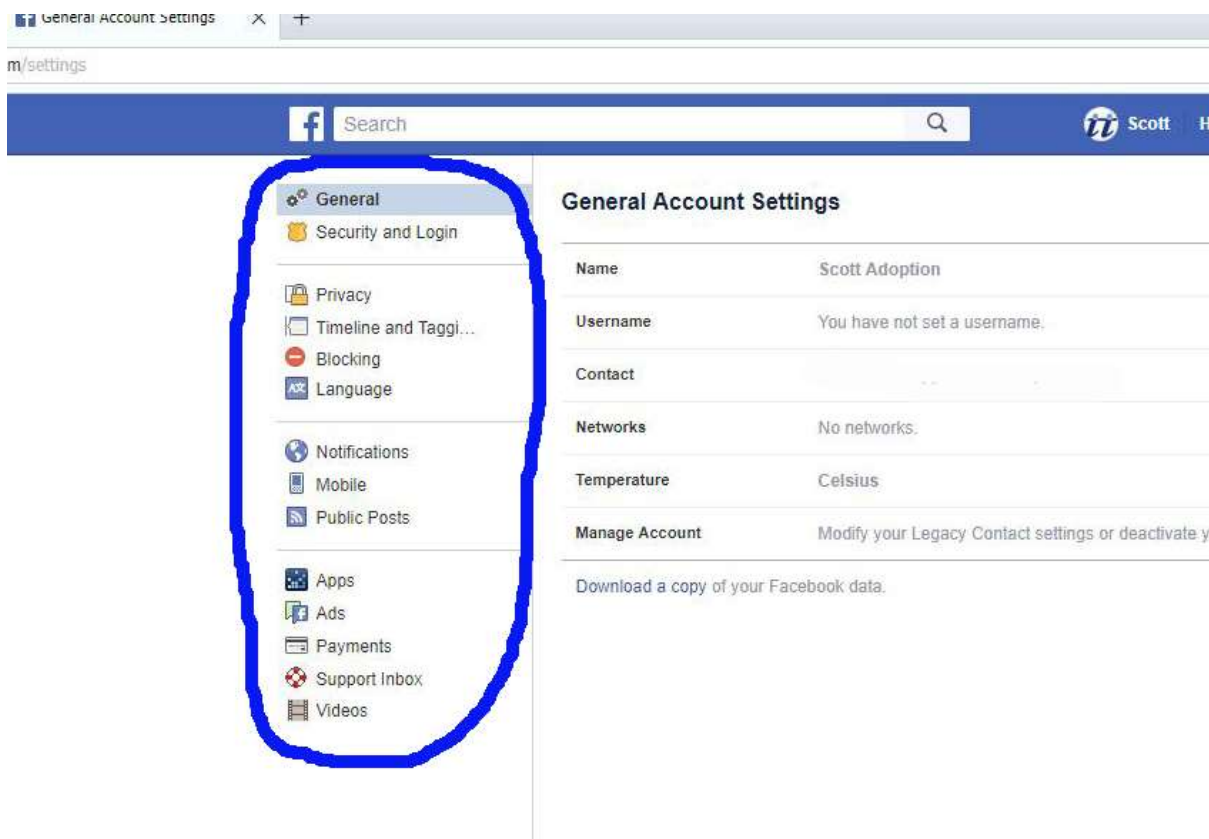
Up until now, if you wanted to change your privacy and timeline settings on Facebook you would need to stop what you were doing and navigate through a separate set of pages. Now, for key settings, you go to the toolbar, click on the downward pointing arrow, and choose Settings.

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Clicking on Settings will take you to this page

We recommend you go through all of the sub sections under the Settings section and mark everything as tight as it can be. Your friends will still be able to see your posts and interact with you under these settings but you will not be open to strangers getting in touch and them seeing your posts, photographs and videos.

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Default Privacy

Your default privacy setting is the first thing you will see on your privacy settings page. It is also the most important item on the page, since it controls who can and cannot see content that you post automatically. Facebook provides three options here:

1. **Public** Let's anyone see your new posts
2. **Friends** limits access to your content to people you are friends with
3. **Custom** permits you to take a more detailed approach to your privacy settings
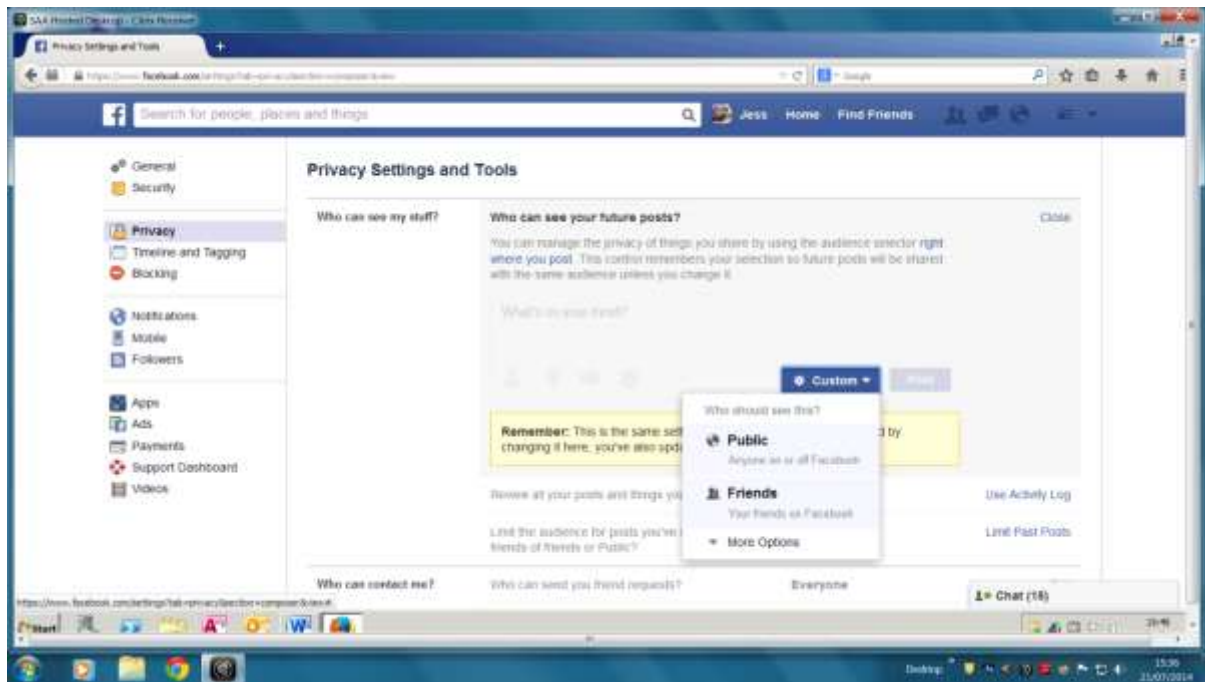

For many users, the Friends privacy setting will be perfectly acceptable but you may want to experiment with Custom and familiarise yourself with the privacy customisation menu. You can configure the Custom setting to make posts visible to specific people, to custom lists of people, or to any school/work networks that you might be a part of. Just as important as always are friend's lists, the feature that enables you to segment all of your friends in to groups and assign privacy settings to each of them. While it may sound a bit excessive, separating out your Facebook friends into at least a few can be extremely valuable. An example setup would be having three friends' lists: *Friends, Family* and *Professional.*

The three things to know about privacy settings are:

1. You can add each friend to more than one friend group
2. Friend lists should be used like "tags" as used elsewhere around the web
3. Friend Lists can have specific privacy policies applied to them

Understanding: In-product education.

Along with the overall effort to continue bringing privacy controls up front, Facebook is adding in-context notices throughout Facebook. For example, they have created a series of messages to help you understand, in context, that the content you hide from your timeline may still appear in news feeds, searches and other places.
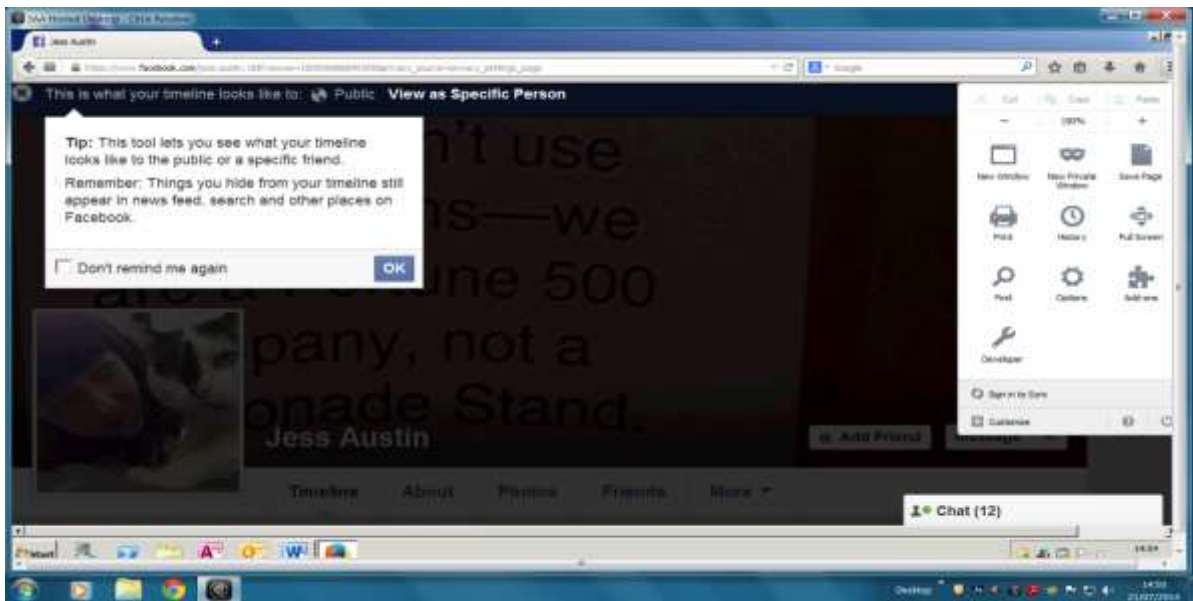
Updated Activity Log

Some years ago, Facebook introduced the Activity Log. The log makes it easy to see things you have posted on Facebook, makes changes to the audience of past photos and other posts and choose what appears on your timeline. This updated Activity Log has new navigation, so you can easily review your own activity on Facebook, such as your comments and likes, photos of you and posts you have been tagged in. It also has new ways to sort information, for example, you can quickly see public photos you are tagged in and have hidden from your timeline, but which may still appear in other places on Facebook. A good way to see what is still lurking in the depths of Facebook.
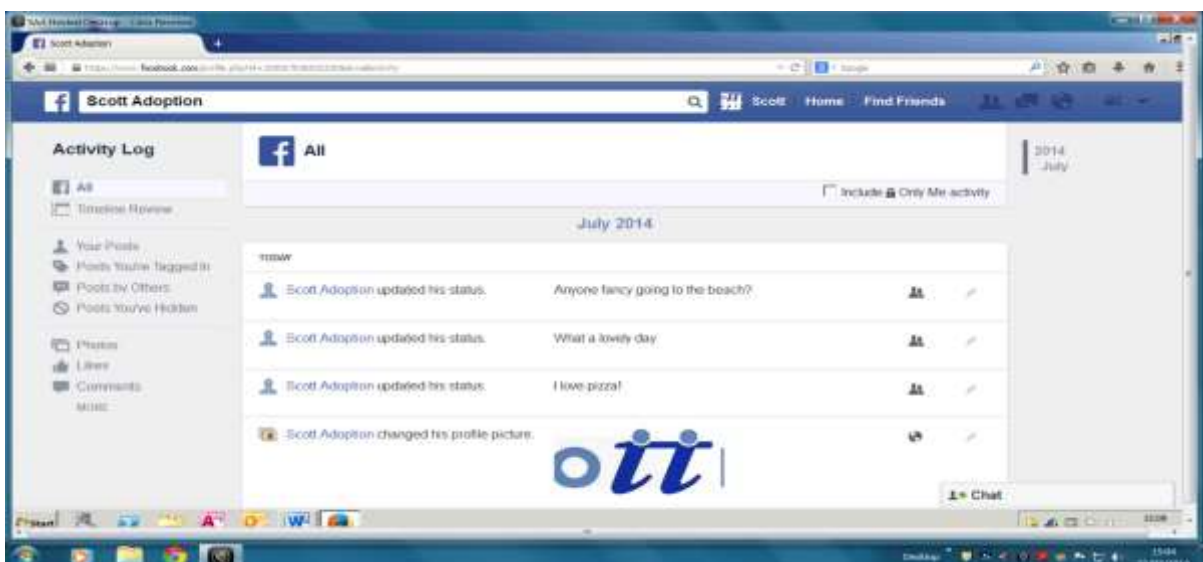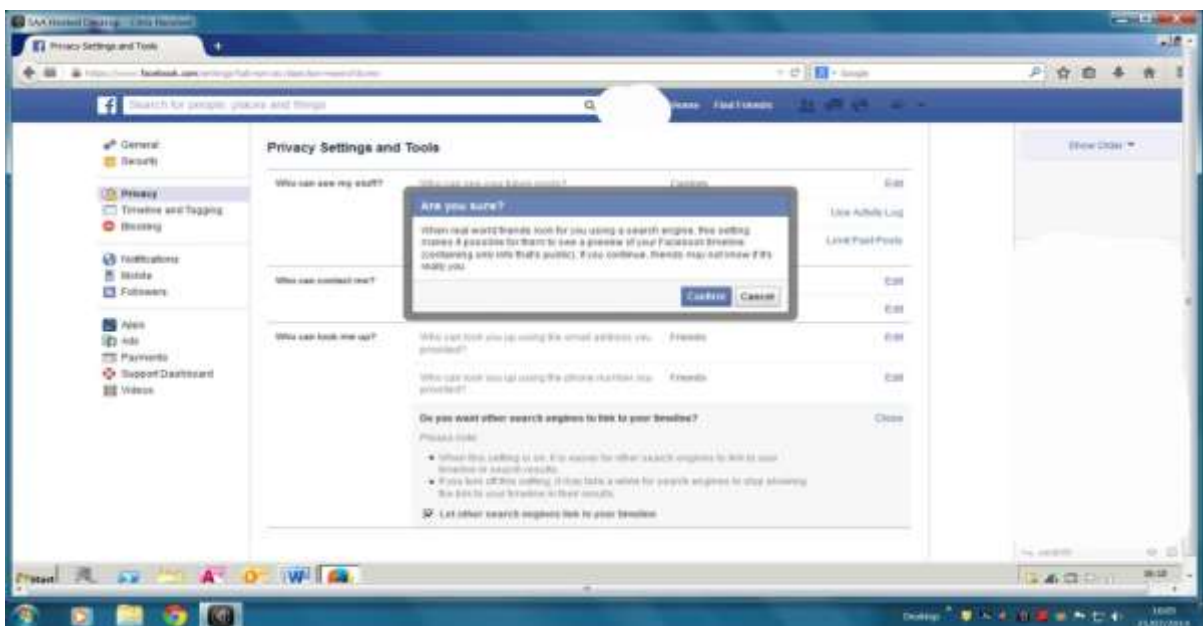

Within the updated Activity Log, you now have a Request and Removal tool for taking action on multiple photos you are tagged in. If you spot something you do not want on Facebook, it is now even easier to ask the people who posted them to remove them.

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Go to the "Photos of You" tab. You can now remove any pictures that you have been tagged in by ticking the left hand box next to the photo, clicking on "Report/remove tags" and then click on "Untag Photos" to confirm. Keep in mind that while untagged photos do not appear on your own timeline, they can still appear in other places on Facebook, such as searches, newsfeeds or your friend's timelines.
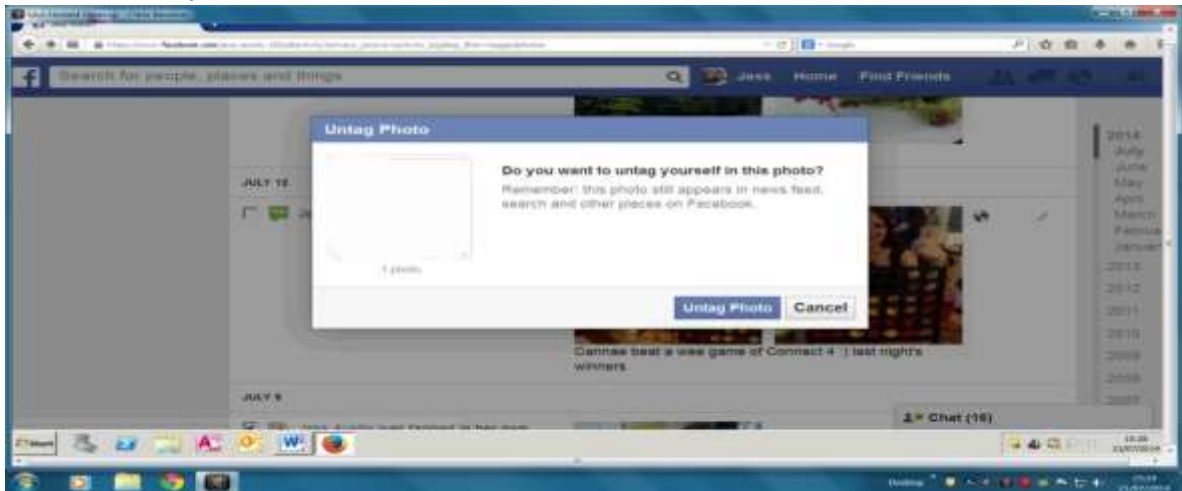

Google Search

When someone searches for your name on Google, your Facebook account will most likely show up in the search results. Sometimes you prefer not to show up in Google every time someone searches your name. If that is the case, you will want to turn off the public Facebook search results. Go to settings and then on the left hand column, privacy. Scroll down to "Who can look me up" and then on the "Do you want other search engines to link to your timeline?" untick the box.

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Who can look me up?

The settings which control who can view your personal information and who can contact you on Facebook constitute what most users think of as their Facebook privacy settings. They are among the most important privacy controls on the site.
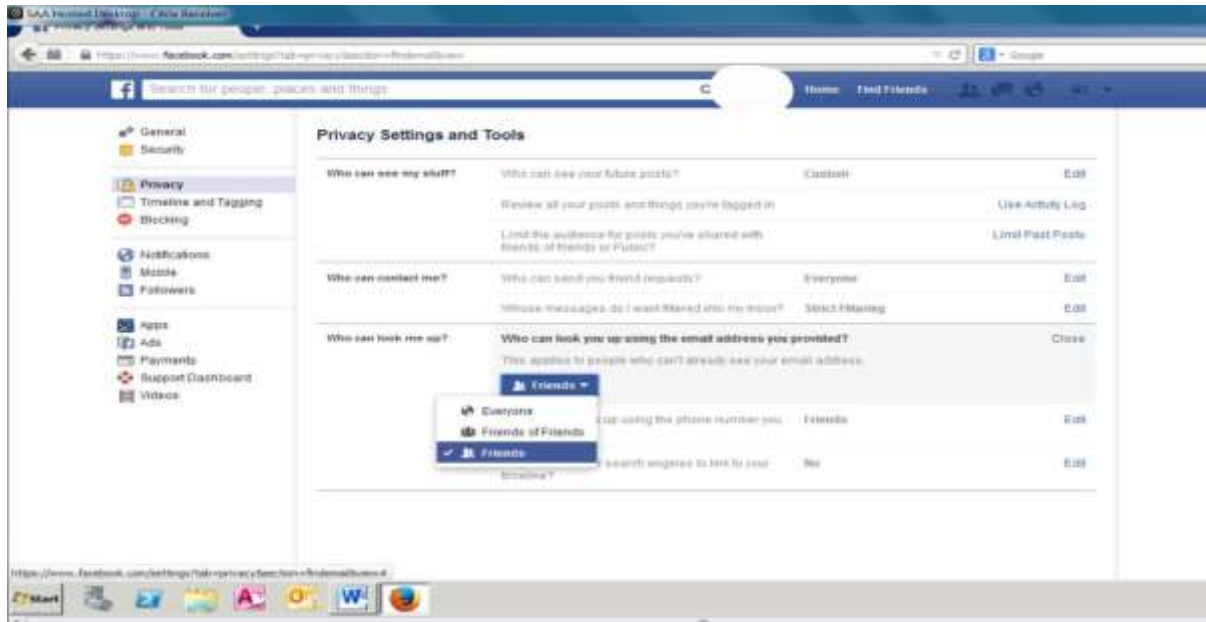
All of the setting in the "Who can look me up" section are significant. They determine who can send you friend requests and who can see your timeline. They also control who can see your email address and phone number if you provide that data to Facebook. The settings are structured to give you the same Public, Friends or Custom options as does the Default Privacy menu and most default to either "Everyone" or to "Friends of Friends" so you may want to configure them to be a little less permissive.

Timeline and Tagging

This menu contains the bulk of your timeline settings, including specifications for who can post on your timeline and who can see those posts.
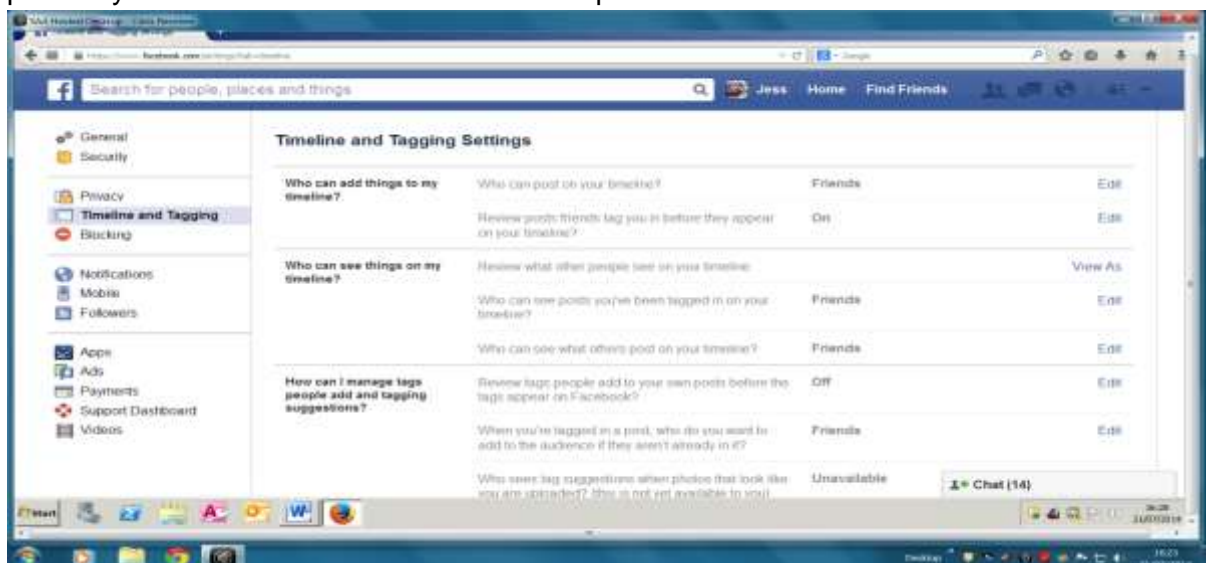
Another important setting to look at is one that lets you review friend's posts that you have been tagged in before the posting is approved. As of 2014, Facebook will ask your permission before your friend's post anything that you have been tagged, so if you do not want to give them that permission, your name will not be included in the post.

Ads, Apps and Websites

This section controls how your Facebook profile and personal information interact with things outside Facebook, including Facebook apps, personalised ads and websites that use Facebook data to customise your experience. If you are worried about Facebook's impact on your privacy, this should be your first port of call. Go to settings and then down to apps and ads.
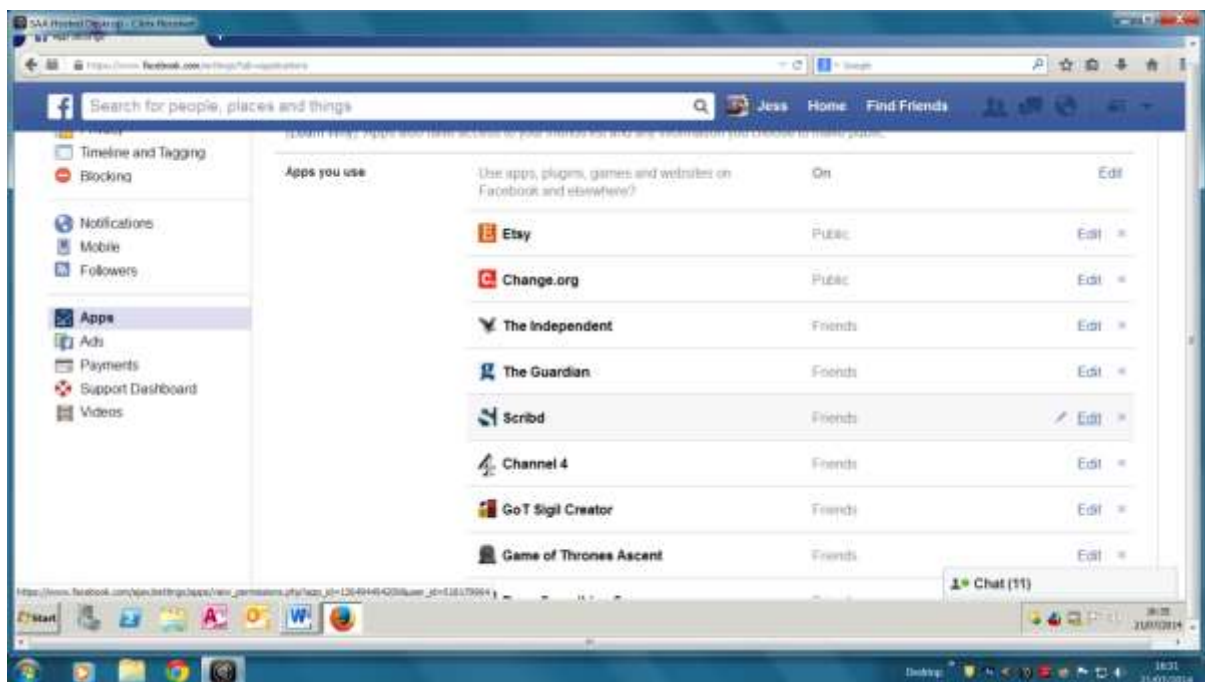

Everything here is worth scrutinising, especially the "Apps you use" control panel. Here you can review and remove all of the third-party apps you have added to Facebook. You must remove (and confirm removal) of each app separately, unless you elect to delete them all, so can take a while to do.

In the ads section you can turn off social ads and pre-emptively opt out of having your data used in third party advertising. Go to the "website and Mobile App Custom Audiences" section and click on the "Opt out" link. This section also lets you turn off Facebook "features" such as instant personalisation (which exports your personal data to partner websites) and public searches (which allows users whom you haven't friended to see your timeline through search engines, even if you've set your timeline to be visible to friends only.)

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Blocked People and Apps

The manage Blocking settings lets you selectively block Facebook apps and users from interacting with you. These settings are unlikely to be much use for you when you establish your privacy settings but they may become more useful if friends or apps start spamming your Facebook feed.
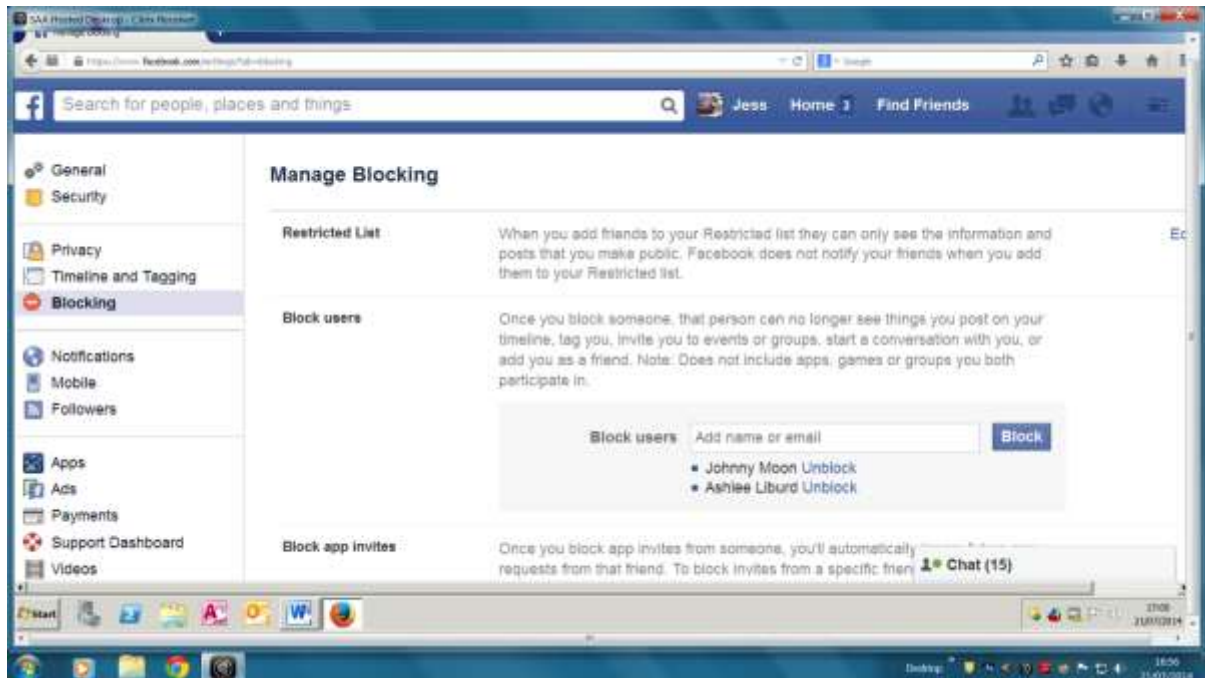
The "Block users" setting is a fantastic tool if you are being harassed on Facebook and want to take care of the situation yourself. Preventing interactions with a threatening person through Facebook is easy (be sure to report the harassment to Facebook as well) for most users though, the less serious settings will be more useful. For example, do you have a friend who sends you endless event invites? Simply enter the person's name in the "Block App Invites" or "Block Event Invites" and Facebook will automatically block any new event invitations from them. Similarly, adding a friend to your restricted list will ensure the person will be able to wee only your public posts, effectively unfriending them without causing them upset.

Control Who Gets to See What

Create a 'Close Friends' list. Not only will this filter out posts from your News Feed to provide quick access to posts from close friends, this feature also permits you to limit the audience for specific posts to your 'Close friends' list.

On Similar lines, you can create a 'Family' list and many other custom lists. Move the cursor to the 'friends' bar on the left hand column of your home page. You will now see a list of all your friends and you can change which group you wish to put each friend in by clicking on the 'friends' bar and choosing the list. You can create new lists by scrolling to the bottom.

Select which posts, pictures or videos you wish to make public or keep private by clicking the 'Friends' icon on the bottom right of the text box. From the drop-down menu, choose which group you would like to share your post with.

Tie up Loose Ends

Pay attention to comments you make on any blogs, online forums or websites using your Facebook profile. Most users are surprised by how much data Facebook holds. To view a complete list of all data Facebook has ever had on you, go to 'Account settings' from the dropdown menu on the top right of your page. Click on "Download a copy of your Facebook data' and you might be in for a surprise.

Play around with these tips to figure out what privacy settings work best for you. As Facebook continues to innovate and change, adding new features and functionality do not overlook the privacy bit that evolves along with it.

Further Support

If you need any further advice or support in relation to Facebook settings, please contact Scottish Adoption on 0131-553-5060 or email info@scottishadoption.org and we will be happy to speak to you over the phone or you can arrange a time to come into the office for a 1-1 support tutorial.

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