

Identity: Social Sign-On and The Information We Give Away

Background

Many websites provide users with the option to log in using Facebook or other social network profiles. The implications of using social network profiles to log in to third-party websites, however, have received scant discussion in curriculum and instruction. This lesson provides a starting point for educators to have a dialogue with students about the opportunities and potential privacy implications about the use of social profiles as a cross-web login.

Objectives

- Encourage thinking about social profiles
- Identify information that third party providers might be able to access when users opt to utilize a social profile
- Recognize the privacy implications of using social profiles
- Identify questions that might be asked when considering whether or not to use social profiles

Materials

- Computers and internet connectivity: one per student or one per group of 2-4
- Whiteboard or chalkboard

Audience

- Advanced Middle School; High School

Time: 45 - 60 Minutes



Lesson last updated: June 3, 2013

Instructional plan

Activity 1: Do Now

Time: 5-10 Minutes

A “do now” is something that students do immediately upon entering the classroom. It helps them focus on the learning and task on hand, and cuts down on transition time. Write the following questions on the board and, as students enter, ask for them to write answers to the questions on a sheet of paper. They should write continuously until their time is up.

Describe an instance in which you have used your Facebook or Twitter account to log in to an unaffiliated website. Why did you choose to log in that way? Do you feel it enhanced or hindered your experience?

Call time, and ask students to talk about what they wrote. After each response, ask students if someone has more to contribute, or thinks differently.

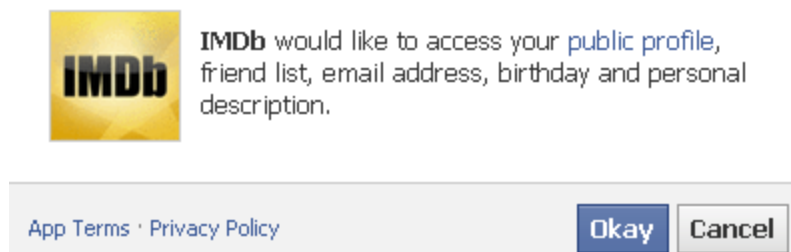
Activity 2: Research, in small groups

Time: 20 Minutes

Build on the do now. Prepare for the next exercise by asking students to brainstorm a list of the benefits and drawbacks of social login features. Track this list on the board.

Once this list has been created, explain to students that they should take a few minutes to identify 3-4 sites they commonly use that provide them with the opportunity to log in with Facebook. Ask them to try to find out what information the sites collect.

If the school’s infrastructure allows, ask a student in each group to try to create a new account, by logging in with Facebook. This requires a Facebook sign-in as a first step. When the system asks if the user would like to approve of the site’s access of user information, they may decline (and close the window). The screen will look as below:



You may find it helpful to model this practice first on a projector.



Identity: Social Sign-On and The Information We Give Away

Activity 3: Dialogue and presentation.

Time: 10-20 Minutes

Based on their research, what information do the sites obtain? Dialogue and present. What have students found? Students should use evidence from their exploration to discuss whether it's appropriate for sites to store this information.

It may be natural for some students to feel that it's appropriate for websites to store personal information; others may not. In this case, if time allows, you may have the opportunity to create or inspire a productive classroom debate. In this case, be sure students keep the conversation civil and backed by evidence (if at all possible).

Activity 4: Teachback and considering future scenarios.

Time: 5-10 Minutes

Ask students to consider: How much information would people provide if they created an account, rather than to use a social profile?

Finally, drive the dialogue to a conclusion applicable to students' classroom and home experience. Ask: What can you learn from this dialogue? What are some practices that can be applied in the future?

