Myspace and Facebook

Abstract

In my project I will be discussing vulnerabilities in Facebook and Myspace. I will give history about both websites. I will also discuss incidents that happened within both sites. Also display screen shots of what to look out for and how important it is to pay attention to what you’re doing online.

Introduction

Two of the most popular web sites are Facebook and Myspace. On both sites, over a billion people access them. Myspace and Facebook makes millions of dollars a year from their users. This is a good site for hackers and predictors to attack. Are People’s data secured and protected on these two sites? Is it easy for hackers and predictors to obtain information from these sites? Are your friends the only people that actually view your personal information? Many people who visit these sites aren’t thinking about these questions because they believe this is a popular site and their information is safe.
Myspace was first developed by Tom Anderson and Chris Dewolfe in August 2003. Tom first had about 1000 people on his first site Friendster. Myspace was developed in August 2003. Myspace is basically a site you can go to and meet new people. It’s also a great site to keep in contact with all of your friends. This program became popular because many seen that they could keep in touch with their friends online rather than being on the phone. MySpace was purchased in 2005 for $580 million by Rupert Murdoch the creator of 20th Century Fox and the Fox television stations. Also Google paid $900 million to be MySpace's search provider. MySpace runs on Microsoft .NET Framework, operating under Windows 2003 server and applications written in C# for ASP.NET. [3]

Most of the features that Myspace contains:

- Able to add friends
- Insert information about your which doesn’t necessarily have to be true. The information contains your name, location, date of birth, grade level, school you attend, age, relationship status, income, what are you interested in, ethnicity, etc.
- Customize the page; you can add different headers, different backgrounds, music, music videos etc.
- Everything is basic run by HTML
- Post Blogs
- Leave comments on friends pages
- Write messages to friends or even people you don’t know
- Tell people what mood you’re in
• Know when your friend’s birthday is
• Upload or receive html graphics
• Upload pictures and view friends pictures (even people you don’t know)
• Search for people
• Browse through people all over the world

There are also many other features but these are the basic ones that Myspace contains.

Facebook was first developed in February 2004 by Harvard students Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes. This website was first developed as a site for college students to go on and communicate with other college students. At first only college student could sign up, with their college email. Now people can sign up from any grade. This site is also like Myspace but users can’t customize their pages like Myspace. Many people would rather use Facebook rather than Myspace because of many various reasons. Some say you can find your friends easier, easier to use etc. Facebook had already signed a five-year deal for Microsoft Corp. to supply banner advertising, a deal possibly worth hundreds of millions of dollars per year. Facebook runs on Microsoft .NET Framework, uses Javascript, also uses Scribe server. [6]

Some features that Facebook has:

• Add friends
• Search for people
• See users profiles if they are the same network as the user (school)
• Write on a wall
• Leave messages
• Insert information about your which doesn’t necessarily have to be true. The information contains your name, location, date of birth, grade level, school you attend, age, relationship status, income, what are you interested in, ethnicity, major, etc.

• User can know updated information about their friends

• Send a friend a gift, a drink, flyers, invitations, etc

• You can poke your friend to let them know you want to talk to them

• Upload pictures

• Customize page so certain people can access it.

Advantages and disadvantages

Many people would rather use one over the other. Myspace and Facebook both have their advantages and disadvantages. Certain people rather use one over the other because of their features. Obviously the information above is the advantages that both websites contains. Security plays a major role in today’s society. Both sites contain important information about users which needs to be protected. With the information hackers and predictors can obtain can cause extremely harmful damage. Identity theft is very high over the World Wide Web. People who access these sites are always putting their personal information on the website. For instance, let’s say a user was talking to their friend on Facebook or Myspace, and left their phone number in the comment box. With that information the hacker can obtain all of your personal information such as your name, where you live, and other information attached to your phone number. One out of ten people always leave private information on the comment box. Here are some disadvantages of both sites.
Disadvantages of Myspace

- Many spam, spyware, and viruses
- Pedophiles
- Anyone can sign up
- Personal information is broadcasted over the web
- Hackers can get into people’s account
- There’s really not a lot of privacy
- Everything is run by html
- Server is always down
- Always doing maintenance

Disadvantages of Facebook

- Spam, spyware, and viruses
- Pedophiles
- Users can give out contact information which can be viewed by friends
- Uses school email
- Unable to design the page
- Many silly things that aren’t useful

Many of incidents happened with Myspace and Facebook. Hackers are able to get into a user and do what they please to it. A problem that Myspace has right now is that many messages that are being sent to people are spam. People were getting messages displaying that there is a site you need to go to or information up need to look at. Also many friend invites were fraud, they would be porn star pages and all they want you to be
go to their website. Another incident that occurred was many people had to change their passwords because a lot have been hacked.

So they would send a message out saying the user will need to change their password within a certain amount of days. Myspace tried to solve this issue by having users type the letters and numbers that appeared on the screen. This worked for about 75% of the problems. People are still able to send you messages and still can obtain your password. They also developed a spam filter and your able to select what you think is spam.

**Vulnerabilities**

Even though Myspace is very popular, it also has some vulnerability. One vulnerability is with IM request, which allows users to chat with one another like AIM, Yahoo messenger, and Window live. When a user sends an IM request, it is sent to the other user’s inbox. The IM request is a basic code that can be change and cause damage to a user. Just by calling up_launchIC function the hacker will be able to insert a virus or spyware.

```javascript
window.parent.up_launchIC( 
`[
'ATTACKER FriendID]',
'[TARGET FriendID]', 'amanda', '1',
&Mytoken=20050410024025&showIM=false', 'M', '17', ', ',
'http://n00084.myspace.com/00084/36/34/84744363_s.jpg' )
```
When the hacker calls up_launchIC, this allows the application to install automatically even if the user declines the request. So basically the hacker can do whatever he wants and get away with it.

Another vulnerability the Myspace contain is with the passwords. There is an actually website that you can go to and receive anyone’s password to their account. Apparently a guy hacked into their server and retrieves their accounts. All the user has to know is the display name or email to receive the password. It cost 20 dollars to receive the password and it might take a week to receive it. To obtain a password to an account will allow the attacker to have unlimited access and they will be able to whatever he pleases.[7]

Similar to Myspace, Facebook also has some vulnerability. One important vulnerability that Facebook has is the friend request.

This allows users to view all information you have on the account even if you don’t know the user. The new friend would be able to know your full name, what school you go to, some may know your phone number, email, and basically everything about you. With this information many stalkers will be able to find your location. In my opinion isn’t safe because the user is allowing unknown user to have access to their information.
In addition to Facebook, another vulnerability is actually inside the users account. In the account their friends are allowed to view anything that happens to their friends. Such as if their friends wrote on someone else’s wall, had a picture tagged, an event they are attending, people they are together with, etc. This is an example of the feature called News Feed:

Which also isn’t good because many attackers can use this to their advantage. [14]

Incidents

There are also some incidents that both website has. First there was an incident with Myspace with a teenage girl. Her neighbor from down the street had Myspace and added the teenage girl as a friend. At first the woman was being nice to the young girl, then eventually she started to tease her. The woman was calling the little girl names, telling her the world doesn’t
need her anymore, and unnecessary criticism. So she sooner or later commits suicide from what the woman was telling her. The woman was put in jail for about 20 years with fines. [8]

One Facebook incident that occurred was about a teacher in high school. This high school teacher has a Facebook and posted a comment on her wall about the school. She said the school that she teaches was “Ghetto”, another teacher saw the comment and reported her. The teacher was suspended for posting that comment about the school. [9]

Here are some things the user should look out for.

1. Phishing pages – these pages look like regular pages but aren’t.

![Image showing a phishing attempt](image.png)

2. IM request that may contain spam, viruses, or spyware

3. Adding friends (able to view private info)

4. Adding Applications (may contain viruses)

Ways to protect yourself

There are ways to protect yourself from predictors and attackers. First of all, the user can download or get a phishing filter. This application will scan every site the user goes to and check
to see if it’s a real website. Second on Facebook just be careful who you’re adding because the user has an option to add. Third, the user should watch what they are downloading or installing into their computers. Many of these applications can contain viruses or spyware to obtain information. Last view the source on whatever your downloading, accessing, or adding. If the user views the source and sees anything unusual, they don’t have to install it.

In conclusion Myspace and Facebook are two popular websites that contain many accounts. It’s always good to know information about materials behind the screen. There are many ways an attacker or hacker can attack you, the best way to solve this problem is to be aware of what to do when it happens. A person’s identity is very important and should be protected at all times. Even though the sites are popular, they are also harmful to some people.
References:

7. http://myspace.wetpaint.com/thread/1443653/Do+you+need+a+Myspace+Password+to+someone+else%27s+Account%3F?t=anon
11. http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,183709,00.html