

Protect your privacy from Facebook's newest feature

It just never ends with Facebook, does it? The minute you finally finish securing your account, it flips the switch on a new feature. It almost makes you want to leave the site altogether!

Let's start from the beginning. The feature in question here is Facebook's Graph Search. It allows you to search for all sorts of new things on Facebook. Think of it like a little bit of Google, mixed with review-site [Yelp](#) and your friends list. [Click here to learn more details.](#)

It sounds harmless at first, but it could help strangers track you down or learn all sorts of things about you.

Facebook users can use Graph Search to find any information that is "publicly available." Since many people post things without checking privacy settings, or don't see what they "Like" as a problem, this could be embarrassing and dangerous.

For example, say you've Liked a page or joined a group in the past that your employer would frown upon. It could be a rival company or just something your employer doesn't want to associate with. Your employer could search "co-workers that like getting drunk," or "co-workers that like taking fake sick days."

Your name would pop up! You'd have plenty of explaining to do the next day at work. This is just the tip of the iceberg of things someone could find with Graph Search. A nearby thief might even be able to find your address or information to steal your identity.

People are already finding embarrassing and dangerous combinations of searches. For example, you can make a list of "women who live nearby and who are interested in men and like getting drunk."

How about "married people who like (cheating site) Ashley Madison" or "married people who like prostitutes"? The person might have Liked those things years before they were married. Maybe they were a teenager and did it as a joke. But it sure doesn't look good today.

Even businesses could have a problem. You can quickly generate a list of companies and organizations that employ people who Like "racism." I'm serious!

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Kim Komando hosts the nation's largest talk radio show about consumer electronics, computers and the Internet. To get the podcast or find the station nearest you, visit: <http://www.komando.com/listen>. To subscribe to Kim's free e-mail newsletters, sign-up at: <http://www.komando.com/newsletters>.

Luckily, Facebook Graph Search isn't available to everyone yet. That means you have time to clean up your profile so these searches aren't used against you. So, what should you do?

First, click the Padlock icon to bring up Facebook's Privacy Shortcuts. Click "Who can see my stuff?" and then "Use Activity Log." The Activity Log shows you everything you've posted and everything that's been posted about you.

The big sections that could cause Graph Search problems are "Posts You're Tagged In," "Posts by Others," "Photos," "Likes" and "Groups." You have to click "More" under "Comments" to see "Groups."

Search for any post, group or Like you have that may embarrass or offend. You should look for stuff that reveals too much of your information, too.

You can change who can see these items by clicking the first icon next to the post. Remember, only public information is available in Graph Search, so setting it to Friends or Only Me is a good option. You can delete a post entirely by clicking the pencil icon.

To remove yourself from any questionable group, you have to visit the group's page. Click the gear icon on the main page and select "Leave group."

If you don't want to go through these items one by one, there are some broad changes you can make to your profile. To find out more about those, [check out this must-read column](#).

That should prevent any strangers from finding you. There's still a chance friends could see a post you don't want them to. Here are three tips that will help prevent that.

- Organizing your Facebook friends into custom lists makes your Facebook safer. [Manage your Facebook lists with these simple tips](#).
- A questionable post, picture or video could cost you your job or land you in jail. [Think before you post or you'll end up like these folks](#).
- A more private social network may be a better option for you to share your thoughts. [Check out these private alternatives to social networks](#).

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