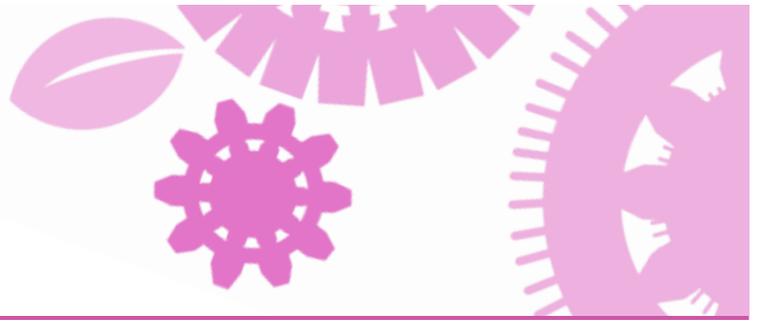# Using Facebook

## For academic purposes

**Facebook started out as a student networking site and, as of September 2015, has over 1.5 billion active users. As well as individuals, many companies, organisations and groups use Facebook for communication, advertising, and marketing purposes. But have you considered using Facebook for academic purposes?**

⇒ At the University of Sunderland, many academic departments, student support services, Students' Union and clubs and societies have Facebook pages, which you can choose to 'Like'. Many students find this a useful way to keep up-to-date, ask questions, or communicate with other students at the University.

⇒ Depending on your programme of study, it may be appropriate for you to use Facebook to work in groups, organise events or collaborate with other students on projects. Always check with your lecturer if you are permitted or encouraged to use Facebook in this way.

⇒ Facebook is commonly used by companies or organisations to communicate about products, services or updates. If you 'Like' their page, you will see their posts in your news feed, providing you with a way to keep up-to-date with information relating to your studies, research topics or future career.

⇒ Facebook is a public site which can be accessed by anyone with an account, which means that potentially, over a 1.5 billion people can see your information, photos and status updates if you do not take care with your privacy settings. Increasingly, employers also check the Facebook profiles of potential employees when recruiting (See the **Manage your online reputation** guide, for more information on this topic).

⇒ It is also important to keep your social and academic use of Facebook separate as far as possible. A recent study (Kirschner and Karpinski, 2010) showed that excessive use of Facebook by students for social purposes led to less time spent studying and resulted in lower grades. The study asserted that students who constantly switch between social networking sites and their assignments may make more mistakes in their work!

**Reference:**

Kirschner, P. A. and Karpinski, A. C. (2010). "Facebook® and academic performance". *Computers In Human Behavior*, *26* (Online Interactivity: Role of Technology in Behavior Change), 1237-1245. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2010.03.024

**Reflection: using Facebook for academic purposes**

⇒ Think about the ways you could use Facebook for academic purposes

⇒ Do you 'like' any of the University Facebook pages?

⇒ Do you think any of these pages could help you stay up-to-date and be a way to communicate with staff and other students?

⇒ If you currently use Facebook, does the time you spend on it have any negative effects on your studies?

⇒ If so, how could you adapt your use so that you get the best out of this tool without it affecting your studies? (See the **Skills for Learning**: **Managing your time** module for tips on this topic)

'Like' University of Sunderland in London on Facebook

Adapted from: Cottrell, J. and Morris, N. (2012). *Study skills connected: using technology to support your studies.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

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