

Controlling In-App Purchases

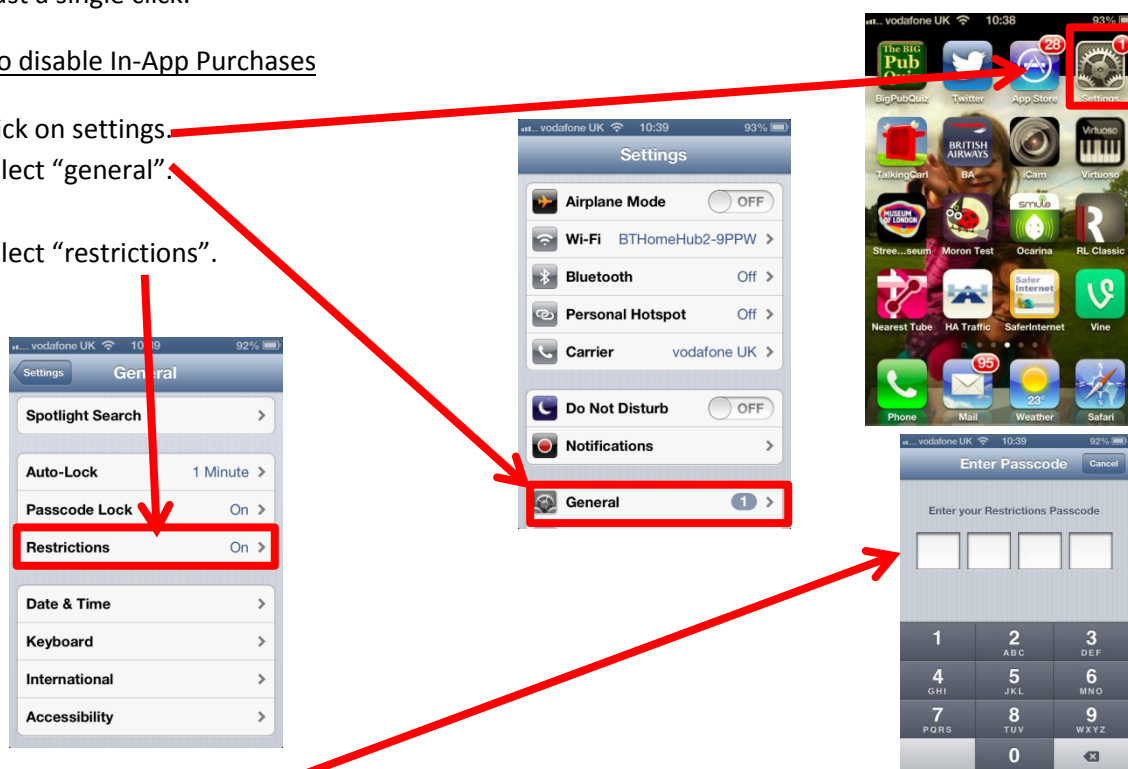
What are In-App Purchases?

Many of us use apps, on smartphones, tablets and other devices. They are incredibly useful and many are free, but some may have hidden costs that can find us receiving large bills. A recent story of a 5-year-old boy who managed to spend £1,700 in less than 15 minutes is a classic example. In-app purchases refer to users being able to buy things when using an app, often with just a single click.

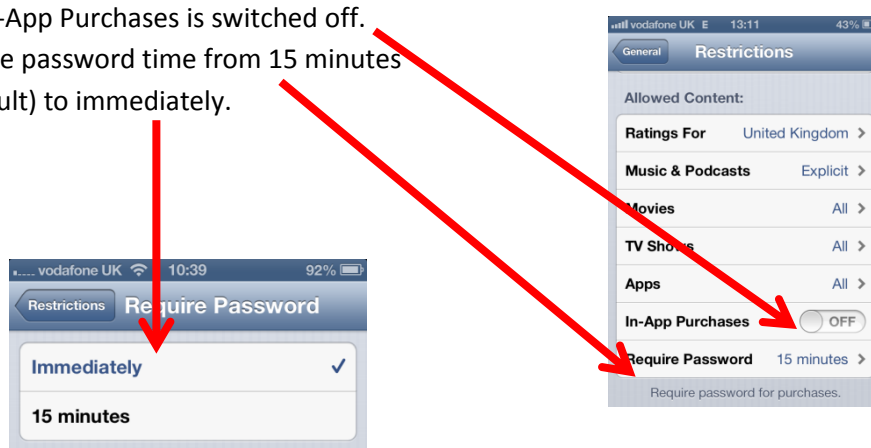


How to disable In-App Purchases

1. Click on settings.
2. Select "general".
3. Select "restrictions".



4. Type in your passcode (if using one). If not you can set this up by switching restrictions on.
5. Make sure that In-App Purchases is switched off.
6. Change the require password time from 15 minutes (which is the default) to immediately.



Apps – challenges and solutions

Chatbot mobile apps – Talking Angela

What is it?



There has been a good deal of discussion in the press recently about an app for children called *Talking Angela*. This app is known as a chatbot mobile phone app and it uses artificial intelligence so that it appears to users that the on-screen character (in the case of Talking Angela this is a cat) is actually talking to them.

The initial concerns centred around the app being associated with a paedophile ring and that there were real people (as opposed to artificial intelligence) communicating with users. This is clearly not the case and the developers of the app (an organisation called Outfit 7) are very well known. As reported earlier this month in the Guardian, the app *“is part of a wider series of apps called Talking Tom and Friends [a talking dog, parrot and giraffe as well as cats], which have been downloaded more than 1.5 billion times since 2010, and are currently being used by 230m people every month – lots of children, but also lots of adults. They’ve spawned a series of popular YouTube videos in partnership with Disney, as well as a range of physical toys. Outfit7 is a well-known apps company, not a shadowy network of child-catchers....”*.

Yes, the app will ask users for their name, but this is so that it knows how to address them. Yes, it will ask for their age, but this is so that it can guide them away from topics or issues that may be inappropriate. Users can have a conversation with the app – it is described as a conversation agent – but the information is carefully protected by the company and is not shared.

Advice for parents

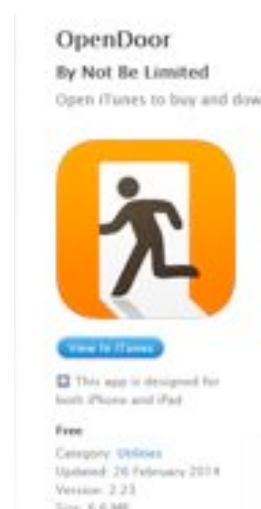
Like many apps and social networks, Talking Angela was not designed for children and so parents would be advised to have a look at it first before allowing their children to use it.

Having said all of this, it can be difficult for parents, carers and educators to know which apps children and young people are using but clearly important that they do. Apps which are downloaded from the Apple store or the Google Play store will have age ratings. Common Sense Media also publishes reviews of the most popular apps and provides useful advice and guidance for parents as to their suitability -

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews>

OpenDoor

OpenDoor is an app which is becoming rapidly popular in schools and colleges. The app, which can be freely downloaded from the app store or from the Android marketplace, allows users to browse anonymously and will bypass any network level filtering. Schools have played a game of cat and mouse for years with pupils who have tried to use proxy servers to get around filtering regimes but the advent of 3G and 4G has meant that this has been largely unnecessary. However pupils still prefer to use Wi-Fi/broadband rather than their slow (and sometimes costly) access via 3G. As OpenDoor is an app, it is proving more difficult to block without causing problems for other apps and software. The technical experts will manage to sort these problems, but no doubt there will be other similar apps which will provide the same service. Clearly the need for dialogue and education is ever important.



WhatsApp

What is it?

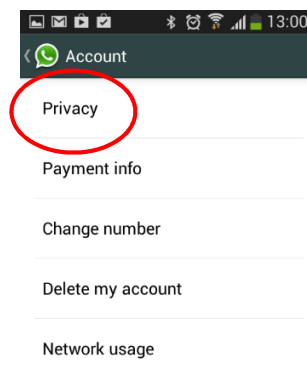
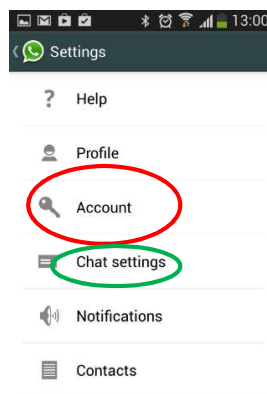
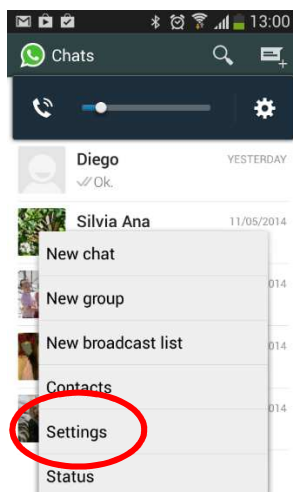
WhatsApp (www.whatsapp.com) is an instant messaging app for smartphones that allows users to exchange free text messages to and from other WhatsApp users, locally and worldwide. In addition to text messaging, it is possible to send each other images, video, and audio media messages as well as our location using integrated mapping features. WhatsApp employs the mobile number to identify the user, so there is no need to register. The app uses the internet for communication (Wi-Fi, 3G and 4G networks) and it works on all major smartphones. In 2014, WhatsApp was acquired by Facebook Inc.



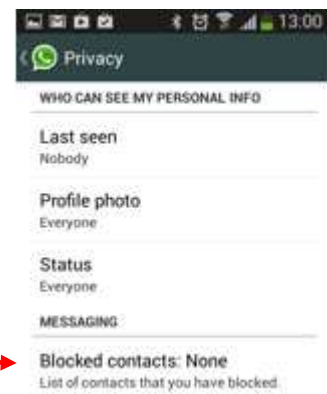
Privacy

In March 2014, WhatsApp updated its app and added new user settings dedicated to privacy. It is important to note that **by default WhatsApp will automatically set your privacy settings to allow any WhatsApp user to view your last seen, profile photo and status**, but users can change these settings.

1. Go to the menu button (for Android devices, it usually is a physical button on the phone and not part of the screen) or to WhatsApp (iPhone or Blackberry)
2. Choose Settings > Account > Privacy



3. There are **three levels of privacy** for last seen, profile photo and/or status:
 - Everyone
 - My Contacts
 - Nobody. Note that the "Nobody" option will also prevent you from seeing other users' information.



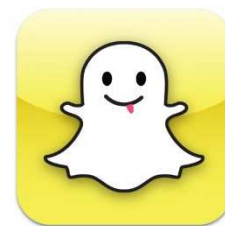
The feature to **block contacts** is located on that same screen.

It is also important to remember that if someone steals your smartphone or somehow gets access to it, he/she will be able to read your chats, so you might want to delete your chats from time to time. To do that, go to Settings > Chat settings (green circle) > Delete all conversations.

Snapchat

This popular app has had a recent update and it is now possible to share video as well as images (see page 2).

Many of the icons and buttons have been re-designed and the whole app has been “tidied-up”.



What is it?

*Snapchat creates a place to be funny, honest or however else you might feel when you take and share a Snap with family and friends. **It's sharing that lives in the moment, unless someone decides to save it.***

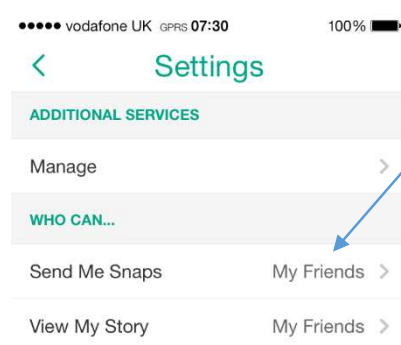
Essentially Snapchat allows users to send images, text and now videos with the promise that they will disappear after a limited amount of time. Like many other applications of this sort, users should be 13 or older to use it.

Users are able to decide how long a photo will “live” for once it has been sent – this can be anything from 1 to 10 seconds. It is interesting that Snapchat recognise that content can be saved now. Initially many users were enticed by the very ephemeral nature of the app – an image would only stay on the recipient’s phone for up to 10 seconds and this could be defined by the sender. Very quickly users realised that it was possible to take a screen-shot of the image which could then be repurposed. There are also several apps (SnapSave, SnapHack) which will take the screen-shot on a users’ behalf, so no matter what the timer is set to, the image will be captured and saved as a photo. Further information on some of these other apps can be found here -

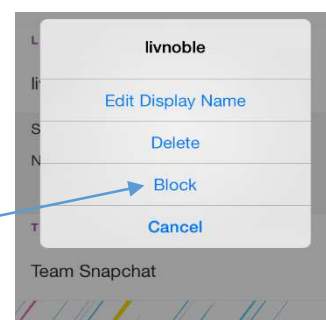
www.yahoo.com/tech/how-to-save-snapchat-pictures-without-the-sender-80875346215.html



Privacy



Click on the menu button to access settings – users are then able to decide who is able to send them snaps – this should be set to *MyFriends*. It is also possible to block other users – tap the menu button and then *My Friends*, click on a friends name and choose Block.

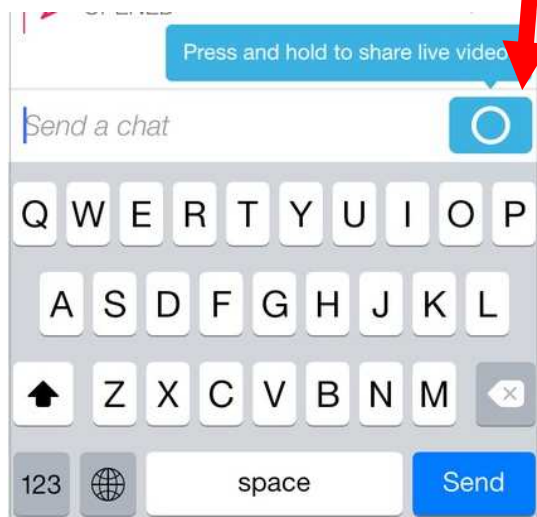


Video

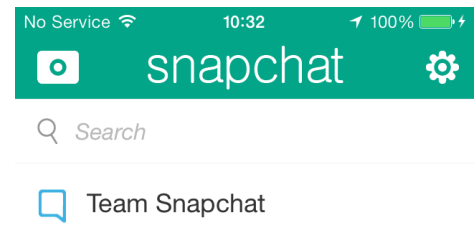
To take and send a video rather than a photo, simply hold the capture button down – it will turn red/pink. Videos can only be up to 15 seconds long and a timer will appear within the button to indicate how much time is left.

It is also possible to have a video chat with a friend now if you have the new/latest version of the app. This is not available to everyone yet and like many of these things it is being rolled out slowly. When the app has been updated you will notice a blue chat bubble next to the names of any friends that have sent you a text. If you swipe right, this will allow you to chat to that person.

In order to have a video chat with another user, you both have to be connected to the internet and have the application open at the same time. You will know whether this is the case by looking at the button above your keyboard. If it is yellow then the other user is not connected – a blue button means that you can video chat.



In order to keep a video chat going, both users need to keep their finger on the bubble which appears in the screen.



Instagram

What is it?

Instagram is an app which allows users (there are currently 80 million of them) to share photos with others. A photo is taken with a mobile device and then can have a filter applied in order to improve the image before it is shared.



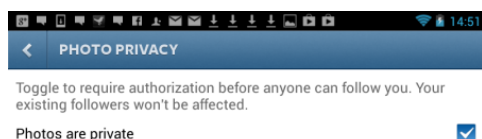
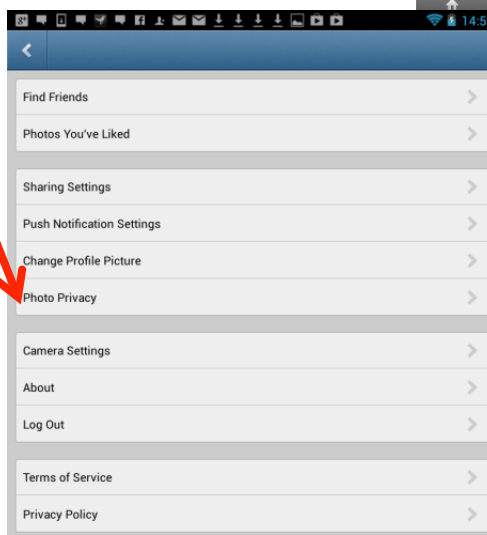
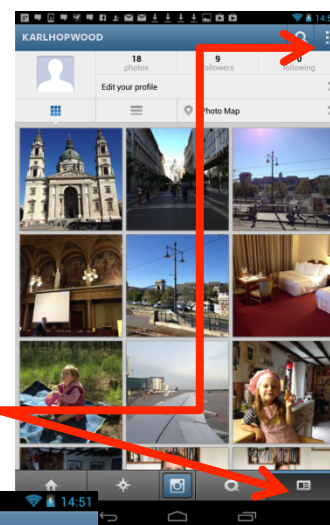
Instagram is currently available for Android and iPhone. Photos can currently be shared immediately to Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare, Tumblr and Flickr but there are plans to make it possible to share with other services in the future.

Privacy

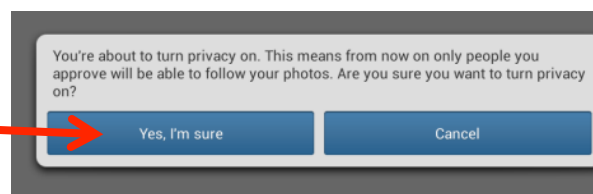
It is important to know that **all photos on Instagram are public by default** which means that anyone who is using Instagram or visiting the Instagram website will be able to access them.

Setting privacy on an Android device – this will mean that only approved followers will be able to see your photos:

1. Click on the Instagram icon to open the app.
2. Click on the address card icon to open up your profile.
3. Click on the settings icon.
4. Scroll to the “photo privacy” option and click on it.



5. Make sure that the “photos are private” box is ticked.
6. If necessary click “Yes, I’m sure” to make photos private.



Once you have done this, you will receive a follow request every time a new user wants to see your photos and you will be able to approve or ignore this.

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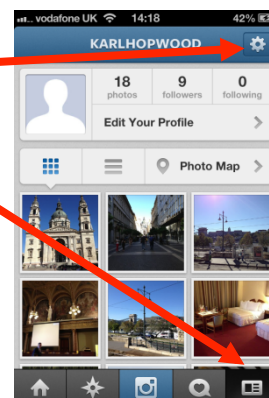
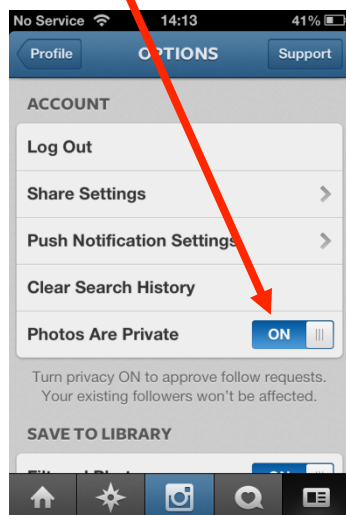


Privacy

It is important to know that **all photos on Instagram are public by default** which means that anyone who is using Instagram or visiting the Instagram website will be able to access them.

Setting privacy on an iPhone/Apple device – this will mean that only approved followers will be able to see your photos:

1. Click on the Instagram icon to open the app.
2. Click on the address card icon to open up your profile.
3. Click on the settings icon.
4. Scroll to the “photos are private” option and ensure that privacy is “on”.



Once you have done this, you will receive a follow request every time a new user wants to see your photos and you will be able to approve or ignore this.

Tumblr

What is it?

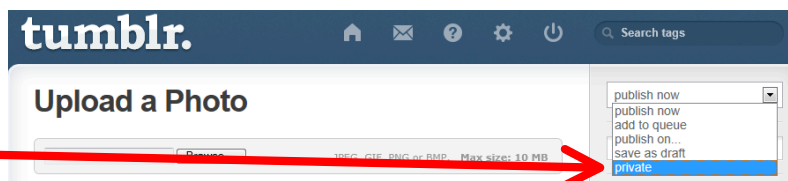
Tumblr is a micro blogging platform and social networking service which allows users to post images, audio, video, comments and text to a webpage/blog. Users can follow others and profiles can be public or private.

Tumblr currently has over 150 million users and some research points to it quickly catching up with Facebook. Tumblr can be accessed directly through a website: www.tumblr.com or by using an app which is available for different devices and platforms.

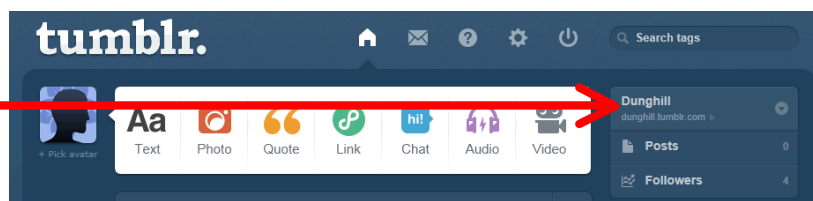
Privacy

Tumblr is very clear about privacy: **By default, all sharing through the Services is public, and when you provide us with content it is published so that anyone can view it. Although we do provide tools, like password-protected blogs, that let you publish content privately, you should assume that anything you publish is publicly accessible unless you have explicitly selected otherwise.**

However, the password-protected blog is not quite so easy to get hold of! Users need to set up a secondary blog if they want to use the password protection – the primary blog (which is the first blog you set up when signing up for Tumblr) cannot be password protected and is therefore always public unless you choose to make a post private (which means no one can see it except you).

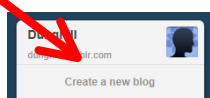


1. To set up a secondary blog with password protection – click on the blog menu at the top right side of your dashboard.

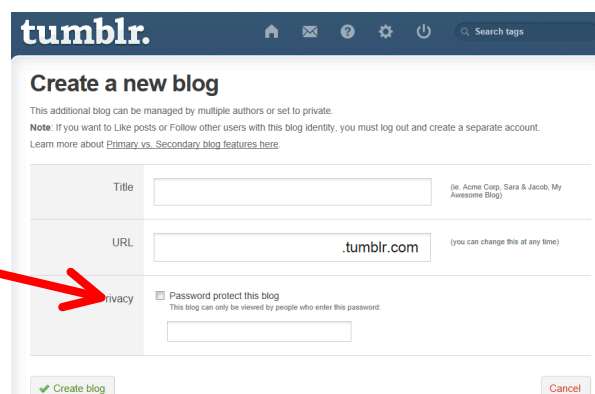


2. Click on “create new blog”.

3. Tick the box next to “Password protect this blog”.



4. You can then share the password with those people who you want to be able to access the blog.



Twitter

What is it?

Twitter is a micro blogging social networking service which allows users to send and receive text-based posts (tweets) of up to 140 characters online. It is also possible to use Twitter's Vine app which allows users to embed a six second video into their tweet. Twitter currently has around 500 million users, of which 200 million have an active profile.



Twitter can be accessed directly through a website: www.twitter.com or by using an app which is available for different devices and platforms.

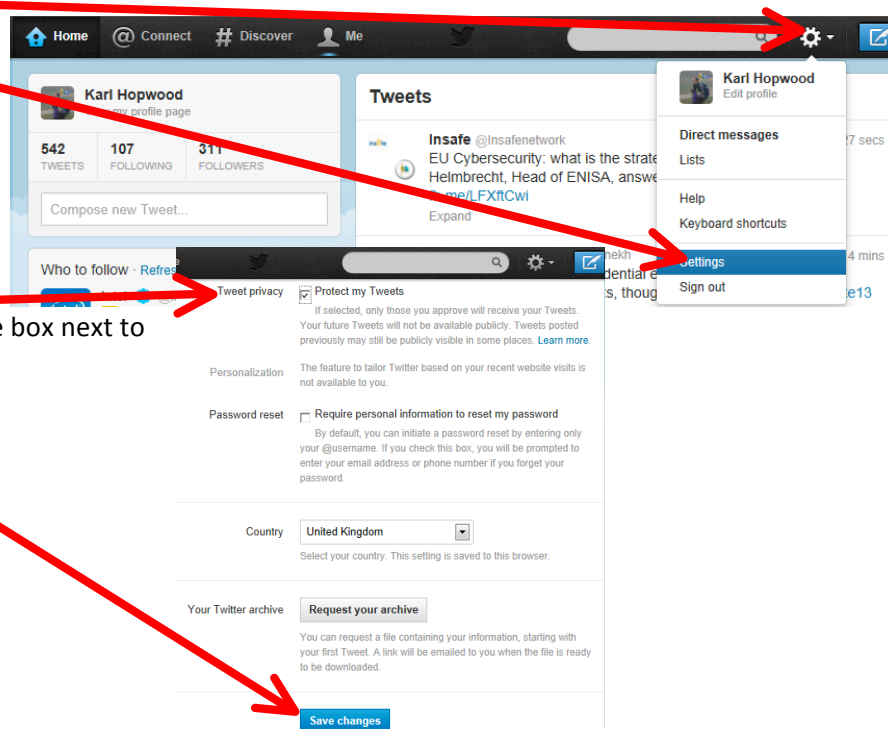
Privacy

It is important to know that **twitter is public by default and tweets are searchable unless they are protected by the user** – this means that anyone who searches for information on Twitter using an app or website will be able to find tweets.

The nature of Twitter means that many users want to share their thoughts, ideas and opinions with the world. However you may wish to control who is able to access the content that you upload and in order to do this, you need to “protect your tweets”.

1. Go to your profile.
2. Click on the settings icon.
3. Choose “settings”.

4. Scroll down to tweet privacy and make sure there is a tick in the box next to “Protect my Tweets”.
5. Remember to save changes.



It is important to remember that followers can re-tweet protected tweets – so think carefully about who you allow to follow you! Having lots of followers may make you look popular, but is not always the safest way to use Twitter.