



Appropriate Internet Behaviour

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Last week, Harvard [rescinded the acceptances](#) of 10 incoming students for posting racist, sexually offensive material in a Facebook messaging group. As intense as the consequence may seem, this is an important reminder that nothing on the web is private, even private chat groups.

A person is responsible for what they post, a lesson our boys might not always appreciate. According to a 2015 survey by the [Pew Research Center](#), 88% of teens surveyed believe that people share too much information about themselves on social media. It is definitely worth us asking our boys what they feel is too much information. Also, 75% of teens said they either “frequently” or “occasionally” see people “stirring up drama on social media.” That is a lot of posts and messages that are all about drama!

We know it is popular for teens to have a main Instagram account and then a separate one, that is thought to be private, for closer friends - called a Finsta account. This is a great time for us to talk about these alternative accounts. Are they as private as one might think? For some, they create a supportive small group so I would start with the positive - why might a person want a Finstagram?

The action taken by Harvard is a great way for us to remind our boys about what they choose to post on social media. The students involved probably had no idea their posts would be seen by anyone but themselves, they were in a private chat. However, “private chat” is a misnomer. These students were the cream of the crop, and they did not have the wisdom to keep inappropriate messages out of the conversation.