

SOCIABILITY: SOCIAL MEDIA FOR  
PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

# A GUIDE TO FACEBOOK

## WHAT IS FACEBOOK?

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Facebook is a popular social networking tool that allows users to create a personal profile, add other users as friends, exchange messages, and share information and media. Facebook also allows members to participate in interest groups, follow particular organisations and play simple online games.

As reported by *Social Media News Australia* in mid-2011, Facebook remains Australia's most popular social media tool with approximately 10 million users locally. Business Insider reported that the social network has approximately 650 million users worldwide.

## WHY TRY FACEBOOK?

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Facebook is all about personal interaction – people use it to keep in touch with friends. You can let people know what you're doing, read messages from one another, share photos, chat and even play games together. It is an important method of sharing information amongst people you know. You can search Facebook and ask people to be your friend, and likewise others can find you. Businesses and organisations also use Facebook to promote and build a community around their brands via Pages which members can “like” to stay updated.

For people with disabilities, social interaction on Facebook can be especially beneficial. For people who have a vision or mobility impairment, it is often difficult to travel to see a friend, and Facebook can provide a quick and easy way to communicate and share information without the need for travel. For people who are hearing impaired, Facebook can be an effective communication platform as most of its key features do not have an audio component.

Additionally, Facebook can provide great community support for people with disabilities. There are many online community groups within Facebook that allow you to communicate with other people with disabilities to provide support or share information that can help overcome disability-related issues.



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# A GUIDE TO FACEBOOK

## FACEBOOK FEATURES

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Here's a quick tour of the most common Facebook features:

- Profile: your profile contains the personal information that you would like to share with your friends.
- Friend search: find your friends on Facebook and add them to your contacts.
- Wall: the Wall lets you update your status, share photos, post links, and upload videos for your friends to see. The most common use of the Wall is to post status updates. Friends can also post updates and links on your Wall for all your friends to see.
- News feed: part of the home page that is constantly updating a list of stories from friends and Pages that you follow.
- Poke and message features: if you want to alert a friend that you are using Facebook, you can do so using the Poke option. When you poke someone, they will receive a notification. There is also a message option which your friend can view through their Wall.
- Chat: it is also possible to send real-time instant messages to friends who are online through the Chat function.

## FACEBOOK ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES

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Prior to 2008, the Facebook website was generally considered inaccessible. However, through 2008 and 2009, Facebook worked in conjunction with the American Foundation for the Blind to improve the accessibility of Facebook. While significant improvements were made to the interface, there are still a number of accessibility issues with the primary Facebook website, [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com).

User feedback received by Media Access Australia and tests conducted by BITV-Test have confirmed that while improvements were made at the time, several years later there are a number of accessibility issues currently in the primary Facebook website. These accessibility issues are most likely to affect people who have a vision or mobility impairment and include a CAPTCHA during the sign up process, difficulties with keyboard navigation and missing text alternatives. For Deaf and hearing impaired users, videos uploaded to Facebook directly do not support closed captions.

The instructions provided in this manual are designed to help overcome some of the key accessibility barriers and provide additional resources to help if the accessibility issues continue to prevent Facebook access. There is also a quick reference guide that can provide support for the most likely issues, including keyboard shortcuts and contacting Facebook support directly.

## OVERCOMING FACEBOOK ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES: TIPS AND TRICKS

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The research conducted by Media Access Australia and feedback from Facebook users has provided a number of accessibility tips to help you get your Facebook account up and running.

### MOBILE FACEBOOK WEBSITE

Many blind and vision impaired users have found the standard Facebook website challenging and have recommended using the mobile website as an alternative. The web address for the mobile site is [m.facebook.com](http://m.facebook.com). You can sign up to the mobile website which provides basic Facebook functions through an HTML only interface. It is important to note though that while the mobile website is generally considered more accessible it only provides basic profile editing, messaging, Wall posts and friend searching options.

### FACELY HD APP FOR IPHONE, IPAD AND IPOD TOUCH

Media Access Australia has tested a number of Facebook apps, and based on our testing and user feedback, the Facely HD app is one of the best options for people using the VoiceOver screen reader on an iPhone, iPad or iPod Touch. While it has some minor quirks, it performs much better than the website in Safari or the standard Facebook website, and does a good job in reading out and navigating around the essential Facebook features. Facely HD can be purchased from the iTunes store for \$0.99. An in-depth user review of Facely HD is available on the [AppleVis](http://AppleVis) website.

### CAPTCHA ISSUES ON SIGN UP

Another issue highlighted by people who are blind or vision impaired is the use of the CAPTCHA during the sign up process. The CAPTCHA generally consists of one or two words which are difficult to read for people who are blind or vision impaired. There is an audio CAPTCHA that may be worth trying which appears if the visual CAPTCHA is unsuccessful, but many users have reported that this does not work very well depending on which device or web browser is being used for the sign up process. If you are unable to get past the CAPTCHA, Facebook provides specific support for assistive technologies. Their contact information is listed in the Quick Reference section of this guide.

### ADDITIONAL KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

The Facebook website has a number of additional keyboard shortcuts that let you quickly navigate between the Help, Home, Profile, Friends, Inbox, Notifications, Account Settings, Privacy and About sections. The keyboard shortcuts vary slightly between web browsers and a full list of commands can be found in the Quick Reference section.

### FINDING FRIENDS IF YOU CAN'T SEE THEIR PHOTO

A number of people who are blind or vision impaired have provided tips on how to find friends if you are unable to see their photo. Firstly, when you search for a name, it is likely that the first search results will be people who live closest to you or with whom you have friends in common and are therefore more likely to be the correct person. There is also often information relating to the city and country where the person lives which can also be helpful. The biggest tip though is not to be afraid to Friend someone. If it turns out not to be your friend, they simply won't accept your request.

### ADDING A CAPTION TO FACEBOOK PHOTOS

For people who are blind or vision impaired, adding a caption to a photo will enable screen readers to read out information about the photo. To add a caption:

- 1) Go to your Home page.
- 2) Select the 'Photo' option.
- 3) Select the album that has the photos you wish to add captions to.
- 4) While viewing a photo, select the 'Add a caption' option located beneath the photo.
- 5) Enter the text you wish to use to describe the photo in the box provided.
- 6) Select the 'Save' button.

### CAPTION SUPPORT FOR FACEBOOK VIDEO

Unfortunately there is no support for captions when videos are uploaded to Facebook. People who are Deaf or hearing impaired have suggested that if you want to share a video, upload it to YouTube and caption it there, then put the link to the clip on your Wall. The video will then embed with the 'cc' icon highlighted in red.

# A GUIDE TO FACEBOOK



## NAVIGATION LANDMARKS

While many accessibility issues are present on the Facebook website, some navigation help is available if you are using a recent version of a screen reader and web browser. WAI-ARIA landmarks provide additional accessibility information, and the Facebook website has some WAI-ARIA landmarks set up. This means that a screen reader is likely to read out more information and provide additional help in navigating between the Facebook functions. Further information on WAI-ARIA and the screen readers that support it can be found on the Media Access Australia website.

## FACEBOOK'S ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Facebook has created an Accessibility team to provide support to assistive technology users including JAWS and ZoomText and they can be contacted at [www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show\\_form=accessibility](http://www.facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=accessibility). Facebook also has some online accessibility resources at [www.facebook.com/help/?page=440](http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=440).

Further information can be found from these sources:

- Select the 'Help' option at the bottom right of any Facebook page
- HelpMeRick Beginners' Guide to Facebook: [helpmerick.com/a-beginners-guide-to-facebook.htm](http://helpmerick.com/a-beginners-guide-to-facebook.htm)
- Facebook 101 from LearnFree.org: [www.gcflernfree.org/facebook101](http://www.gcflernfree.org/facebook101)
- eHow.com Facebook Video Series: [www.ehow.com/videos-on\\_108\\_use-facebook.html](http://www.ehow.com/videos-on_108_use-facebook.html)

## SIGNING UP TO FACEBOOK

To sign up to Facebook for the first time, you will need to create a Facebook account. Go to the Facebook website [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). Locate the heading 'Sign Up' and step through the following instructions:

- 1) In the 'First Name' box, enter your first name.
- 2) In the 'Last Name' box, enter your last name.
- 3) In the 'Your email address' box, enter an email address.
- 4) In the 'Re-enter email address' box, enter the email address again.
- 5) In the 'New password' section, enter a unique password.
- 6) In the 'I am' section, select either 'male' or 'female' from the drop-down menu item.
- 7) In the 'Birthday section, you will need to select the month, day and year of your birth. These fields are listed as three drop down menu items.
  - a. In the first drop down menu item, select the month of your date of birth.
  - b. In the second drop down menu item, select the day of your date of birth.
  - c. In the third drop down menu item, select the year of your date of birth.
- 8) Select the 'Sign up' button.
- 9) A new webpage will load with the CAPTCHA. Enter the characters in the area labelled 'Text in the box'.
- 10) Select the 'Sign Up' button.
- 11) Open your email. You should see an email from Facebook. Open the email and select the 'activation link' contained in the email.

You are now ready to use Facebook using your email address and password.

# A GUIDE TO FACEBOOK

## STARTING FACEBOOK FOR THE FIRST TIME

### THE 'GETTING STARTED' PAGE

Once a Facebook account has been created, you will be taken to the 'Getting Started' webpage. This page includes a three-step process to find friends, set up a profile and add a profile picture. For each of these three steps, select the 'skip this step' link. This will take you to the Home page, where Facebook allows you to set up your personal information in more detail.

### SETTING UP A PROFILE

To set up your profile:

- 1) Select the 'Profile' option.
- 2) Select the 'Edit Profile' option.
- 3) There are a series of questions which you can choose to fill in. Enter your responses in the boxes provided. At the end of each box, there is a privacy box that allows you to select from a drop-down box whether you would like this information to be viewed by the public, friends only or just you. Select your preferred privacy setting for each option.
- 4) Select the 'Save changes' button.

The final step for getting Facebook up and running is to add a photo to your profile. You can do this by either uploading a photo that you have already taken, or by taking a photo using your device's webcam or camera.

To enter the photo section:

- 1) Select the 'Profile' option.
- 2) Select the 'Edit Profile' option.
- 3) Select the 'Profile Picture' option.

To upload a photo:

- 1) Select the 'Upload a photo' option.
- 2) Select the 'browse' button. This will take you to the files on your computer or device. Navigate around and select the file you want to upload.
- 3) Select the 'Save and continue' button.

Alternatively, to take a photo:

- 1) Select the 'Take a photo' option.
- 2) Ensure that you are in the view of the camera or webcam, and then select the 'Save picture' button.
- 3) Select the 'Save and continue' button.

### CONFIGURING THE PRIVACY SETTINGS

One of the most important things to do when using Facebook is to correctly configure the privacy settings. Facebook has changed the settings a lot due to privacy concerns raised by Facebook members so it is a good idea to check for additional privacy settings regularly.

To set the privacy settings:

- 1) Select the Account option.
- 2) Select 'Privacy settings'.
- 3) In the 'Choose your Default Privacy' section, choose whether you want the Public, Friends or Custom privacy option. Custom will provide you with further privacy options.

There are also additional privacy options on this page for posting, connections and tags.

## PERFORMING TASKS IN FACEBOOK

### ADDING FRIENDS

At the top of the page there is a big Search box. To search for friends:

- 1) Type in the name of your friend in the box.
- 2) As you type, a list of possible matches will appear. You can either select the person directly or select the search box, and then select the friends from the list of people.
- 3) Select the 'Add friend' button.

### USING THE WALL FOR STATUS UPDATES AND POSTING PHOTOS

To post a status update on your wall:

- 1) From the Home page or your Profile select the 'Update Status' item. Note that this option may already be selected by default.
- 2) Enter your statement in the box provided and select the 'Post' button.

To post a link on your wall:

- 1) From the Home page or your Profile select the 'Update Status' item. Note that this option may already be selected by default.
- 2) Enter the web address in the box provided and select the 'Post' button.
- 3) You can also write a statement about the link in the same box before you click on 'Post'.

To post a photo on the Wall:

- 1) From the Home page or your Profile select the 'Add photo' item.
- 2) Select 'Upload photo or video'.
- 3) Select the 'Browse' button to select your photo. Once the photo has been chosen, select the 'Post' button.

### CONTACTING FRIENDS USING POKE AND MESSAGE

To send a poke:

- 1) Select the name of the friend you wish to contact.
- 2) Select the 'Poke' button.
- 3) A box will appear confirming that you wish to send a poke. Select the new 'Poke' button.

To send a message:

- 1) Select the friend you wish to contact via the search bar.
- 2) Select the 'Message' button.
- 3) A box will appear. Enter the text you wish to send.
- 4) Select the 'Share' button.
- 5) If your friend is logged in at the time, messages will appear in the chat box discussed below.

### COMMENTING ON STATUS UPDATES AND LINKS

The Home page features a News Feed which shows status updates and comments made by your friends.

To comment on a friend's status update:

- 1) Select 'Comment'.
- 2) A box should appear allowing you to enter a comment. Note that if others have also commented on the post, the box will appear underneath the other comments.
- 3) Once the comment is complete, press Enter. This will add the comment.

### CHAT

To use chat:

- 1) On the right hand side there is a list of your online friends. Select the friend that you wish to chat to.
- 2) A Chat window will appear. At the bottom of the Chat window is a box. Enter the text you wish to send to your friend and press Enter once completed.
- 3) The screen above the text box will show you the conversation between you and your friend. The chat box can be minimised by pressing ESC.

## FACEBOOK ACCESSIBILITY QUICK REFERENCE

### GENERAL RESOURCES

Additional accessibility resources include:

- Facebook mobile website: [m.facebook.com](http://m.facebook.com).
- Facebook Inc. Accessibility Resources: [www.facebook.com/help/?page=440](http://www.facebook.com/help/?page=440)
- Contacting the Facebook Accessibility team directly: [facebook.com/help/contact.php?show\\_form=accessibility](http://facebook.com/help/contact.php?show_form=accessibility)
- Mobile app Facely HD for iOS devices: [itunes.apple.com/au/app/facely-hd-for-facebook-chat/id392550341?mt=8](https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/facely-hd-for-facebook-chat/id392550341?mt=8)
- Facely HD AppleVis review: [www.applevis.com/app-directory/social-networking/facely-hd-facebook-chat](http://www.applevis.com/app-directory/social-networking/facely-hd-facebook-chat)

### KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

The keyboard shortcuts work through the use of a browser-specific keyboard shortcut in conjunction with the number in the table below. The keyboard shortcuts for the browsers are as follows:

- Internet Explorer: 'Alt' + number
- Firefox in Windows: 'Alt' + 'Shift' + number
- Safari or Firefox in Mac OS: 'Ctrl' + number

Numbers:

NUMBER	SECTION
0	Help
1	Home
2	Profile
3	Friends
4	Inbox
5	Notifications

NUMBER	SECTION
6	Account Settings
7	Privacy
8	About
9	Terms