

Setting up a social media account

From connecting with friends, old and new, to staying in the know, social media can a great tool for you to get the most out of the online world and discover all sorts of new things.

This factsheet will introduce you to some of the most popular social networking sites and tell you how to set up your own social media account.

*Instructions may vary according to your device model.

What you'll learn

1. What a social network is
2. How to set up a social media account

What a social network is

A social network is an online community where people can share information with each other in several ways, such as posting updates about what they're up to, posting photos, or commenting on current affairs.

As well as being a handy way to keep in touch with people, social networks can also be great fun. Even when your friends or family aren't next to you, you can still chat or share experiences with them online.

There are many different social networks out there, each offering slightly different things:

Facebook



Connect with friends and join interest groups, for example about your local area.

Twitter



Keep up with what's happening in the world.

Instagram



Share photos.

Pinterest



Share and discover new interests.

Setting up a social media account continued

Signing up to social media

To sign up, you will need to provide some personal details, including your email address, and create a password. If you don't have an email address, check out our factsheet to help you set one up by clicking on the following link or, if this sheet has been printed, by typing it into your web browser: bt.com/seniorskills

You may be asked to go to your email inbox and open an activation/verification email. This will contain a link that you'll need to click to open your account for the first time.

Once you're set up you can start searching for people you know. Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have search bars that will allow you look for friends or family that also have a social media account on this site. Simply click on the search bar and type in their name. There will likely be more than one person with that name, so make sure you select the right one. Their picture usually helps you know you're connecting with the right person.

If you are using social media on a phone or mobile device, it may suggest people in your saved contacts.

You might start receiving connection requests from other people when they find out you've joined the social media network. It's up to you to decide whether you want to connect with them. Think twice before accepting a request from someone you don't know: it might be a spam account.

If you do connect with someone, that person will now become a 'friend' or 'follower', which means they will be able to see what you post. You may have to send them a request back so you can see their content/profile in full.

As well as friends, you can also follow pages that relate to your interests, such as BBC News or your favourite football team.

Each person using a social network (including you) has a profile. If you want to see what someone has been up to, or start a conversation, you can go to their profile. A profile shows information about the person, and what they have shared recently

When you login to a social network, you'll see a list of the things that your friends/the people and pages you follow people have recently shared. This is called a newsfeed or feed. People post lots of different things, like what they're doing, photos, videos or news stories, so can be a great way to find out what people have been up to!

What about Pinterest?

Pinterest is slightly different to Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, but is a great way of discovering new hobbies or interests. It allows you to 'pin' images or videos you find interesting to a virtual 'board' on your profile. Others can then share their board with you so you can discover what other people are into and broaden your horizons.



Links to further learning

To find out how to navigate social media safely, click on this link or type it into your web browser's search bar: bt.com/seniorskills

For more information on setting up social media accounts across a range of platforms, you can visit Age UK's website by clicking this link: www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet/using-social-media

Alternatively, if this sheet has been printed, simply type 'Age UK – using social media' into your search engine and click on the top result.