Do the Right Thing!

You may not realize it, but you have a lot of power when you're online: you can cheer people up, make them laugh, and help to make your school, your town or even the whole world a better place. The flip side is that what you do can make things worse, too. That's why you have to think about what you say and do online, and try your best to do the right thing.

Doing the right thing online mostly comes down to the **three R's of respect:** respect people's privacy, respect people's feelings and respect people's property.

Respect People's Privacy

Our friends share stuff with us all the time: pictures they took, what they're thinking, even where they are. Every time a friend shares something with you, you have to decide whether you should share it with anybody else.

Here are some things to think about when you're making that call:

What might happen if what I'm sharing gets sent to people who weren't supposed to see it? How will my friend feel if their parents see it? Their teachers? Their friends, girlfriends or boyfriends?

If there are other people in what your friend shared with you, think about this:
- How will they feel if I share this this?
- Is there anything they'd be worried about?

Respect People's Feelings

Sometimes we don't realize how the things we do and say online make other people feel. That's because we don't see or hear a lot of the things that let us know how someone is feeling, like the look on their face or how their voice sounds.

Here are some things to think about when you're talking to people online:

• **Griefing, trolling and pranking are pretty common in a lot of online places.** Sometimes this is just "part of the game," but before you get into it you should think about how what you're doing or saying might feel to the other person. Also, remember that the rules are different in different places: stuff that's normal to do in your favourite online game might not be OK when you're talking to your friends.

- **It's really easy for drama to get started online, and it's just as easy for it to blow up into something serious.** When you read or see something online that gets you angry, take the time to cool down before you reply. Ask yourself if maybe you're reading it wrong and seeing things that the person who wrote it didn't mean to say. Finally, if drama does get started between you and somebody else, try talking to them in person to sort it out.

- **If one of your friends gets involved in drama or is being picked on by a bully, ask them what you can do to help.** It's great to stand by your friends, but just taking their side against somebody else might make things worse: most of the time, people who've been bullied say that what helps them the most is to have somebody listen and give them support.

- **If you have a boyfriend or girlfriend, don't get into things like keeping tabs on where they are or watching who they're texting or talking to online.** Don't ever ask your girlfriend/boyfriend for a picture or anything else that he or she doesn't want to share. If your boyfriend or girlfriend does any of those things to you, you should talk to your parents, your friends, an adult you trust or a helpline about it.

Respect People's Property

The Internet can feel like a great big mall, and most of the time there's no security guards to make sure we're not stealing anything. That doesn't mean that you don't have to show respect for the people who made all of the games, videos, music and other great stuff that's online.

Here are some things to think about when you're watching, listening to or playing stuff online:

- **Just because something's online doesn't mean you can take it and use it.** For things you are allowed to use, always give credit to the person or company who owns the copyright.

- **It's also not true that you can do anything you want so long as you give credit to the person who made it.** That's important, but you also need to respect what they want done with it: when somebody makes something like a game, a song or a movie, they own it and they deserve to control what happens to it. They may choose to give it away, but if they want to charge for it that's their right. With all the stuff that's free online, if something isn't free it's because the person who made it expects to get paid. Check out our tip sheet Getting the Goods Ethically for info on how to find what you want online.

- **Don't think that cheating a big company is different from cheating a person.** For one thing, selling and licensing the stuff they make is how a lot of artists make a living: if companies stop doing this because they aren't making money, it's the artists who suffer.

- **Respecting people's property also applies to using someone else's work in essays and assignments.** Sometimes plagiarism is accidental: for instance, most students know that copying whole assignments is cheating, but they may not know that rephrasing things and stitching them together to look like their own work counts as cheating as well. Remember, if you can find something online, so can your teacher, so play it safe and make sure you give the source for any ideas that aren't yours.

- **There can be lost of pressure when assignments are due, but don't take short cuts.** If you copy something somebody else wrote for your school work, you're not only cheating that person, you're really cheating yourself out of a chance to learn something and you're cheating all the other kids in your class – the ones who didn't copy – as well.

THINK BEFORE YOU SHARE

Tips from Facebook and MediaSmarts

We always hear that sharing is a good thing. And thanks to technology, we can share our ideas, opinions, pictures and videos with our friends and other people.

Most of the time, sharing *is* good. But if we aren't thoughtful about how we share, we run the risk of hurting ourselves or someone else. Also, remember that the things you share with your friends can end up being shared with others. That's why it's important to think before you share.

YOUR OWN STUFF

Whenever you're sharing things about you – whether it's a picture, video or personal things like your phone number – keep in mind that it could easily end up being seen by people you didn't want it sent to.

Also, it's not a good idea to share things when you're feeling really emotional – whether you're angry, sad, or excited. Calm down first and then decide if it's really a good idea.

Next, ask yourself:

- ✓ Is this how I want people to see me?
- ✓ Could somebody use this to hurt me? Would I be upset if they shared it with others?
- ✓ What's the worst thing that could happen if I shared this?

Passwords are not social: There's some things you need to be really careful about sharing. Sometimes friends share passwords with each other when all is good, but unfortunately this can turn into a nightmare later.

An image lasts forever: Some people think sharing risky photos with friends shows they trust them. Be extra careful in this situation and think – an image can outlast a relationship.

Remember that if somebody asks you to share something you are not comfortable with you have the right to say no. Nobody who loves or respects you will pressure or threaten you.

Gone in seconds, but maybe not gone forever: Some apps or social networking sites promise to auto-delete images or videos after a few seconds of viewing. But there's ways around this – the viewer could take a screenshot – so you still have to make smart decisions about sharing.

FacebookTIPS:

1

Passwords are not social. Don't share your password with anyone. For additional security tips go to: facebook.com/help/securitytips

2

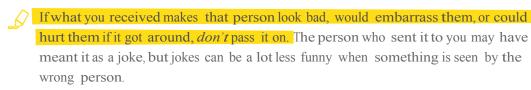Check your privacy settings at facebook.com/privacy to see who can view your posts.

3

Check the audience selector tool each time you post on Facebook in order to make sure you are sharing it with your desired audience.

OTHER PEOPLE'S STUFF

Most of the time when people send things to you, they're okay with you sharing them with other people. If you don't know for sure, think twice before doing this. Even better, ask the person who sent it if they mind if you share. The same is true if you're sharing photos or videos that have other people in them: ask before you tag, re-post or pass them on.

If someone shares something with you with somebody else in it, ask yourself:

- ✓ Did the person who sent this to me mean for it to be shared?
- ✓ Did they have permission from the person who's in it?
- ✓ How would I feel if somebody shared something like this with me in it?

If what you received makes that person look bad, would embarrass them, or could hurt them if it got around, *don't* pass it on. The person who sent it to you may have meant it as a joke, but jokes can be a lot less funny when something is seen by the wrong person.

FIXING THINGS IF THEY GO WRONG

Everyone makes bad choices sometimes. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't do everything you can to fix things.

If you shared something you shouldn't have, the first step is to ask the people you sent it to not to pass it on.

If someone else posted something you sent them, start by asking them to take it down. It's actually pretty effective most of the time. Remember not to do anything while you're mad: give yourself time to cool down and, if you can, talk to the person offline.
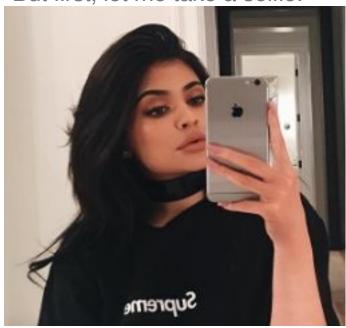
If they refuse to take it down, don't try to get back at them by sharing private things they sent you, harassing them or getting your friends to gang up on them. For one thing, this almost always makes things worse. For another, the more you get back at them, the more it might look like it's just as much your fault as theirs.

If you're tagged in a photo that you don't like, remember that a lot of photo-sharing and social networking sites may let you take your name off any pictures you've been tagged in. On Facebook, you can also select to review posts you are tagged in before they post to your timeline under your privacy settings: facebook.com/privacy.

note!

This New Study Suggests Selfies Are Linked to Happiness

"But first, let me take a selfie."

INSTAGRAM
By Gina Mei
Sep 22, 2016

Good news, selfie lovers: A new study published in *Psychology of Well-Being* now suggests that taking selfies might actually give you a mood boost.

In the study, 41 students were asked to download an app to their smartphones and track their moods over the course of four weeks. The students were then assigned into three groups: The first group was asked to take a smiling selfie every day, the second was asked to take pictures of things that made them happy, and the third was asked to take photos of things they thought might make other people happy, then send the photos to those people. At the end of the month, the study found that all three groups had experienced an overall increase in happiness.

"Qualitative results showed that those in the selfie group observed changes in their smile over time; the group taking photos to improve their own affect became more reflective and those taking photos for others found that connecting with family members and friends helped to relieve stress," the study concluded.

In the selfie group, they saw themes of "changed mood, due to feeling more confident, comfortable, or creative." Conversely, a few of the people in the group reported "stress" over having to smile in every photo — but overall, the response was definitely positive.

"As days went on, I got more comfortable taking photos of myself," one of the participants said. "If you feel good about yourself, then [a] selfie would be a way to capture that."

Of course, 41 students is a pretty small number for any study, and it would need to be expanded quite a bit for the results to be more conclusive. But hey: At least you can now claim that psychology is on your side the next time you snap a picture of yourself.

Scientists examine why selfies are linked to conflict in relationships

ROBERTA JENKINS March 8, 2017

Despite being created to bring people closer together, social media sites such as Facebook could be causing more damage to relationships than good. According to a recent study published in *Telematics and Informatics*, when people share pictures of themselves online it can create 'selfie related conflicts'. Previous research has found that people become increasingly jealous the more their other half uses Facebook, suggesting that copious social media use reduces the quality of romantic relationships.

It is possible that our ever increasing ability to effortlessly view other people's information online makes it easier to search for and find a new partner, which leads to a higher turnover of romantic relationships. Additionally, apps like Snapchat where images are only displayed for a matter of seconds can be used for sharing provocative pictures and flirting, which has been found to incite more jealousy between partners than Facebook.

It is established that social media use can cause jealousy between partners, but it is not established what specifically about social media causes feelings of jealousy to arise. The authors of the study conducted two online surveys that were completed by 305 adults over a two-year period. The first survey was concerned with jealousy, how frequently individuals posted selfies and how people go about presenting an ideal version of themselves online. The second survey (completed one year after the first) measured social media related conflicts and the quality of relationships.

The results showed that the level of jealousy between romantic partners increased with the amount of selfies that were posted on social media sites. Additionally, photo related conflicts as a result of posting selfies negatively affected the quality of the relationship. It was also found that the more selfies an individual posts on social media, the more likely it is that they are trying to create an idealized persona of themselves for social media connections to see.

The study brings to light the negative effect that social media can have on romantic relationships over time. It may be the case that visual communication compared to other forms is more prone to the damaging effects of over sharing. The saying 'a picture is worth a thousand words' comes to mind. It seems that although communication is important in a relationship, consistent selfie posting could be 'too much communication'.