

Yahoo faces privacy test with new e-mail features

June 2 2010, By MICHAEL LIEDTKE , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Yahoo Inc. is hoping to turn on a new sharing option in its popular e-mail service without shocking users who prize their privacy.

That's why the Internet company is advising its 280 million e-mail accountholders to review their [privacy settings](#) along with their incoming messages.

Yahoo posted the privacy reminder this week as it prepares to unveil new features that will share its e-mail users' online activities and interests with people listed in their address books unless they take steps to prevent the information from being broadcast. The new sharing tools will be appearing in people's e-mail accounts this month.

Another addition already available in some accounts allows people to use Yahoo's e-mail service as a platform for posting comments on [Facebook](#), the Web's top spot for swapping information with family and friends. An e-mail link to Twitter's messaging service is coming this summer.

Yahoo has been testing and talking about these changes for months, but it's treading carefully after seeing both Facebook and [Google](#) Inc. stumble recently when they retooled their services so more personal information would appear on the Web. Some of those changes irked users, privacy watchdogs and lawmakers. The outcry prompted Facebook and Google to develop simpler privacy settings to give people greater control over what gets shared online.

Yahoo is trying to avoid a similar privacy backlash by providing users the opportunity to opt out of the e-mail service's new social features with the click of a button. The company also is promising not to expose a person's e-mail contacts to the public, a mistake that Google acknowledged making when it set up a social network called Buzz within its own e-mail service four months ago.

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