Social Networks - Do’s and Don’ts

- Only establish and maintain connections with people you know and trust. Review your connections often.
- Assume that ANYONE can see any information about your activities, personal life, or professional life that you post and share.
- Ensure that your family takes similar precautions with their accounts; their privacy and sharing settings can expose your personal data.
- Avoid posting or tagging images of you or your family that clearly show your face. Select pictures taken at a distance, at an angle, or otherwise concealed. **Never post Smartphone photos** and don’t use your face as a profile photo, instead, use cartoons or avatars.
- Use secure browser settings when possible and monitor your browsing history to ensure that you recognize all access points.

Managing your Twitter Account

Twitter is a social networking and microblogging site whose users send and read text-based posts online. The site surged to worldwide popularity with +300 million active users as of 2011, generating 300 million tweets and 1.6 billion search queries daily.

**Tweets**

“Tweets” are short text-based messages – up to 140 characters – that users post to Twitter. "Tweet" can refer to a post as well or to the act of posting to Twitter. Tweets are public, indexed, and searchable unless protected by the user. Many users never Tweet, choosing only to follow persons or topics of interest.

**Hashtags (#topic)** are used to mark a keyword or topic in a Tweet. Posts with hashtag are categorized by topics in the Twitter search engine. Hashtagged words that become popular become Trending Topics (ex. #jan25, #egypt, #sxsw).

**Mentions (@username)** are used to tag a user in a Twitter update. When a public user mentions a private Twitter account, the link to the private account profile becomes public.

Profile Settings

Apply the Profile settings shown below to ensure that your information is visible only to people of your choosing.

Twitter Best Practices

- Avoid using hashtags (#) in updates to avoid being indexed and associated with a topic by Twitter Search.
- **Tweet responsibly.** Do not provide personal details regarding your whereabouts and activities in your post.
- Do NOT upload links to personal photos or websites on Twitter.
- Do NOT allow Twitter to use your location on mobile devices.
- Change your Twitter username periodically to limit account exposure.
Apply the **Account** settings shown below to ensure that your information is shared in a limited fashion.

### Account Settings

**Deactivating / Delete Your Twitter Account**

To deactivate your account, go to **Settings** and select **Account** page. At the bottom of the page, click **Deactive my account**. After deactivation, the user can reactivate the account within 30 days. After 30 days, the account is permanently deleted.

### Notification & Application Settings

Maintain a small digital footprint by minimizing the number of notifications. Revoke access to unnecessary third party applications.

### Useful Links

- OnGuard Online: [www.onguardonline.gov/topics/social-networking-sites.aspx](http://www.onguardonline.gov/topics/social-networking-sites.aspx)