Privacy Settings

Facebook has a range of settings that allow you to control how much of your content other users can see. It is *essential* that younger users set their default privacy to 'Friends.' This means that only people who have been accepted as a friend can see most of your content. Take the time to browse through the Privacy and Profile settings to ensure that people who aren't friends can't see your private information such as birthdate or email info. Note the difference to 'Friends of Friends' which makes your details visible to thousands, considering that many younger users tend to collect hundreds of friends.

Photo Tagging

Facebook allows you to 'tag' yourself or others in an image you upload. This means that other Facebookers who are NOT your friends can see your name attached to images of you. Fortunately, Facebook allows users to *approve* these tags before they become visible. Look for the Profile and Tagging settings to turn this on.
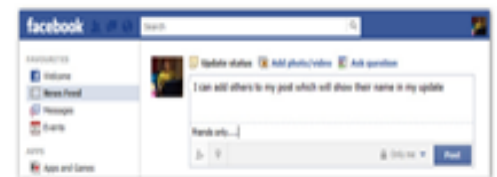

Geo-Tagging

Similar to image tagging, Geo-tagging allows you to show WHERE you are when you post. Not much of a concern if you are tagging yourself on a holiday (as in my Facebook example below), but in your day to day activities, showing where you are on regular basis allows others to see where your regular movements lie. This seems quite harmless in Facebook, but the same feature in Twitter is a little more confronting when you see your actual location pinpointed on a map.

'With' visibility

The WITH feature when creating a post allows others to be included in the post. This feature is limited to only include people you are friends with, which is another good reminder to KNOW all your friends personally. However, when included using the WITH feature, your name is now visible to all your friends' friends as well. Also, this may include you in a conversation you have no desire to be part of. Some maturity is required when using this feature and involving other people in your posts

Posting to Public or Friends only

As mentioned Facebook's account settings allow you to set the default sharing option to Public or Friends. Yet this can be overridden with the click of a button so take care not to inadvertently make a post visible to the whole of the Facebook community – now over 750 million active users.

A final note to parents

It is vitally important that parents include themselves in their child's online life. Have conversations with your child about how they use tools like Facebook, not to check up or spy on them, but to inject some maturity and insight into what happens online. You should even considering signing up to Facebook, and friending your kids to allow you to be an active part of their online community.