

# MySpace simplifies settings as Facebook criticised

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The homepage of MySpace is pictured on a laptop computer screen. The Social networking site has announced plans to simplify its privacy settings as it seeks to differentiate itself from rival Facebook, which is under fire over its privacy practices.

MySpace has announced plans to simplify its privacy settings as it seeks to differentiate itself from social network rival Facebook, which is under fire over its privacy practices.

Mike Jones, co-president of News Corp.-owned [MySpace](#), announced the changes in a blog post on the [News Corp.](#)-owned social network, which has been eclipsed in popularity in recent years by [Facebook](#).

"The last few weeks have been fraught with discussion around user [privacy](#) on social networks," Jones said without directly mentioning

Facebook by name.

"MySpace early on recognized the issues facing a website with a massive global population and we've taken our responsibilities seriously," he said.

"While MySpace at its core is about discovery, self expression and sharing, we understand people might want the option of limiting the sharing of their information to a select group of friends," Jones said.

"We respect our users' desires to balance sharing and privacy, and never push our users to an uncomfortable privacy position," he said.

"We provide clear privacy settings, allowing not only restrictions on who can view their profile data, but also age restrictions to allow age separation of older and younger users."

Jones said MySpace, which was bought by News Corp. in 2005 for 580 million dollars, is "planning the launch of a simplified privacy setting for our user profiles.

"While we've had these plans in the works for some time, given the recent outcry over privacy concerns in the media, we felt it was important to unveil those plans to our users now," he said.

"In the coming weeks, MySpace will continue to simplify its [privacy settings](#) to create a simpler, more intuitive approach that gives users greater control over their information," Jones said.

The MySpace co-president said setting options will include "public, friends only, or public to anyone 18 or over."

"In making this change, MySpace will default the setting to 'friends only' for any user who previously had any granular page setting to 'friends

only," he said, adding that users can change the option if they want.

The MySpace move comes with Facebook under fire from US privacy and consumer groups, US lawmakers and the European Union over new features that critics claim compromise the privacy of its more than 400 million members.

The new features introduced last month include the ability for partner websites to incorporate Facebook data, a move that would further expand the social network's presence on the Internet.

Four US senators, in a letter to Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg, said they were worried that personal information about Facebook users is being made available to third party websites.

The senators also expressed concerns that "Facebook now obligates users to make publicly available certain parts of their profile that were previously private."

Sharing personal information should be an "opt-in" procedure in which a user specifically gives permission for data to be shared, they said.

Facebook vice president of global communications Elliot Schrage has been adamant that online privacy is taken very seriously at the company.

"These new products and features are designed to enhance personalization and promote social activity across the Internet while continuing to give users unprecedented control over what information they share, when they want to share it, and with whom," Schrage said.

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