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Making online spaces safer [tactical activity]

The goal of this activity is to go through the privacy options for accounts and groups of the agreed-upon (i.e. commonly used in the group) social media sites.

If you want to get hands-on with online services, this activity provides guidance for analyzing the settings, policies, and norms of online spaces.

About this learning activity



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The goal of this activity is to go through the privacy options for accounts and groups of the agreed-upon (i.e. commonly used in the group) social media sites. For groups who have gone through the exercise Develop Your Internet Dream Place, this is an activity to make the dream places real, including addressing challenges of current design and policy of online spaces being at odds with the dream space visions. For groups who already have online spaces and want to alter them to make them feel more safe, you can also use this activity.

If you want to get hands-on with online services, this activity provides guidance for analysing the settings, policies and norms of online spaces. It is not a step-by-step guide to adjusting settings, as they change too frequently.

Learning objectives this activity responds to

- Come up with some strategies to create safe online spaces for themselves and their networks.
- Gain an understanding of the privacy limitations of most social media.

Who is this activity for?

This activity can be used with participants with different levels of experience with both online spaces and creating safe spaces. Participants will be asked to explore and set privacy settings in the tools they are using.

Time required

This activity will require about **3 hours.**

Resources needed for this activity

- A soft-copy of the planning tables.
- Computers for people to work on their plans on

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Mechanics

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1. Map your space

Developing new spaces: If you have done Develop Your Internet Dream Place, you can use the work from that exercise as your map.

Redesigning existing spaces: If your group would rather redesign an existing online space, identify a space that the group already participates in or ask the participants to form groups based on spaces they participate in and facilitate the group(s) to answer the questions from Develop Your Internet Dream Place, about these existing spaces:

- What is it called?
- Why is this space significant?
- Who is it for? Who is it not for? How can you make sure?
- What kinds of things do people do in this space?
- What are the rules in this place?
- Who can join? Who cannot join?
- What will the space look like?
- How will people find each other in that place?
- What topics can people talk about in this place? What can they not talk about?
- Who has responsibility for managing the space?

Have the groups draw out this space as creatively as possible, and get them to prepare a creative presentation for the rest of the group.

2. Choosing spaces: Spaces that work and assessing safety

If you have done Input + activity: Online safety "rules", you may have already had a conversation about choosing spaces and assessing risks of online communications.

Choosing spaces for functionality

How do you choose platforms and assess risks to yourselves on those platforms? Choose spaces that help us reach our communication goals and try to participate in these spaces in ways that do not expose us to risks we do not wish to take.

Look at the map you have made. Can you identify a platform already that will allow you to create the space you have mapped? Which of the components of your space will be easy to create? Which will be difficult? Are there alternative spaces where pieces will be easier or harder?

Choosing spaces strategically

Does the space you chose match your strategy? Is this a good space for: organising, mobilising, for announcements/influencing discourse?

Facilitator: Introduce how these different activities bring with them different levels of risk.

Suggested questions to ask

- What are some risks with different types of communication?
- Who are you communicating with in these activities?
- Who are you not communicating with?
- What are the consequences if someone you do not intend your message for accesses it?
- How public can the audience be?
- What risks might people face if they are known as message creators or recipients in this communication?

This discussion leads into the next discussion section looking at risks people are most concerned with.

> **Note to facilitator:** This section may be very quick, with everyone agreeing that they need to be on a single platform right now, for instance, Facebook. You may, however, get to talk about a variety of tools and platforms.

Discussion OR Input: Assessing dimensions of safety and the internet: What are the current issues?

Ask the group: What safety risks are you concerned about in online spaces? Facilitate this discussion to include concerns about actions that individuals can take in these spaces as well as actions taken by the software companies who own the spaces.

If you have already done Input + activity: Online safety "rules", you may reference that discussion and abbreviate this section.

Otherwise, facilitate discussion about safety risks in online spaces. Draw from the experiences of the participants but also prepare some examples of stories where privacy was breached through

online spaces and that impact that had on individuals.

Discussion: Ask participants what safety concerns they have in online spaces. Are there any specific incidents or risks people are concerned about and want to address in their Dream Space or redesigned space?

Input: We suggest familiarising yourself with 2-3 case studies and sharing them here. To share these with the least amount of time, present them as a lecture. If you have more time, or want to facilitate deeper conversation and engagement with the issues, find some media like articles, short videos, interviews, regarding a case and share them with the group. Ask group members to discuss them together in pairs or small groups.

- Real name policies and their implications for organising and expression online.
- The myth that to be online is to be anonymous and therefore safe – laws and policies that don't allow for this.
- Women's experience of the internet – harassment, attacks, etc.
- The value of the internet; why do people stay in online space; how is it of value to us and our community?
- Diversity of access and comfort level of online spaces that we choose. Is it a barrier for people in our networks to participate because you´ve chosen a specifc platform?
- Are there cost implications for the space that you are choosing to use for the people in your network community?

Facilitator: ask participants to consider why the platforms we are on are not safer by design.

3. Make a plan: Address the risks of the spaces that you are using

Using the Dream Spaces or Redesigned Spaces as examples, have the participants make plans for implementing this space online.

This would be most useful if they have active spaces they want to secure and safeguard.

Issues to consider here:

- Privacy settings on social media – is it enough? What are the limitation of available settings?
- Considering moving to non-commercial spaces – what are the barriers?
- Safer options for online communications – tools that offer encryption by default.

Consideration	Platform or Space	How will you address this

		Review my privacy settings; consider content that I post, respond to, like, and the def

Do you know everyone you're linked to		review my connections; remove connections to people I do not know;

Do you want to use your real name; anonymity and how hard it is		use a pseudonym; prevent others from naming you with your real name

Do you want to share your location		No, I do not want to automatically share my location; turn off location services; limit phot

Authorisation

Consideration	Platform or Space	How will you address this

Ensuring that I am logging out	f-book	do not save password in browser; review setting on f-book for automatic log out

2-factor on accounts and devices		setup 2-factor to be more certain that only I am logging in

Shared accounts		review who has access to shared accounts; review password policies on these accounts

Devices

Consideration	Platform or Space	How will you address this

Device-level safety	Twitter or any app	do not automatically log into any apps or through browsers

Do I want notifications to show on my devices		turn off audio and visual notifications

Group Administration

If you are working with a group to implement a space online, use the following table of questions and work through the answers, finding the appropriate settings on the platform you are using to implement the group's preferences.

Example design/implementation table:

Link to Group or Personal Page	https://www.facebook.com/APCNews	**What are you doing to implement this?**

Who can see this space?	anyone on the internet	our group is public on Facebook and searchable on the web

Who is this space for?	APC members, community and potential APC members	we invite APC staff and network members to join, mention the mins posts, invite them to e

Who is it not for?	APC members, community and potential APC members	closed/public-we limit who can post, but make the page findable on facebook

What kinds of things do people do in this space?	notifications about APC work and links to APC network content published elsewher	

Who can create content in this space? What kind of content?	staff and members	-

How do you want to communicate the rules of the space	on our group's about page	we will write our rules based on this chart of questions and answers and post it on

Well-being Note: Bringing up risk and technology concepts might cause participants stress. Be aware of this. Pause for a breathing exercise. Or allow participants to take a walk around the venue to decompress when they need to.

Additional resources

- If you want to spend more time discussing tools and choices, there are a lot of great resources here: https://myshadow.org/.
- How to Increase Your Privacy on Twitter
- Security in a Box: Social networking
- Protect the privacy of your online communication
- Create and maintain strong passwords

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