



# Questions to consider before joining a platform

New social media platforms are popping up every day, and you might be interested in joining them to inform your work. Joining a social media platform for professional purposes should be approached with caution and consideration of all potential risks.





# Eight questions to consider before joining a platform

## 1 - Have you thought about the personal information you are giving the platform?

Here is a short list of personal details that platforms often ask for upon registration: name, phone number, email, an official ID, your location or even social media credentials. Consider using a burner phone and minimizing the personal information you give out.

## 2 - Have you checked what device data is being linked to you?

- If you're an iOS user, you can check which data apps use to track you via the App Store.
- For Android users, try this phone privacy guide.

## 3 - Have you checked your privacy settings within the platform?

You might be surprised to know what's public from your social accounts. Try clicking the eye icon on Facebook to see what your profile looks like to strangers. See this handy guide from WIRED on locking down your social media.

## 4 - How will you identify yourself on the platform?

Will you identify yourself as a researcher, journalist or other professional? Some spaces require initiation questions; have you thought about how you will answer them? We recommend having a conversation with your manager about the potential risks to you and your organization and setting a protocol.

- see the "Ethical Considerations" section of our Essential Guide.

## 5 - Are you informed about what kind of content the platform allows on the site?

Platforms have different moderation policies about hate speech, pornography, graphic material, misinformation and more. Make sure you are mentally prepared for what you might see.

## 6 - Do you know what privacy experts have to say about the platform?

Copy/paste this Boolean search query into Google or Twitter to stay updated on what people are saying about privacy and security. You can substitute "whatsapp" for any platform.

- whatsapp AND (privacy OR security OR data)

## 7 - Have you thought about the implications of being in certain spaces?

You will be contributing to metrics for the site, such as page visits, app downloads and total users. What value is added by your entry into these spaces, and are there other ways you can obtain the same information? Are there others already in these spaces you could speak to instead?

## 8 - What are you going to do with what you find?

Do you plan on publicizing content you find on the site? Have you considered the consequences of amplifying this content, as well as the privacy and safety of the source of the content?