

# Facebook exposes children to online threats says EU

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"Most [social networking sites](#) are failing to ensure that minors' profiles are accessible only to their approved contacts by default," said European Commission vice-president Neelie Kroes in a statement.

Of 14 tested, just two -- [Bebo](#) and MySpace -- ensure the required controls to ensure "potential strangers" cannot gain access.

The authorities in Brussels say the number of minors who use the Internet and subscribe to social networking sites is growing -- currently 77 percent of children aged 13-16 and 38 percent of those aged 9-12.

Kroes said she will urge online social networking site owners to make the changes, warning that "[youngsters](#) do not fully understand the consequences of disclosing too much of their personal lives online".

Of particular concern is the practice of tagging people in pictures, which increases the risk for teenagers of "grooming and cyber-bullying", the EU executive said.

The tests, carried out over two months around the turn of year, covered the following websites: Arto, Bebo, [Facebook](#), Giovanni.it, Hyves, Myspace, Nasza-klaza.pl, Netlog, One.lt, Rate.ee, SchulerVZ, IRC Galleria, Tuenti and Zap.lu.

The commission said nine more sites that have also signed up to a self-regulating code will be tested later this year.

An EU survey earlier this year said little more than half of children aged 11-12 knew how to change [privacy settings](#).

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