So, you’re child wants to sign up for Myspace...
Social networking is a brilliant concept that has sadly been tainted by several nefarious individuals. The term simply means a website that allows its users to connect with other people with similar backgrounds and interests. Odds are, if you have a teenaged child, you’re quite familiar with sites such as Facebook and MySpace, the two most popular social networks.

Say someone signs up for an account on MySpace. They find 12 people they went to high school with. By visiting each of those 12 individuals’ sites they can send them a “friend request.” Should the recipient of the request approve it then you’ll be added to each others’ Friend’s List. Once the connection is made you can share information and post comments on one another’s’ sites.

Those aforementioned nefarious individuals make it difficult to allow children to freely populate the website. If your child wishes to sign-up for MySpace (they will, trust me), and you agree to let them have it, it is a MUST for you to study what security measures are offered by the site.
Welcome to the front page...

Open up your web browser and type in the http://www.myspace.com web address. This brings you to the incredibly busy MySpace front page.

As you can see, the site offers videos, music, games, and several other services. Apps, one of the latest additions to the site, give users the chance to install useful (and useless) applications to their profile. For instance, if you wish to show the world what you’re reading, try the MyGoodReads application. This displays your current reads, and, it also allows you to recommend books to other users of the App.

Before we go any further, let us go in to an area of the MySpace site that I’m sure
MySpace Terms of Service

Let’s face it, very few people take the time to read the terms of service or user agreements on a website or computer program. There is so much legal-speak in these that even if you do read them they might not make sense. Here is what you need to know if you have kids:

• **Age** – MySpace users **MUST** be at least 14 years of age. All information must be truthful, so, should you lie about your age and they find out about it then your profile will be deleted.

• **Fees** - MySpace is completely free; however, they’ve inserted a section in their terms mentioning they have a right to charge at any time. This will probably never happen but it’s something to keep in mind.

• **Content** – MySpace allows bands to post songs, users to post pictures and videos ... Should you be attempting to forge a musical career or, to become the next Spielberg, then you might fear for the rights of the content you produce. MySpace assures those that post their content that they claim no rights to it, but, if you post content created by someone else, then they can take it down. The license granted to MySpace when posting content is non-exclusive which means you’re free to license the content to anyone else.

• **Content/Activity Prohibited** – MySpace does not allow any of the following type of content:
  
  o Racist/Physical Harm against a group or individual
  
  o Harassing
  
  o Sexually Explicit Material (This still happens, though ... we’ll talk about that in another section)
- Solicitations of non-adults
- Privacy Risks
- Libelous Material
- Constitutes or promotes piracy.
- Spam/Junk Mail
- Promotion of Criminal Activity
- Password Solicitations
- Posting pictures or images of someone without their consent.

- **The following activity is also prohibited**
  - Criminal//Tortuous Activity
  - Chain Letters
  - Exploiting security or instructing others how to do it.
  - Removing the banner ads from your profile
  - Using automated scripts for spam
  - Creating “undue” burden on Myspace servers
  - Impersonating a member
  - Content creators embedding their player in other sites.
  - Using someone else’s password
  - Selling/transferring your profile
  - Using info obtained from MySpace users to harass others
  - Displaying unauthorized commercial ads on profile.

There are quite a few things in here worthy of study if you’re worried about your child doing something wrong on the site.
**Setting up a profile...**
I’m now going to walk you through setting up a profile and show you the steps to take to secure it. Once we’ve finished we’ll deleted the profile, but, if you don’t wish to display your information on the site for the duration of the class then feel free to make something up. Once it is deleted no trace remains.

On the front page you’ll find a big orange button that says SIGN UP. Click it to begin.

(setting up a profile, cont.)
The next screen primarily consists of what is shown above. This is where you feed your personal information, but, it won’t display what you turn off.

**NOTE:** Passwords must be at least six characters and contain 1 letter.

(setting up a profile, cont.)
You might be a little confused once you arrive at the part of the page that looks like this.

Verification:

![Image of aCAPTCHA]

Please enter the text from the image above:
The letters are not case-sensitive.
Do not type spaces between the numbers and letters.

This feature is actually a good thing despite how confusing the text looks. You simply enter the text you see to continue. The reason this is done is to prevent spammers from using automated programs to sign up for MySpace profiles and send junk to members. Automated programs cannot read images, so, since the text is actually an image in lieu of regular typing, the programs won’t see it. This is called CATCHPA.

Once you’ve completed the sign-up process you’re asked to check a box to let them know you’ve “read and agreed” to their terms of service. We’ve actually looked at them so feel free to click away.

The CATCHPA security measure is actually the most complicated part of the sign in process. It’s good, as I mentioned, but, if you’re eyesight is bad then deciphering the text could be difficult.

(setting up a profile, cont.)
The next screen asks us to upload a profile photo. As detailed in the Terms of Service, the image cannot be copywritten, pornographic, etc.

Keep in mind that anyone can view this photo, even if they aren’t a friend of your child. One security step taken by some parents is to forbid their child to add a photo of themselves. If that’s something you’d like to do as well then you can click “Skip this step” at the bottom to proceed to the next screen. Today, for this example, we’ll go ahead and use one.

This works similar to uploading other things to the internet. Click browse, and you’ll be given an explorer window that allows you to look for files on your PC. I’ve placed a few images on the Windows Desktop, so, navigate the explorer Window to your desktop and pick one. Once you’ve selected it, and it appears in the box, click upload.

(setting up a profile, cont.)

Once you’ve done that, you’re taken to a screen that will search your email address
book for others on MySpace and see if they’re also on MySpace. If they are, you can request their friendship. If they approve you two will be able to leave comments and communicate with one another via the site. We’ll skip this as it is pretty self explanatory.

Now, at last, we are on MySpace. You should have before you the profile admin screen. It looks like the following picture:

![Profile Admin Screen](image)

The pop-up is to inform you of a handful of new features offered by the site. They, in hopes to pull some attention from rival social network Facebook, have started to post news blasts of things you’ve done to your site. If you’ve added friends, change profile, broken up with your boyfriend then those connected with you on the site will find out when they log in. This is another privacy concert, but, the only ones that will see these updates will be friends that your child approves. I’ll show you how to turn the news blasts off, though, just in case.