

# **MySpace Primer:**

A Concise Guide On

How to Use MySpace.com

Safely and Responsibly

29 April 2006

**Kevin Farnham**

**Dale Farnham**

[www.MySpaceSafetyTips.com](http://www.MySpaceSafetyTips.com)

[www.HowToPrimers.com](http://www.HowToPrimers.com)

*www.MySpaceSafetyTips.com*

## MySpace Primer: A Concise Guide on How to Use MySpace.com Safely and Responsibly

Copyright © 2006 Kevin and Dale Farnham

This document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives License Version 2.5.

Permission is granted to reproduce and redistribute this document in its entirety provided that you attribute the work to the authors and publisher. Permission is granted to quote segments of this document provided that the authors are credited and the source document is named. This document may not be used for commercial purposes. All other use of this document requires written permission from the authors.

Published by How-To Primers

<http://www.HowToPrimers.com>

Source document hosted at:

<http://www.MySpaceSafetyTips.com>

<http://www.HowToPrimers.com>

## **About this Document**

This document's original source is material from the How-To Primers book *MySpace Safety: 51 Tips for Teens and Parents*, which will be available at [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com) and [www.HowToPrimers.com](http://www.HowToPrimers.com) in late May 2006.

This document is updated more frequently than the book, so while the primer is derived from the book, it is also a supplement to the book.

## **Disclaimer**

The statements in this document are based on study of MySpace.com as it existed prior to the publication date. MySpace.com is an active business. The site can change in significant ways, without advance warning to the user community. This document does not claim to represent official MySpace.com policy. Any misrepresentation of MySpace.com in this document is unintentional.

While every precaution has been taken in the preparation of this document, the publisher and authors assume no responsibility for errors or omissions, or for damages resulting from the use of the information contained in it.

# **Contents**

- 1. Introduction*
  - 2. Joining MySpace*
  - 3. Responsible Account Privacy Settings*
  - 4. What Your Profile Shouldn't Say About You*
  - 5. Photos*
  - 6. Friends & Comments*
  - 7. Blogging*
  - 8. Groups, Forums, Chat*
  - 9. Quitting MySpace*
- Resources*

# **1. Introduction**

MySpace is one of a class of web sites that are termed “social networking” sites. People are given a web address where they can post information about themselves, and they can very conveniently contact other people on the same social networking site. Similar sites include Xanga.com, Friendster.com, and Facebook.com.

MySpace.com is owned by Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp, which purchased the site for \$580 million from Intermix Media July 2005. Since the News Corp buy-out, much has improved at MySpace. Enhanced technology resources are more effectively meeting the site’s ever-growing bandwidth requirements. Additional scrutiny is being applied, and the accounts of members who post pornography or hate content are being deleted. There is a new commitment to addressing safety-related issues. And, enhanced customer service resources are making it much easier for people to contact MySpace for problems that require human intervention (such as deleting accounts of underage users and addressing identity theft).

### ***But Isn't MySpace Dangerous?***

Read the headlines, and it can sound like MySpace is the most dangerous place anyone can visit on the Internet. It's not. Take any group of millions and millions of people, who are freely able to join and navigate a web site, and you are certainly going to have a large number of people who are a danger to other people, just as when you walk down any street, there are some people you walk past who have been or will be a danger to other people.

The Internet is a very different "place" from the "real" world. Yet, in many ways, the Internet is quite similar to the natural world. People interact in both worlds. People misrepresent who they are in both worlds.

So, is MySpace dangerous? Every open Internet site is somewhat dangerous, so yes. Can a MySpace user take steps to significantly reduce the risk involved in using the site, without losing the benefits the site offers? Yes, absolutely.

### ***Dear Parents: MySpace Is the Future***

When parents first discover MySpace, the initial reaction can be shock, followed by a response of

“Under no circumstances will I allow my teen to go to this site!”

Unfortunately, this type of response may cause more problems than it solves, except in the case where the child is underage (13 and younger, in the case of MySpace.com). In most cases, banning MySpace isn't a good answer because the use of “social networking” Web sites like MySpace is considered a normal part of everyday life by a majority of teens today.

Banning what a teen considers part of normal life won't help. If something's “normal” then young people will seek it out—when you're not at home or not monitoring the computer, or by using the computer at the home of a friend who is allowed to use MySpace, or at a computer at school or in the library.

With MySpace.com challenging Google for ranking as the top page view site on the Internet, we should assume that MySpace and similar sites are going to be part of the teen and young adult world for a long time into the future. Social networking, whatever opinion one may have on whether it's good or bad, must be viewed as “progress.” The clock isn't going to be turned back. Social networking is here to stay.

So, what's an appropriate response for parents? To get accustomed to the new world—to join MySpace, find out what it's about, learn about and teach your teens about the risks, and ideally to enjoy participating with them in this new form

of interaction that has become normal for this younger generation.

If you choose not to share these experiences with your children, then you may find yourself losing contact with them as they grow up and leave home as young adults. At minimum, you'll be losing one form of sharing with them into the future.

### ***Teens: What's Your Motive?***

Before you join MySpace, it's a good idea to know why you are joining it. If the reason is friends or networking, this guide can assist in making sure your MySpace experience is safe and secure.

The "Basic Info" tab of the MySpace "Edit Profile" screen has an entry where you respond to the prompt "I'd Like to Make Space for." The choices are:

- Dating
- Serious Relationship
- Friends
- Networking

You can select any or all or none of these. Whatever you select is displayed in on your profile page and in search results. Someone using the



MySpace browse or search functions can also use these “motive” choices as search criteria. That is, they can search only for people who have identified “Dating” as one of their reasons for joining MySpace.

We highly recommend against teens using MySpace for dating or seeking a “serious relationship.” It’s too easy for people to role-play, and pretend they’re 18 when they are really 43. This is what happened in several of the most publicized incidents where contact on MySpace led to meetings that turned very bad.

If your goal is an in-person meeting with someone for dating / serious relationship purposes, then you are seeking to use MySpace for a different reason from what this guide assumes. In that case, you should visit the online safety sites listed in the Resources section at the end of this document, and make your decisions based on the advice they provide. Our advice is that you do not use MySpace.com (or any other online networking site) for dating or a serious relationship if you are under 18 years old.

Meanwhile, if your reason for joining MySpace is to “make space for” friends and/or networking, and you’d like to enjoy a safe and secure MySpace experience and learn how to use MySpace responsibly, please read on!

### ***Five Levels of Safety***

1. Every teen remembers being told “Don’t talk to strangers” and “Never get into a car with a stranger” when they were young. If these rules are applied on MySpace, the possibility of something bad happening is minimal.

2. The risk can be much further reduced if you do not post provocative content (pictures, comments, blog entries). If you post such content, you’re sending a message to people you don’t know, who may interpret it in ways you don’t expect.

3. A third level of safety comes from not posting information in your profile or elsewhere that identifies where you live, where you go to school, where you go for fun, what your daily schedule is, what upcoming events you plan to attend, etc. Internet safety experts have recommended against posting this kind of information on public sites for a very long time.

4. MySpace provides its own software-embedded safety through account settings, blog settings, picture settings, etc. These settings can be applied to limit who can view your information and posts.

5. Finally, there’s your brain. Use it when you’re online! Consciously think about the possible impact of what you’re typing into the computer

and onto the net. Think about who has the ability to see what you're typing, not just about the friend or friends for whom you're specifically writing your post. If it's something that really only a particular friend or friends should see, then send it in an email message. Yes, email is boring, but if the information is private then safety requires private communication. Think before you publicly post!

## **2. Joining MySpace**

Knowing the basic rules of Internet safety is critical before you begin posting information at any online site. The Resources section at the end of this document includes links to web sites that describe recommended procedures for safe use of the Internet by teens, children, and also adults.

### ***MySpace Terms of Agreement and Privacy Policy***

When you sign up to join MySpace.com, you are required to check a box that is labeled:

“By checking the box you agree ... to the MySpace Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.”

The MySpace Terms of Service document contains information about what you can and cannot post on your page and others' pages. If you violate the terms, MySpace can delete your account. In practice, they will do this only if your violation is extreme, for example, if you are posting pornography or hate content, or if you are pretending to be someone else in order to harm them.

The MySpace Privacy Policy is similar to those of many Internet sites where members post information and interact. Still, it is useful to read the document if you want to understand specific privacy policy items.

As is the case for most web sites, the MySpace Terms of Service and Privacy Policy are subject to change. It is the user's responsibility to stay aware of the policies.

### ***MySpace Sign-Up Information***

The MySpace Terms of Service specify that the information entered during sign up must be correct. That is, you must provide your real name, your real postal code, your real gender and date of birth. If you don't enter your real information, you are violating the MySpace policies.

Entering the real information on this form increases a user's risk in using MySpace. Many people recognize this, and enter altered information to increase their security on the site. Thus far, MySpace has not strictly enforced this policy. However, this could change in the future.

### ***Email Address***

The email address you enter when you sign up is used as your login name. We recommend not using your primary email address, for example, a work address, or a school email address. Instead, get an email account you could easily part with in the future, for example, a Yahoo! or Hotmail account.

### ***Your Real Name***

The name you enter at sign-up time is used by the MySpace “Find Someone You Know” search option. The benefit of entering your real name is that someone who knows you can use a MySpace search to find your MySpace profile page. But

if you're a teen, having your real name in the MySpace database can add to risk.

Despite the MySpace terms, we recommend that teens enter something other than their real name when they join MySpace. Select any name

you'd like—a nickname or modified spelling, or an obscure, fantastic, or humorous name—as long as what you select doesn't give out information like where you live, what school you go to, etc.

### ***Postal Code***

MySpace requires that you enter a postal code if your country selection is United States, Canada, or United Kingdom. The postal code is used to identify the town and state (or province) where you live. This information is displayed next to your photo on your profile page, so it's viewed by everyone who visits you on MySpace.

The MySpace search options allow users to filter search results using the postal code. For each person in the search results, the following information is displayed:

- Photo
- Headline
- Orientation (Bi, Gay, Straight, Not Sure, or blank)
- Here For (Dating, Serious Relationships, Friends, Networking)
- Gender (Male or Female)
- Age
- Location

- Profile Updated (the date on which the person’s MySpace profile was last updated)
- Last On (the last date and time when the person logged into MySpace)

This is precisely the type of profile information that’s most dangerous to display publicly. If it’s combined with the possibility of finding out your real name, then it becomes very easy for a person with malicious intent to target you.

Our recommendation, if you live in the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom, is to either select a different country (which will let you leave the postal code box blank), or select a postal code for a location that is hundreds or thousands of miles from where you really live.

### ***Your Age***

The birth date that you enter at sign up time determines which set of rules will be applied to your account. You must be at least 14 years old to join MySpace. Do not join MySpace if you are 13 or younger! It’s not the right place for you, yet. We urge all MySpace members to report underage users.

If you are 14 or 15 years old, your MySpace profile is “private” (or “friends only”) by default.

This means only only people on your MySpace friend list can view your full profile page. This in itself provides a lot of safety.

If you are 16 or older, and you would like the added protection afforded by a private profile, you can reset your birth date to date that makes you 14 or 15. Alternatively, if you'd like to reduce the chances of your profile turning up in search results, you can select a birth date that makes you 100 years old. From scanning MySpace pages, it's clear that many teens and young adults have chosen to do this.

## **3. Responsible Account Privacy Settings**

Immediately after joining MySpace, go to your home page and click the "Account Settings" link in the box at the upper left of the page. The "Account Settings" page is the most important page MySpace provides a user. This is the page where you can configure what access others have to your pages and posts on MySpace.



From the account settings page, click “Privacy Settings.” Our recommended selections for the most critical settings are as follows:

- **Require email or last name to add me as a friend:** if you check this, then others cannot request being your friend unless they know the last name or the email address you use for your MySpace account; check this if your goal is to use MySpace only for contact with your real-life friends.
- **Approve Comments before Posting:** checking this is highly recommended; checking this let’s you reject any comment that contains personal information that would let someone identify you, or content you don’t want associated with your online presence, before anyone else sees it.
- **Hide Online Now:** check this for safety and privacy, and to avoid some profile invasion scams; if you don’t check this, people you don’t know can see when you’re online on MySpace.
- **No Pic Forwarding:** for safety, this should be checked. Otherwise, people you don’t know can send emails with links to your pictures to other people you don’t know.

- **Friend Only Blog Comments:** if you use your blog as a kind of newsletter or online diary for sharing personal experiences with your friends, then check this option, so that only friends can post blog comments.
- **Friend Only Group Invites:** increasingly, people are using MySpace groups to post adult content. These people often invite MySpace members they don't know to join the groups in an attempt to boost the group's membership count. Check this option to eliminate contacts of this type.

In addition, 14 and 15 year old users can specify "Who can view my full full profile?" The choices are:

- My Friends Only
- Anyone under 18 on MySpace

If you select "My Friends Only," your profile is said to be "private." This is the recommended setting, and the default setting imposed by MySpace.

The problem with the "Anyone under 18 on MySpace" setting, with respect to safety, is that anyone can set their age to be under 18 in their MySpace account. Because of this, we recommend

that all 14 and 15 year-olds keep their profiles private by selecting “My Friends Only.”

Changes in account settings may not take effect immediately. After you change account settings, allow time, perhaps up to 30 minutes, before you conclude that your requested changes were not put into place.

## **4. What Your Profile Shouldn't Say About You**

MySpace provides opportunities to enter all kinds of personal information into your profile, including much information that should never be shared online according to Internet safety experts.

To view and edit the information stored in your MySpace profile, go to your home page and click the “Edit Profile” link.

### ***Interests and Personality***

The “Interests and Personality” profile tab allows you to enter/edit the following items, all of which are displayed on your profile page:

- **Headline**

- About Me
- I'd Like to Meet
- Interests
- Music
- Movies
- Television
- Heroes
- Books

What you choose to enter for these items is your choice. If you've applied the recommended precautions—that is, you've made it very difficult for a person with malicious intent to find out your real name, where you live and go to school, etc.—then entering your actual “Interests and Personality” preferences will be fine.

### ***Dating-Related Profile Information***

The “Background & Lifestyle” and “Basic Info” tabs on the “Edit Profile” page include several data entries that are typical of a dating service. We do not recommend that teens use MySpace as a dating service, or to find a “serious relationship.”

For “Marital Status” the following options are available:

- In a Relationship

- Single
- Divorced
- Married
- Swinger (displayed only if you are 18 or older)

Selecting “Married” or “In a Relationship” (whether true or not) may ward off some malicious people who happen to browse your page. These selections will also keep you out of the search results where such a person specifies “Swinger” or “Single” as search criteria.

The MySpace selections for your sexual orientation are:

- Bi
- Lesbian or Gay
- Straight
- Not Sure
- No Answer

The safest answer is “No answer.” You’re making space for friends and/or networking, so who cares what your sexual orientation is?

The following options are available in the “Children” category:

- I don’t want kids
- Someday
- Undecided
- Love kids, but not for me

- Proud parent
- No Answer

“No answer” is the best response, to keep you out of search results and leave someone you don’t want to meet with that much less to talk to you about.

The “Basic Info” tab includes “Body Type” and “Height” entries. If you’ve joined MySpace for friends and/or networking, then this information is irrelevant. The safest selections for body type and height are “No answer.” This will keep you out of search results where the person searched for people with specific body and height characteristics.

### ***Schools***

Online safety experts agree that where you go to school should not be posted on the Internet. Entering your current school information into MySpace pinpoints your location for people who don’t know you.

We strongly advise that teens on MySpace follow the recommendations of online safety experts: do not enter information about your school into your MySpace profile.

## ***Display Name***

The “Name” tab on the Edit Profile screen allows you change your Display Name. Your MySpace Display Name is the name that is displayed in the top left corner of your profile page, above your picture and headline. This is also the text that identifies you on other people’s friend lists and when you turn up in a set of search results.

By default, MySpace uses the first name you enter at sign-up time as your display name. You may want to change this. Good choices include a nickname, the name of a character you like from a movie or a book, or a statement about you or them.

The only thing you shouldn’t do is enter the type of information that would let someone who doesn’t know you find out your actual name and location. And, of course, don’t include information like your cell phone number in your display name (or anywhere else on MySpace).

## **5. Photos**

Selection of your default photo is an important decision. Combined with your display name, your default photo is your MySpace signature.

Whatever photo you select as your default picture is displayed everywhere on MySpace where you are referenced, from friend lists, to emails, to comment postings.

Your default picture is also displayed in browse and search results. What do you want them to see? In thinking about this, consider that most of the time you turn up in a search, it's going to be someone you don't know who's looking at your picture.

### ***Photo Upload and Privacy Settings***

Use the "Upload/Change Photos" link on your home page to upload new pictures, manage your existing pictures, or change your picture privacy settings. You have two choices for "Allow your photos to be viewable by:"

- Only You
- Everybody

If you select "Everybody" then anyone can look at your pictures, unless you have a private profile, in which case only your friends can see your pictures.

By default, people who are on your friend list are allowed to send a link to your pictures in an email message. If you want to disable this



capability, go to the privacy settings section of your account settings, and select “No Pic Forwarding.”

If you allow picture forwarding, then the person the message is sent to will be able to see the picture, even if the person is not a MySpace member, unless your profile is set to private. Because of this, we recommend disabling picture forwarding. There is no reason to allow links to your pictures to be forwarded all over the Internet.

Your MySpace friends can also post comments about your pictures. If you have pictures posted, you will want to look at the comments people are making, to make sure you are comfortable with the comments. Delete any comments you’d prefer not to have on your page.

For greatest control over what’s posted by others into your MySpace picture gallery, select “Approve Comments before Posting” in the privacy settings section of your account settings.

### ***MySpace Picture Policies***

MySpace picture policies are clearly stated: no pornography is allowed. In late March 2006, MySpace deleted 200,000 profiles, many because of pornographic content. As of April 2006, MySpace is actively engaged in reviewing every picture that is posted on MySpace.com.

If you have pictures that violate the terms of use, you risk having your account deleted, in which case you lose all of your comments from friends, all of your blog entries, everything you've put onto your MySpace site.

## **6. Friends & Comments**

One of the most-used features of MySpace is the practice that is nicknamed "friending." To "friend" someone, you visit their profile page, click "Add to Friends" in the "Contacting [name]" box located below the person's name and picture on the left of the page. A message is sent to that user saying you'd like to be one of their MySpace friends. If they approve it, then you are added to one another's friend lists.

### ***Friend Privileges***

The people on your friend list have privileges that other MySpace members (those in your "extended network") do not have. When you accept a friend request, or someone accepts a friend request from you, you have given each other approval to post

onto your pages, and to observe content that you have designated as visible only for your friends.

Here are some of the actions that are permissible only for your MySpace friends:

- Only friends can post comments on your page
- Only friends can post comments about your pictures

In addition, using account privacy settings, a MySpace user can reserve the following actions to friends only:

- Comments on blog entries
- Invitations to join a group
- Instant messaging (IM)
- View calendar

These friend-only privileges can be applied to make your MySpace experience safer by giving you a more private “space” that is reserved for you and your friends.

The key is to be selective about who you choose to allow to be your MySpace friend. If you approve every friend request you receive, then you will actually have no privacy at all, because all a person will have to do to see everything on your page is send you a friend request.

### ***Friend Requests from People You Don't Know***

Before you accept a friend request from someone you don't know, you should visit that person's profile. Look at their postings, their pictures, their blog entries, the groups they belong to.

It's also very important to look at the person's friend list. If you accept the friend request, your picture and display name will be posted on that person's friend list, among all the others. Are the friends the person currently has anything like you? Are they people you want to be associated with? Remember too, that if you accept the friend request, some of these people will think you're like them and they'll also send you friend requests. Is this something you'll welcome?

If it isn't apparent from the person's page why they might want to befriend you—that is, if it doesn't look as if you have anything in common, or if they've made it so you can't view what's in their profile—then you should deny the friend request.

For complete security against friend requests from people you don't know, activate the "Require email or last name to add me as a friend" option in your account privacy settings.

## **Comments**

There are three places where MySpace members can post comments on another member's page:

- Profile comments, which appear on your profile page
- Comments about pictures
- Comments about blog entries

Only friends can post profile comments and comments about pictures. Comments can be posted about blog entries by anyone, unless the user has specified otherwise using the blog privacy settings.

The freedom to post comments, then, should be viewed as a privilege. As you write comments, you should keep this in mind. Whatever you write is going to appear on your friend's page.

When you post comments, you need to be especially sure you don't post information that could expose you or your friend to risk—information such as

- phone numbers
- your school name and town
- where you or your friend lives
- where you go with your friends for fun

Remember, if the person you're sending a comment to is 16 or older, everyone on the entire

Internet can read your comment. Treat your writing of comments with the same care that you apply to your own profile posts.

## **7. Blogging**

Many teens who use their MySpace blog provide details in their blog entries that would make it very easy for someone they don't want to meet to find them. Entries are commonly full of details like locations where social events took place, names of schools, names of towns, streets, stores, teachers' real names, etc.

If you do this, then the precautions you took in safely configuring your profile may not matter. It makes no sense to omit information from your profile because you want to be safe, and then put that same information into your blog posts.

### ***What Not to Blog***

Here's a list of the type of information you should never post on your blog, whether it's information about yourself, about your friends, acquaintances, parents, teachers, about anyone:

- real name
- street address, town or city
- school name
- phone number
- places of employment
- unique store names (stores that have only one location)
- the time and place for an upcoming event you'll be attending
- anything you wouldn't say in public (because on your blog, you are saying it in public)
- anything you'd find embarrassing if a certain person saw it
- anything that would hurt someone if they saw it
- anything that is intentionally malicious toward another person
- anything that someone you don't know could use to take advantage of you (for example, someone could blackmail you by threatening to tell your parents, or the police, about what they read, unless you do something for them)

### ***Blog Privacy Settings***

The Account Privacy Settings provide an option that limits the comment posts to your friends only.

Additional settings related to safety are available in the “Customize Blog” page, accessed from your “Manage Blog” page.

Scroll down the page to the “Side Module” section. Here you can specify the following options:

- Show Gender
- Show Status
- Show Age
- Show Sign
- Show City
- Show State
- Show Country
- Show Signup Date
- Show Subscriptions
- Show Blog Groups

To maximize safety and privacy, set all but the last two items to “No,” so that your personal information is not displayed beside your blog entries.

### ***Blog Post Privacy Setting***

When you make a blog post, you are provided with a “Privacy” setting that lets you specify who can see this particular entry:



- Public (everyone who has the right to view your blog can view this entry)
- Diary (only you can read the post)
- Friends (only friends can read the post)
- Preferred List (only people on your preferred list can read the post)

Selecting “Friends” is fine if you’ve been careful about selecting who’s on your friend list. Or you could set up a “Preferred List,” which is a specific list of MySpace users (friends or members of the extended network) who can read blog entries you designate for “Preferred List” access.

“Public,” which is the default option, should really only be selected if you’ve written the type of piece you might submit to a newspaper or magazine “Letter to the Editor” section.

## **8. Groups, Forums, Chat**

The most important thing to remember when you use MySpace groups, forums, or chat is that within these “spaces” your profile privacy settings provide no protection. These MySpace pages are open for viewing by anyone who meets the requirements specified by the person who started the group or forum.

If your profile is private, people won't be able to click on your link and see your profile, but everything you post in the group is readable by the public that has access to the group's posts. With MySpace groups and group-related features, you are much more out in the open. Therefore, younger teens in particular need to be very careful about what they post in MySpace groups and forums.

### ***Add to Group***

Moderators or group members may have permission to invite other MySpace members into a MySpace group. Unfortunately, some people have decided to use MySpace groups as a venue for pornography and for recruiting visitors to pornography sites outside of MySpace. These people will often send out thousands of invitations for people to join their MySpace group. The invitations arrive in your MySpace InBox, asking you to approve your invitation to the group.

There is no restriction on invitations to groups based on age and group content. A 15-year-old can be invited to a group that is designated as having adult content. It is the responsibility of each MySpace user to beware of such group invitations.

To eliminate invitations to groups from people not on your friend list, select “Friend Only Group Invites” in your account privacy settings.

## ***Forums***

MySpace has many forum categories, including Automotive, Campus Life, Games, Love & Relationships, Music, and Sports. If you click on one of the categories, you are brought to a page listing subcategories. Click on a subcategory and you see a list of “Forum Topics,” which are the actual forums where entries can be posted.

Anyone can read the posts in any forum. MySpace applies rules that limit young teens from posting in certain forums, but we haven’t found information on what the exact rules are.

Forums do not pose a serious safety risk for teens who are seeking a safe MySpace experience, provided that the rules about listing personal information are followed.

It’s important to remember that any post you make to a forum remains there permanently, unless MySpace removes it because someone files a complaint. Don’t post to forums if you have any doubt that you want your post to be permanently readable by others.

## **Chat**

MySpace chat can be accessed through the forums or by going directly to [chat.myspace.com](http://chat.myspace.com). The MySpace chat rooms are open chat areas, where anything goes. As such, the safety risk is in the hands of the individual user. Young teens need to remember that people online can pretend to be anyone they want to be. The seemingly cute 17 year old may really be 29 or 43 years old and not cute at all in real life.

## **9. Quitting MySpace**

If you stop using MySpace, you should go through the procedure of formally cancelling your account. Otherwise, the information you posted will remain online and available for others to see.

In addition, we recommend emptying your account of all personal information, all postings, all photos, everything, before you cancel the account.

The standard way to cancel a MySpace account is to go to the Account Settings page and click the “Cancel Account” link near the top of the page. But, this will not work if the email account

you use for logging in is invalid or is not accessible by you.

If you cannot use the standard cancel account procedure, click the “FAQ” link at the bottom of every MySpace page and look for entries relating to canceling accounts.

If nothing in the FAQ applies, send a message to:

customercare@myspace.com

Your message should include the URL of the profile page for the account you want deleted. Go to the page and copy the URL from your browser’s address box and paste it into your email message.

## **Resources**

<http://www.MySpaceSafetyTips.com>, location of the latest version of this document and additional up to date information on MySpace.com.

*MySpace Safety: 51 Tips for Teens and Parents*, by Kevin and Dale Farnham, ISBN 0-9778833-5-3, published by How-To Primers, May 2006.

<http://www.HowToPrimers.com/>, the publisher’s site.

<http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm>, “A Parent’s Guide to Internet Safety” published by U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

<http://www.missingkids.com>, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

<http://www.BlogSafety.com>, “where teens, parents, teachers and adult bloggers can learn about the benefits of safe blogging & social networking.”

<http://NetFamilyNews.org>, “based on the premise that informed, engaged parenting is essential to kids’ constructive use of technology and the Net.”

<http://tcs.cybertipline.com>, “Don’t Believe the Type,” a site for children and teens about online safety, hosted by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.