tech**tip**

How to untag yourself on Facebook
(and why you might want to)

Have you ever been tagged in a picture or post on Facebook? If you have a Facebook account, the answer to this question is likely yes. And don't feel comforted if you aren't on Facebook: Anyone can be tagged in a photo, even someone who doesn't have a Facebook account.

Given the nature of Facebook, a tagged photo or status update can easily reach a very large number of people. Being tagged in a way that portrays you in a positive or neutral way is likely not a problem for most people. However, being tagged in an unflattering photo or post will at least be embarrassing, and at worst, it could seriously damage your reputation or relationships.

If you are on Facebook – and even if you are not – you should understand tagging and know how to untag yourself if you are tagged in an unflattering photo or post.

What is tagging and how does it work?

A tag is a special kind of Facebook link. You can tag people, photos, places and pages in anything you post on Facebook. And it's a two-way street – anyone can tag you in photos and other information they post on Facebook. Anyone clicking on a tag has a direct link to the tagged person's timeline.

Creating a tag is easy. When viewing a photo click on *Tag photo*, place the crosshairs over a person's face, click once and type a name. Facebook will give you name suggestions from your friends list. In a status update or comment the names of friends will automatically turn into tag links. You can also create a tag by including the @ symbol in front of any names you mention. People often do this in status updates to say who they are with.

When you tag someone in a photo, people will see "Tagged by [Your Name]" when they hover over the name of the person you tagged.

Who can see tags? Lots and lots of people. When someone is tagged in a photo or post it is likely visible on the timelines of the following people:

- The audience selected for the post by the person posting the content (by using the audience selector drop-down next to the *Post* button) and can include their friends, friends of friends, or if they select custom, selected individuals or groups;

- The person tagged;

- Friends of the person tagged; and

- Anyone else tagged in the post and the friends of that person.

And it doesn't end there. Anyone who can see a photo or post an update can also tag it, like it, or comment on it.

Removing a tag you don't like

Even well-meaning friends might tag you in unflattering photos or mention you in comments you'd rather not see shared with a large audience. If you're not happy with a post you're tagged in, you should take steps to remove the tag or the post. To do this, place your cursor over the photo or post, click the edit button (the pencil in the top right corner), click on *Options* and then select *Report/Remove Tag* in the dropdown. From there, choose why you want to remove the tag. If you select the option *I want to remove this tag* you can choose to:

- Remove the tag so the post no longer links to your timeline;

- Ask the person who tagged you to remove the post; or

- Block the person who tagged you (this is mutual).

In this dialog box you can also report harassment and offensive content to Facebook. You could also directly ask the person to remove the tag or post, but would need to rely on them complying with your request.

Knowing when you are tagged

Facebook sends you a notification on your activity log (click on the globe icon) whenever your friends tag you and – by default – there will also be an update on your timeline. To review and approve posts from anyone (including your friends) before they go on your timeline, you may want to consider enabling Timeline Review. When this is turned on, posts may already be visible in other places on Facebook (and will stay that way), but they won't appear on your timeline until you approve them. When you have a post to review, it will show up in your activity log. You can enable Timeline Review in your Privacy Settings. Note that tags from non-friends require your approval before they appear on your timeline, even when Timeline Review is off.

Make sure you understand how Facebook tagging works and actively monitor status updates that you are tagged in. This can help preserve your online reputation in the event embarrassing or damaging content about you is posted on Facebook. ■

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