

## The art of the poke: A Facebook guide for the uninitiated

Everyone's heard of Facebook, but there still may be some of you out there that have so far refused to jump on the social media bandwagon. If you are finally breaking down and joining the rest of us, welcome, and we're here to help you make the transition. Joining Facebook is free, simple, and worthwhile — after all, it's a great way to keep in touch with friends and family, meet new people, and express yourself. Our Facebook guide is by no means complete, but the following are some of the basics for the novice social networker. Just remember to keep those privacy settings in check.



### Signing up

First, you'll need to go to the official Facebook website and sign up. The site will ask you for your first and last name, and either your mobile number or email address (either will do). You'll also need to enter your birthday and gender, which will help assist others in finding you on the site. Make sure you also choose a password that's easy to remember, and, moreover, strong enough to keep others guessing.

A word on using your real name, though. While Facebook has relaxed its requirement on using something other than your real name in some cases, in general, the site will force you to use your real name in your profile. Those who don't run the risk of having their accounts locked until they prove their identity. It's a process, to be sure, so we suggest you use your real name from the get-go.

### Setting your privacy settings

Once you're set up with your new account, go ahead and set your privacy settings so you can control who has access to your information and profile. These settings are found by clicking the down arrow located in the right-hand side of the topmost toolbar, under *Settings*. Then, look for the *Privacy* link in the left-hand navigation pane and click it.

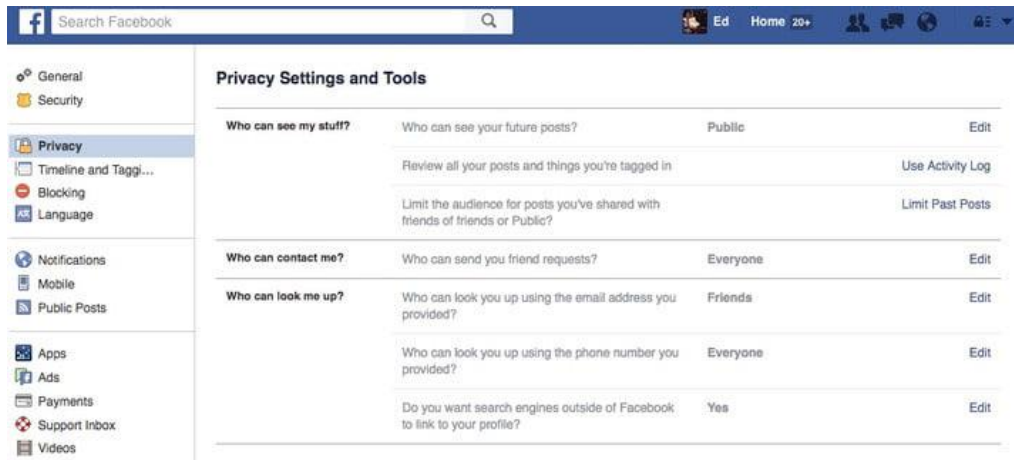
Here, you can set up your privacy defaults. You have three main settings, plus a custom option for even more control. You can even change these on the fly when posting content. We recommend that you avoid leaving your information open to everyone. Remember, what happens on Facebook doesn't always stay on Facebook. Here's what they mean:

**Public:** Everyone can see your content, including those you aren't friends with.

**Friends:** Only those who you're connected to as friends will be able to see your posts.

**Only Me:** Like it says, this content is hidden from view, and only you can see it.

If you want more control, click *More options* and explore some of the Custom options. As you gain friends, Facebook will also automatically add new privacy groups so that posts might only show to those whom you work or have worked with, schools you've attended, or even people who live near you. It's pretty cool.



This page also houses options to control who can send you friend requests, as well as options for managing how others on Facebook can find you. We also recommend surfing around the *Timeline and Tagging* tab if you want to further tinker who can post stuff to your timeline and whether they can tag you in posts and other content.

Making sure these privacy settings are how you want them is important. Think carefully about public photos and information, and consider what your employer or your grandmother would think of your profile.

### **Making it your own**

Facebook is often an expression of the individual, so why not have some fun with it? Below are some of the many personal facets you can tweak on Facebook, and what they mean.

**Profile picture:** Upload, snap a picture from your webcam, or choose a photo from an album to be your default profile photo. Don't worry too much about size — Facebook will crop it for you — but keep in mind that your profile picture will always be displayed regardless of your privacy setting.

**Cover photo:** Upload, take, or choose a photo from an album to be the default banner photo that extends across the top of your profile. Again, whatever image you use can be cropped, repositioned, or changed down the line.

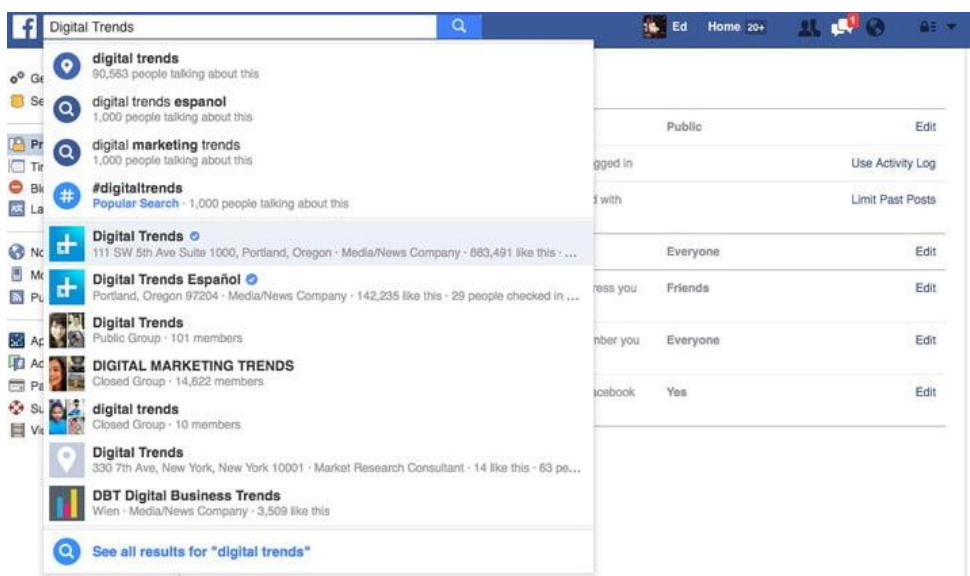
**Update your info:** In the “About” portion of your profile, you can enter information about everything from your work history and education to your favorite quotes and where you live. This is also where you throw in basics such as your contact information, age, gender, religion, and relationship status, among other things. Maybe even write a brief bio about yourself if you really want to get into it, or add a line or two to the “Intro” section located in the upper-left corner of your profile page.

**Likes:** Search for your favorite bands, sports teams, books, businesses, and anything else you can think of in the tiny search bar at the top of the page. Make sure to click the *Like* button once you've found what you're looking for. If it exists, then there is a good chance there's a page for it.

### Finding your friends

Facebook can be lonely without friends, so fire off those friend requests. Once you've collected a few friends, Facebook will start suggesting other people to be your friend based on common friends and interests. Below are two methods for finding friends.

**Search:** The search bar at the top of the page is the quickest and easiest way to find your friends on Facebook. Just type the name of your friends, family, and coworkers in the search bar. It's an easy way to find just about anybody on the site.



**Import:** Facebook gives you the option to import contacts from another location. The site can search through contacts in Windows Live Messenger, AIM, Yahoo, Outlook, and Gmail, as well as most other email services.

### Working with photos and video

While it's cool to find out what's going on in the lives of your friends, photos and videos are much more interesting to look at. Here's how to use these features, including the new Facebook Live feature.

**Uploading single photos and videos:** If you're just uploading just a single photo, use the *Photo/Video* option located atop the spot where you'd normally type the text of your status message. You'll just need to navigate to the file to upload it. If you want to add some text to go along with the photo or video, type it in the text box before clicking the blue *Post* button.

**Creating a photo or video album:** If you have several photos or videos — say from your recent vacation — use the *Photo/Video Album* option. This will group all of these photos and videos together, which, if you're one for organization, will leave your photos page cleaner and easier to navigate.



**Using Facebook Live:** Facebook is making a big push for live video. If you want to start broadcasting from your mobile device in real time, all you need to do is click the *Live* button at the top of the app, type a description of your video, and tap *Go Live* after selecting your audience. You'll instantly begin broadcasting, and you'll be able to see how many people are watching and their comments in real time.

### **Sharing content**

Sharing is at the heart of Facebook, so while you're ultimately in control of what you share, make sure you're at least making it somewhat interesting for your friends. As previously mentioned, you do have the ability to limit with whom you share every post, so not everyone has to see it if you don't want them to. Here's the basics of what you can currently share on the site.

**Status updates.** What's on your mind? Status updates will appear as posts on your timeline and News Feed. Here, you can easily share text, photos, videos, and links with the people of your choice by inserting your content and hitting the blue *Post* button.

**Feelings and actions:** Facebook also allows you to share how you're feeling, or what you might be doing, in your statuses. They'll appear at the top of the status update as something to the extent of "Ed Oswald is feeling amused," or "Brandon Widder is watching *The Walking Dead*." You might already do this in the text of your update, but some prefer to share this way.

**Check-ins:** Want to show off that you got tickets for the big game or concert? Check-ins give you the option of choosing a specific location and time when you post. Just click on the pin icon in the share menu to find nearby locations from a drop-down list, or simply type in a specific spot.

**Life events:** Facebook does a great job of sharing those big, life-changing moments, such as graduating from college or having a kid. From your profile, all you have to do is click on *Life Event* button in the share menu and choose the type of event. Then, just enter the specifics.

**Tagging:** The tagging function allows you to tag your friends and share a post with a number of their timelines simultaneously. Just type the ampersand symbol ("@") in the share box and choose which friends you want to tag from the resulting drop-down menu. You can always type in a name if the person you wish to tag doesn't have a Facebook account.

**Sharing on other timelines:** Sometimes you may just want to share things with a specific someone instead of broadcasting it to everyone you know. Luckily, sharing on someone else's timeline essentially works in the same way as using the share box on your own page. Head to their profile page and insert the content, tags, or place you want to share in the share box on their timeline. Afterward, hit the blue *Post* button.

**Liking:** When checking out what others have shared, be sure to let them know what you think of the content by clicking the *Like* button located below their post. You're not limited to that type of response, either. Recent changes to Facebook mean you can also now respond with a host of emojis — "Love," "Anger," etc. Simply hover over the *Like* button to bring up the options, or press and hold the *Like* button if using the mobile app.



Facebook gives you the option to like, comment on, or share pretty much any post that you can view on the site. All you have to do is choose one of the options below the post.

### **Sending messages**

It's not quite as personal or fancy as your email, but Facebook is incredibly handy when it comes to privately getting in contact with acquaintances or people you don't know all that well. Or maybe you just want to forego Yahoo Messenger, AIM, or Skype in favor of something a bit more all-encompassing.

**Messages:** There are a couple ways to send private message to people on Facebook, and you don't need to be friends with someone in order to do so. One way is to click the *Messages* tab on the left-hand side of your homepage, choose the *New Message* option, and select a name (or names) from the drop-down menu after you begin typing. Then, enter your message and click *Send*. You don't have to stay on this page, as new messages will appear along the bottom of the page while you're elsewhere on Facebook.

**Chat:** Forget the days of AIM and Yahoo Messenger, Facebook has a built-in chat client so you can talk with your friends without ever leaving your News Feed. This works much like the *Messages* page. Look to the lower-right corner of Facebook, and you should see a list of friends who are online. Then, simply click on a name to begin chatting — the chat box will appear at the bottom of the page.

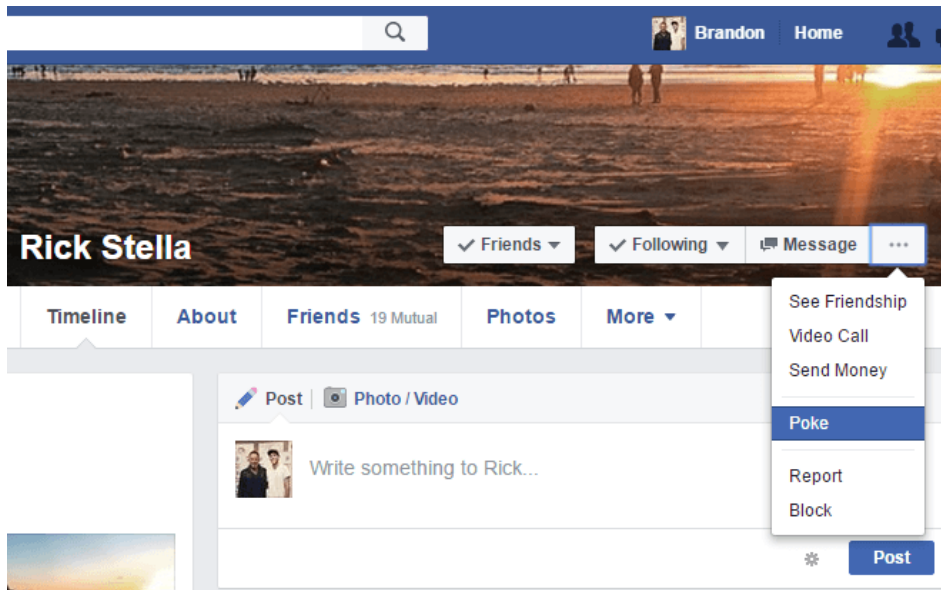
**Video calling:** Facebook makes video calling a breeze. Just click the video camera icon in any chat dialogue box to start a video call with one of your friends using your default webcam. Although you cannot chat with multiple people at once, you can continue using the Facebook chat while engaged in a video call.

### **Other features**

Facebook is continually rolling out new features and expanding the limitations of what a social networking site can do. From groups to games, the site is continually pushing the borders and turning out all sorts of goodies. We aren't going to dive too in-depth into each one, but just know they exist.

**Gifts:** Facebook makes it easy to give gifts to your friends. You choose the friend, the gift, the card, and personal message. Then, your friend inputs his or her street address and Facebook essentially takes care of the rest.

**Pokes:** Whoever you poke will receive a notification saying you poked them. We don't fully understand the point of it, but you can do it all the same. This feature seems to also get more and more buried with each Facebook update, so who knows if the feature will be around for much longer.



**Groups:** These are a great way to create or join a private space for people who share common interests. Want to break a Guinness record, or join a group where members sell concert tickets for face value? There's currently a Facebook group for both, just in case you were worried.

**Apps:** Facebook offers a variety of free apps, *some* of which are actually useful.

**Timeline:** This feature is basically a profile of your entire life in a virtual nutshell. Feel free to scroll through your past to check out old photos, posts, and anything else you may have forgotten about over the years. Timeline wasn't always required, but now it is, so get used to it.

**Notifications:** These are your go-to spot for any and all Facebook activity. You can set it up to email you updates, if desired, or just click the little globe near the search bar to see any recent activity.

**Mobile version:** Now you can access Facebook directly from your smartphone, tablet, or other mobile device. It works in the same vein as the website, but with some slight modifications and restrictions. The app is available for both [Android](#) and [iOS](#) devices.