

## MySpace Precautions

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MySpace is an online community where members can create personal websites and meet new friends or reconnect with old friends. It can be a lot of fun and can also provide excellent networking opportunities but there are some precautions which should be taken by all users of MySpace. These precautions include being aware of the ability for individuals to misrepresent themselves online, knowing how to avoid being harmed or scammed and understanding the terms of service on MySpace. This article will discuss these three key concepts which are minimum precautions MySpace members should take to ensure their MySpace experience is pleasurable.

### **Beware of Wolves in Sheep's Clothing**

The Internet provides an excellent opportunity for unscrupulous individuals to deliberately misrepresent themselves. This misrepresentation may be somewhat innocent such as lying about interest or activities for the purpose of being more attractive to someone you have a crush on or it can be more serious. Those with criminal intent may lie about a number of factors such as their age, sex and location in order to lure another member into a harmful situation. There have been numerous stories which made national headlines about young users of MySpace being abducted by individuals they met online. Although these cases are considered to be somewhat rare, they do exist and members of MySpace should be aware of the potential for this type of activity.

Those who want to do physical harm to another may deliberately misrepresent themselves but there are other potentially harmful reasons why an individual on MySpace might pretend to be someone else. This can be done to gain the trust of other members before conducting a financial scam which will result in a significant loss of money for the MySpace members who are duped in such a scam. MySpace members can avoid both physical and financial danger by exercising caution in their interactions with other members of the community. This includes emails and instant messages but care should also be taken to avoid posting sensitive information on MySpace pages as this information can be viewed by the general public unless the profile is made private.

### **Know How Much Information is Too Much**

One important precaution MySpace members should take is safeguarding their personal information. This information includes, but is not limited to, the following pieces of information:

- \* Full name
- \* Social security number
- \* Credit card numbers
- \* Bank account numbers
- \* Physical address
- \* Phone number
- \* Place of birth
- \* High school attended and year of graduation
- \* Names of children and location and date of their births

Some of the items on the above list such as social security number and bank account numbers are

pieces of information most people are aware they should not divulge to the general public. However, other pieces of information such as high school attended and year of graduation or names of children and location and date of their births may seem harmless. Unfortunately this is not true. These seemingly harmless pieces of information can be used to research an individual and it might be possible to deduce where a person lives from this type of information.

### **Understand the Terms of Service**

Finally, members of MySpace should familiarize themselves with the terms of service provided by MySpace. This information is important for a couple of reasons. First it will help MySpace members to understand their rights as well as the security features which exist in the community. Members who are aware of these facts know their course of action if they are harassed by other members of MySpace. Additionally, being familiar with the terms of service on MySpace is important because it helps members to understand which actions are permissible and which actions are prohibited. This is important because it can prevent a member from inadvertently breaking the community rules and running the risk of being banned from the community. If after reviewing the terms of service you have questions, contact MySpace directly for clarification.