



Browsing social media checklist

Social media platforms offer the opportunity to interact with one another and exchange information. While the services are largely free, they still come at a high cost: our personal data. We offer ten tips for safe social media browsing.

1. When it comes to social media profiles, follow the rules below: Be cautious about the personal information you share!
2. Use different and secure passwords for different social media platforms!
3. Check your profile settings to determine what data you share with whom and who should have access to your profile.
4. Review your privacy settings and limit specific rights, such as personalised advertising.
5. Choose a placeholder or a neutral photo as your profile picture – something you will not be embarrassed about later.
6. Before uploading content to the internet, think about whether and with whom you want to share the content. Do you want an image or a status update to be permanently searchable on the web?
7. Always scrutinise contact requests. Is the sender genuine and trustworthy? Our tip: Be especially vigilant if someone claims to be a friend or family member and asks for money or personal information, such as your mobile phone number.
8. Report individuals who harass you or others ('cyberstalkers' and 'trolls') to the relevant social media platform – for example, if they make unsolicited and persistent attempts to contact you.
9. Document and report texts, images, videos or comments that you perceive to be offensive and/or constituting hate speech against specific groups of people. You can report them, for example, to meldestelle-respect.de and hateaid.org.
10. Do not click on links indiscriminately. Social media platforms are increasingly being used to gain access to your personal data and online account credentials (phishing).

How to spot fake news

When you consume or share news on social media platforms, always ask yourself: Can this really be true?

- Who is the source of the news? Is there a credible source?

Our tip: When sharing links to external news portals, it helps to check the portal's legal notice. In accordance with German laws, websites in Germany are required to contain a legal notice, which is typically linked at the bottom of a website.

- What is the writing style of the news article? Sensationalist texts with striking images, numerous exclamation and question marks, can serve as a first indicator of potential misinformation.
- Who is the author of the article? What information is available about them?
- Have other reputable sources and reliable news websites or broadcasts also reported on the same matter?

Our tip: Use fact-checkers. You can check mimikama.org, tagesschau.de/faktenfinder or correctiv.org to find out what false information is currently being widely disseminated.

- Where, when and by whom was an image or video taken? What does it actually show?

Our tip: You can use Google's reverse image search on images.google.de or Bing to trace the origin of an image and discover where the image has been previously used.

- Is the news article current? Is there a date and can the date be correct?

! Are you unsure? Seek independent advice! For more information, please contact your Consumers' Advice Bureau (Verbraucherzentrale). www.verbraucherzentrale.de