

Facebook

You will have had an e-mail about the creation of a Facebook group for Exeter U3A members. This document sets out how signup with Facebook and find groups and friends.

Getting started with Facebook

(skip this if you already have Facebook set up on your computer/tablet/smartphone – go to Finding Groups and Friends on page 4)

Computer

Open your browser (the software you use to access the World Wide Web - Internet Explorer; Edge; Firefox; Chrome or other).

Either

Enter `facebook.com` in the address bar and press Enter

or

Search for Facebook in your preferred search engine (Google, Yahoo, Bing or other) and click on the link

Make sure that you have the real site by checking the address (URL) at the top of the screen. It should say

`https://www.facebook.com/`

(it may start `http:` which is OK but not quite as good)

This ensures that you don't have a fake site, pretending to be Facebook.

You should now be prompted to Create an account. You will need to enter a name and e-mail address and a password, which should be strong (at least 8 characters, preferably more, NOT a name or word from the dictionary and preferably including at least three out of, upper case letter, lower case letter, digit, other character [punctuation mark or one of the characters above the number keys on your keyboard – try to avoid characters that can be easily confused, such as 1/l or O/o/0]). I would normally write this down even before I type it in. I don't worry about having passwords on pieces of paper in my house – though not next to the computer – but I would NOT store them on my computer. I would not re-use a password for multiple sites.

Now you have to enter some more personal information, your date of birth and gender. You can lie here if you wish (don't tell them I said it was OK), but it's usually more of a nuisance than it's worth. But don't be surprised when Facebook wishes you a happy birthday.

Now you can click Sign Up.

Before you can get going with your new account, you will need to confirm your e-mail address. Check your e-mail. You should have a message from Facebook (it may take a few minutes to come through) and you can click on the button or link to Confirm Your Account. You may also need to enter the code that is in the e-mail (typically a five digit number). When you have done this you should see your Facebook welcome page.

Android Tablet or Smartphone

Start by going to the Play Store and search for the Facebook app. Download, install and open it. You will need to create an account in much the same way as above. Once you have confirmed your details you should get to your Facebook welcome page.

Facebook welcome page

You will be asked to Upload a profile picture. This helps to identify you to someone searching your name on Facebook and find there are fifty others with the same name. You will have to consider whether this is a good or bad thing. If you are going to use a picture of yourself it's best to prepare the photo you are going to use in advance and to follow some rules:

At least 400 pixels wide and 150 high

Less than 100k Bytes

Preferably square

Best if your face is near the centre.

Adjust an existing picture or take one using your web cam (or phone/tablet if using that) and save it somewhere you can find it again.

When prompted navigate the saved location and click open to upload your photo.

Note that you may have good reason **NOT** to want your photo on Facebook and there is no reason not to use a caricature or cartoon or other image to represent yourself. If you have a nickname, say family and friends all know you as carrot top or bunny you could make your profile picture a carrot or a rabbit – that way people that know you would recognise your picture, but those that don't wouldn't.

Next you are asked to add people you know. Facebook wants you to give it full access to your e-mail address book(s), in order to see if it can find anyone you have ever e-mailed on Facebook. I would certainly **not** want to give away all this personal information, so I would skip this step and continue.

The next step is labelled Get to know your privacy settings and it's worth taking the tour to see how Facebook handles privacy. If you aren't sure about this set everything to Friends only.

The last section is about finding friends but we can skip this for the moment and click on Home at the top of the screen to get back to our Home page

Navigating Facebook

Note: The following is all done from the perspective of a PC user. If you are using a smartphone or tablet, the appearance of the screen and the actions will be slightly different – for example when I say click on Home, you will tap on Home instead.

The Home page is where you will spend most of your time on Facebook. It is pretty 'busy' so let me point out a few of the important bits. At the top of the page, towards the left, is a Search box. Immediately below that is a box headed Create Post, which is where you type your thoughts or show a photo.

To the left of this, at the top of the column, is your name and profile picture. Click on this to go to your profile page. (You can also get here by clicking on your name to the right of the search box.) Here you can – if you wish – enter some important information about yourself, including Current town or city; Workplace, School or university; Home town; Relationship status. Clicking on one of these allows you to enter the information. If you go to the last one you can click on a dropdown list to select the type of relationship you are in. Apart from the obvious Single, Married etc. there are a few more unusual ones including It's Complicated! As with all information on Facebook, think about what you want to reveal about yourself.

To get back to the Home page there are at least three options

1. Click on Home to the right of the Search box
2. Click on the back arrow (left pointing arrow at the top left of your browser)
3. Press the BACKSPACE key on your keyboard

On the Home page, on the left hand side is a column of options. Feel free to explore these, but try not to get drawn into the sillier aspects of Facebook and read the Caveats towards the end of this document.

In the middle, under the Create Posts area is where you will see what other people, your 'Facebook friends', have posted and where your replies will appear. The most recent post will be at the top and you can scroll down to see older ones.

To the right of that you will see the adverts and posts that Facebook is pushing to you – the things that it thinks are relevant to you.

On the far right is a list of your friends who are on-line now or who have been recently. If someone is on-line and you want to 'chat' to them (exchange text messages) you can click on their name and use Facebook's messenger system.

Finding Groups and Friends

At the top of the Facebook Home page is the Search box. You can type pretty much anything into this to find other people you know or who have common interests with you. For example, if you type Cockapoo and press enter you will find various groups devoted to this breed of dog (Poodle/Cocker Spaniel cross).

If you type U3A and press enter you should find a short list of U3A groups. At the bottom of this (after three or four groups) is a label See all groups for "U3A". To the right of it you can click on See all. If you do this you can find the Exeter U3A Members group. Click on the '+ Join' button. Because this is a 'closed' group, you have to show that you are 'eligible'. To do this simply enter your name and membership number. Read the rules of the group and click on Submit. Where it had the option to join the group before, it should now have '✓ Request sent' It may take a little while before your request is processed, but if you come back to the group when it has been, you will be able to see posts and contribute.

Another entry on the 'U3A' list is 'U3A: Keeping In Touch', a group set up by National U3A for the obvious purpose. You may want to join this one, too.

If you are having trouble finding the Exeter U3A Members group, simply type 'Exeter U3A Members' into the search box, when you should only get the one 'hit'.

To find a friend on Facebook, simply type their name into the search box. Depending on how common the name is you may see quite a few possibles to choose from. The information they put on their profile and their profile picture will show up here and help you to select the person you are looking for. All this information also reminds you of what you are showing **anyone** who types your name into Facebook. Note that you need to know what form of their name your friend uses on Facebook – does Elizabeth Taylor go by Elizabeth, Liza, Beth, Betty, Liz...? Use the wrong one and you are unlikely to find her.

Once you have found a friend, you can click on Add Friend, but again, you will have to wait until they accept your request, before seeing their posts. When someone sends you a friend request, try to make sure that it really is someone you know – once you have accepted them as a friend they will be able to see all of your posts and collect a lot of information about you. Remember you can always 'unfriend' them later.

Issues with Facebook

There are actually so many of these that I'm going to leave discussion of them for another time, but I will cover a very general rule that most of us use whenever we talk to each other, but sometimes forget when using social media.

Before you say anything, take a moment to think

- Is it true (and are you sure?)
- Is it kind?
- Is it helpful (or will it simply make the reader worried about something they can't change)?

Enjoy using Facebook to keep in touch in these difficult times, but treat anything you read with caution and a healthy degree of scepticism