

# Finding your place in digital communities



This learning scenario introduces how different online communities work and helps learners make informed decisions about joining them. They also learn to navigate the basic features of Facebook Groups, Reddit, or WhatsApp groups.

## Learning objectives

After completing this scenario, learners will be able to

- recognise how online communities mirror and differ from offline communities they already know
- identify three major types of online community platforms and understand what they offer
- evaluate whether an online community is safe and appropriate before joining
- protect their personal information and privacy across different platforms
- navigate the basic features of Facebook Groups, Reddit, or WhatsApp groups
- know their rights to stay offline, take breaks, and get help
- make informed choices about which digital communities serve their needs

## Target group

Adults with basic device skills and offline community experience, but little exposure to online communities. No prior use of Facebook Groups, Reddit, or WhatsApp is needed. Ideal for learners who want to explore digital participation options without pressure to join online spaces.

### Level

Intermediate ★★

### Length

120 - 180 min

### Mode

In-person




image: Canva

## To study before the scenario



The educator preparing to deliver this workshop should get familiar with:

- Genially interactive game “Digital Community Champion” The educator can also use Genially to create new gamified learning content
- Midjourney for AI-generated imagery (optional, for creating new learning content)
- ChatGPT for prompt generation assistance - optional, if creating new content
- Privacy settings on Facebook, Reddit, and WhatsApp
- Current community guidelines and safety features of each platform
- Real examples of Facebook Groups in various categories (local community, hobbies, support)
- Active subreddits that demonstrate positive community culture
- Privacy settings documentation for WhatsApp groups

Emerging Technology tools used	Educator / learner		
<u>Genially</u> interactive game: “ <u>Digital Community Champion</u> ”	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<u>WhatsApp</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<u>Reddit</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<u>Facebook</u> Groups	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

## Equipment needed

Computers/laptops, internet connection, projector, printed scenario cards (optional).



## How to use this scenario

The scenario is designed primarily for in-person delivery with internet access, but sections can be adapted for online delivery via video conferencing with screen sharing.

Can be delivered as:

- Single intensive workshop (2–3 hours)
- Weekly series (4–5 sessions of 60 minutes each, covering one platform per week)
- Adapted to shorter or longer formats depending on learner needs and engagement

**Educator requirements:** The scenario requires the teacher to navigate multiple digital platforms during demonstration and manage both physical and digital gamification elements. The teacher needs confidence in demonstrating live online communities and troubleshooting basic technical issues.

**Flexibility is key:** This is a learning scenario, not a rigid lesson plan. It's intentionally detailed because it serves as inspiration and guidance, so not every section needs to be used.

You can:

- Apply as is: Follow the full workshop structure if it suits your context
- Pick and choose: Select individual sections that work for your learners
- Use as inspiration: Adapt activities, scenarios, and approaches for other topics
- One platform focus: Teach only Facebook Groups, using just that section
- Weekly series: Run one hour per week, covering one platform each session
- Game only: Use the Genially game independently as a reinforcement tool
- Different scenarios: The card game scenarios are suggestions, create your own based on what your learners face

Understand your learners first. This workshop might be too easy, too hard, or not quite right for your group, that's okay. Take what works, leave what doesn't, and adapt the rest.

Emerging technology tools used in this scenario showcase how they can enhance adult education by making it more interactive, personalised, and engaging.



# Description of the learning scenario

## Preparation

### 1. Choose your examples

Prepare 2–3 real examples per platform that are relevant to your learners:

- Facebook Group: Local community (neighbourhood, town) or hobby group (gardening, cooking, walking)
- Reddit community: Supportive subreddit like r/CasualConversation, r/AskReddit, or topic-specific but welcoming
- WhatsApp group: Create a mock example or use screenshots from a family/community group (with permission and names blurred)

If your group loves gardening, show a gardening community. If they're grandparents, show grandparenting groups.

### 2. Test the technology

- Ensure you can access and navigate each platform smoothly
- Test the Genially game link and confirm it works
- Print scenario cards if using the physical card game (or prepare to display digitally)
- Check that devices and internet connection are working

### 3. Review privacy settings

Familiarise yourself with where to find and demonstrate:

- WhatsApp: Settings > Privacy > Groups (control who can add you)
- Facebook: Group privacy settings and audience selectors
- Reddit: Profile settings and what information is visible

### 4. Prepare your framing

This workshop emphasises choice. No one has to join online communities, and choosing not to is completely valid. Prepare to emphasise throughout:

- Digital exclusion should never prevent access to essential services
- Everyone has the right to human support and offline alternatives
- This workshop is about understanding options and making informed decisions



## Section 1: Connecting what we know (30-40 minutes)

### 1. Starting the conversation

Begin by acknowledging that everyone in the room already understands communities, they're part of several. The internet didn't invent community; it just created new ways for communities to exist.

Opening prompt: "Before we look at any screens, let's talk about the communities you're already part of. Turn to someone near you and share: What's one community or group you belong to? It could be your neighbourhood, a hobby group, your family, people you see at the market, a sports team, anything."

Give pairs 3–4 minutes to talk, then invite a few people to share with the whole group.

### 2. Exploring community features

Ask follow-up questions to explore:

- What makes that community valuable to you?
- How do you communicate? (Face-to-face? Phone? Text?)
- How did you join? Did someone invite you?
- Are there rules (spoken or unspoken) about how people treat each other?
- Can you leave if it's not working for you?

What you're doing here: Building a foundation. Online communities aren't foreign, they're just communities that happen in digital spaces. Everything learners know about groups, belonging, safety, and boundaries applies online too.

### 3. Bridging to digital spaces

Make the connection explicit: "The groups you just described all have something in common, they're ways people connect around shared interests, needs, or geography. Today we're going to explore how some communities do this online. We'll look at three popular platforms: Facebook Groups, Reddit, and WhatsApp groups."

Important framing: Emphasise choice throughout. No one has to join online communities, and choosing not to is completely valid.



#### 4. Check existing experience

“Has anyone here used Facebook, WhatsApp, or Reddit? Or been part of any online group? What was that experience like?”

This honours existing knowledge and helps you gauge where to focus attention.

### Section 2: Exploring three digital communities (60-75 minutes total, 20-25 minutes per platform)

This is the heart of the workshop. You’ll demonstrate three different platforms, showing how each works and what makes it distinct. Make this interactive, not a lecture, but guided exploration where learners notice patterns and ask questions.

Note on timing: Take your time here. Discovery means giving learners space to observe and ask questions. If one platform particularly resonates with your group, spend extra time there and adjust other sections.

Note on flexibility: You don’t have to cover all three platforms. Choose what’s most relevant to your learners. Teaching one platform well is better than rushing through three.

#### Platform 1: Facebook groups (20-25 minutes)

What you’ll show: A real Facebook group displayed on screen

How to demonstrate:

1. Start with search: “Let’s say I’m interested in [topic]. I’ll search for Facebook groups about this...”
2. Show search results and click on a group
3. Walk through what you see: group name, description, member count, privacy setting, rules, recent posts



### **Key concepts to highlight:**

- Privacy levels: Public groups (anyone can see posts) vs. private groups (only members see content)
- Joining process: Some groups allow immediate joining; private groups require approval
- Administrators: Real people who create rules and manage the group
- Your identity: Group members can see your Facebook profile: name, photo, sometimes more

### **Questions to ask learners:**

- “What information can you see before joining?”
- “Is this public or private? What difference does that make?”
- “What are people posting about? Look at a few posts—how do people respond to each other?”
- “Who can see what you post here?”

Facilitate noticing: Don’t just tell, help them observe. Point to screen and ask, “What do you notice here?” This builds skills for independent evaluation.

### **Summary together:**

- Facebook Groups connect people around interests, locations, or identities
- Can be public (anyone sees everything) or private (members only)
- You use your real name and profile
- Admins set rules and can remove people
- Good for: local communities, interest groups, sharing photos, organising events

### **Platform 2: Reddit Communities (20-25 minutes)**

What you’ll show: A Reddit discussion (called a subreddit) with a question and responses

### **How to demonstrate:**

1. Explain organisation: Reddit organises by topic, called “subreddits” (show URL: [reddit.com/r/\[topic\]](https://reddit.com/r/[topic]))



2. Show a post with a question and several responses
3. Point out voting system (upvotes/downvotes) and how it affects visibility
4. Show community rules (in sidebar)
5. Highlight usernames, not real names

Key concepts to highlight:

- Anonymity: You create a username; no one knows your real identity unless you share it
- Topic organisation: Communities are very specific (there's a subreddit for almost anything)
- Voting system: Popular/helpful content rises to the top
- Lurking is normal: You can read without ever posting
- Different cultures: Each subreddit has its own tone and rules

Questions to ask learners:

- Why might someone want to use a nickname instead of their real name?
- What happens when a comment gets lots of upvotes?
- How do people talk to each other here? Formal? Casual? Supportive?
- Look at the rules. How are they different from the Facebook group?

Facilitate noticing: Help learners see that anonymity changes dynamics. People might ask more personal questions or share vulnerable experiences, but also sometimes be more critical.

Summary together:

- Reddit offers anonymity through usernames
- Communities organised by very specific topics (subreddits)
- Voting system surfaces helpful content
- Every community has its own culture and rules
- You can read without participating ("lurking")
- Good for: getting advice, learning about niche interests, asking questions anonymously



### Platform 3: WhatsApp groups (20-25 minutes)

What you'll show: Example of a WhatsApp group (mock or screenshots with privacy protected)

How to demonstrate:

1. Show joining process: You can join WhatsApp groups by clicking an invite link, being added directly by a member, scanning a QR code, or searching for and joining public groups directly through WhatsApp's community directory feature
2. Display group info: members list, group description, settings
3. Show real-time nature: how quickly messages arrive
4. Show mute notifications
5. Demonstrate leaving a group

Key concepts to highlight:

- Invitation only: To join a private group, someone must add you
- Phone numbers visible: Everyone in the group can see your phone number
- Immediate and constant: Messages arrive in real time, can feel overwhelming
- Private but exposing: More private than Facebook, but everyone has your number
- Notification management: You can control alerts

Questions to ask learners:

- "How is this different from texting one person?"
- "If you woke up to 50 unread messages, how might that feel?"
- "Can you control who adds you? Let's check privacy settings."
- "How do you know if someone read your message?"
- "How would you leave politely?"

Facilitate noticing: Help learners understand WhatsApp groups feel different, more intimate but also more intrusive. Constant notifications and visible phone numbers change the experience.

Summary together:

- Private WhatsApp groups are invitation only
- Everyone has your phone number
- Messages happen in real time and can pile up



- You can control privacy settings to limit who adds you
- You can mute or leave groups
- Good for: close-knit communities, family groups, people you already know, quick coordination

## Creating the Comparison Together (10-15 minutes)

Now that you've explored all three, create a summary with learners. Draw or project a simple table and fill it in together, below is an example:

Feature	Facebook Group	Reddit	WhatsApp Group
Your identity	Real name/profile	Anonymous username	Phone number
Who can join?	Request or invited	Anyone can read/join	Invitation only
Privacy level	Medium	High (anonymous)	Low (they have your number)
Best for...	[Ask learners]	[Ask learners]	[Ask learners]

Take your time: This consolidates learning and helps learners see patterns. Let discussion flow naturally.

For “best for” row, don't give answers, ask learners to suggest based on observations. This reinforces analytical thinking.

Deeper comparison questions:

- “Which platform felt most comfortable?” “Why?”
- “Which surprised you most?”
- “Can you imagine using different platforms for different purposes?”
- “If someone wanted to stay completely private, which would you recommend?”

## Section 3: Safety, Privacy, and Rights (30-40 minutes)

Now that learners understand how platforms work, address safety. This builds critical thinking about what to share, what to keep private, and what rights everyone has.

### Part A: “What Would You Do?” Scenario Activity (15 minutes)

What you’ll need: Scenario cards (print or write on index cards, or display digitally)

How it works:

1. Display or spread out scenario cards
2. Ask learners to sort into three categories:
  - ✓ Safe to share
  - ✗ Keep private
  - ? Depends on the situation

Don’t rush this. For each scenario, especially “depends” ones, ask:

- “Why did you place this here?”
- “What could happen if someone shares this?”
- “How could you share this more safely?”
- “What would change your answer? What context matters?”

What you’re building: Judgement, not rules. Help learners think through consequences and context.

### Scenario examples:

✓ Safe to share:

- Posting in a local Facebook group: “Does anyone know a good dentist in the area?”
- Commenting on Reddit: “I’m also learning English. This website helped me...”
- WhatsApp group with your child's school: “What time is the meeting tomorrow?”
- Asking a parenting group: “How did you handle this stage with your toddler?”



✗ Keep private:

- Sharing your home address in a public Facebook group
- Posting a photo of your credit card to ask about bank charges
- Telling a Reddit stranger your exact daily schedule
- Sharing your location while on vacation: “The house is empty for two weeks!”

? Depends on the situation:

- Sharing a photo of your children (depends: public group? anonymous space? who is in the photo?)
- Telling a group where you work (depends: professional community? anonymous? public?)
- Posting that you’re going on vacation (depends: who can see this? how specific?)
- Sharing your phone number (depends: size of group? trust level? privacy settings?)

## **Part B: Privacy, Safety, and Your Rights (15-20 minutes)**

Now demonstrate actual tools and settings that protect people online.

### **1. Privacy Settings (5+ minutes)**

Show learners where to find and adjust:

- WhatsApp: Settings > Privacy > Groups (control who can add you: Everyone, My Contacts, or specific people)
- Facebook: When posting to group, check audience selector
- Reddit: Your username protects you, but review what your profile reveals

Key message: You can control privacy, but you must actively set it up. Default settings aren’t always most protective.

### **2. Blocking and Reporting (5+ minutes)**

Show where to find:

- Report button (usually three dots or flag icon)
- How to block someone (prevents contact)
- What happens when you report (platform reviews, but doesn’t always act)



Emphasise: “You always have the right to remove yourself from uncomfortable situations. If something feels wrong, trust that feeling. You can block, report, mute, or leave.”

### **3. Your Right to Be Offline (5+ minutes)**

This is crucial. Many feel pressure to be constantly available. Counter that directly: “Digital exclusion should never prevent access to essential services. You have the right to human support and offline alternatives. This extends to your personal life too:

- You never have to join any online community
- You don’t have to respond immediately
- It’s okay to mute notifications or leave a group
- Taking breaks is healthy and normal
- If a service requires you to be online and you can’t access it, you have the right to ask for offline alternatives”

### **4. Where to Get Help (5+ minutes)**

Provide concrete resources:

- Each platform’s help centre (show where to find it)
- Local digital literacy support services
- [Add specific local contacts: library staff, community centre, adult education programmes]

Make it clear: Asking for help is smart, not shameful.

## **Part C: Creating Your Safety Checklist (15 minutes)**

Work together to build a simple checklist. Write it somewhere visible so everyone can copy it.

Take your time: Don’t rush. Let learners suggest their own rules based on what they’ve learnt. The more they contribute, the more they’ll remember and use it.



Example Safety Checklist:

- Read the community rules before posting
- Check privacy settings (Who can see this?)
- Don't share personal contact information publicly
- Think before posting: Would I say this face-to-face?
- If something feels wrong, trust that feeling
- Know how to report, block, or leave
- Remember: I can take breaks whenever I need
- [Add your own rule]

Let learners suggest additions. This makes the checklist theirs, not something imposed on them.

## Section 4: Learning Through Games (25-35 minutes)

Games offer a playful, low-stakes way to reinforce safety concepts. Use one or both depending on your time, resources, and learners' preferences.

### Game 1: "Digital Community Champion" - Interactive Digital Game (15-20 minutes)

Format: Digital interactive game on Genially






Best for: Independent exploration, visual learners, tech-comfortable groups

Access the game: [Digital Spaces & Communities](#) | [Genially](#).

#### What is this game?

This is an interactive digital game where players journey through five different online spaces, answering questions to unlock each area. As they progress, they learn about online communities, privacy, different platforms, digital footprints, and online safety.

The journey: Players visit five digital spaces and answer questions to unlock each one:

-  The Community Park - What online communities really are
-  The Privacy Gardens - How to protect your privacy
-  The Platform Plaza - How different platforms work
-  The Footprint Path - Why what you share can last forever
-  The Guardian's Gate - How to keep yourself safe and happy online



After completing each digital space, players receive a Wi-Fi password. They enter this password to unlock the next space. Complete all five to become a Digital Community Champion!

### **How to use this game in your workshop:**

- During the workshop: Project it on screen and play together as a group, discussing answers
- Independent practice: Share the link for learners to play at home at their own pace
- Pairs exploration: Have learners play in pairs during hands-on time
- Follow-up activity: Use it as homework between workshop sessions

### **What this game accomplishes:**

- Reinforces key concepts through interactive questions
- Provides immediate feedback on answers
- Offers a gamified, achievement-oriented experience (collecting Wi-Fi passwords)
- Works as both group activity and individual practice
- Accommodates different learning paces

### **Game 2: “Community Decisions” Card Game (15-20 minutes)**

Format: Physical card game for small group discussion

Best for: Face-to-face learning, building group discussion skills, exploring nuanced situations

[Download the card game \(pdf\)](#).

### **How it works:**

This is a scenario-based discussion game where learners draw cards presenting online situations and discuss how they would respond.

Materials needed:

- Scenario cards (provided in Annex, print or display digitally)

Setup:

- Players sit in small groups (3–4 people)
- Shuffle the scenario cards face-down
- Take turns drawing cards and reading them aloud



How to play:

1. One person draws a card and reads the scenario aloud
2. Everyone discusses: What would you do? What are the options?
3. Each person shares their choice and reasoning
4. No “right” answer, the goal is to think through consequences together
5. Move to the next card

Facilitator role during the game:

- Circulate among small groups listening to discussions
- Ask follow-up questions when groups seem stuck: “What would the consequences be?” “Are there other options?”
- Share observations: “I noticed different groups had different approaches to this scenario. Let’s hear a few...”
- Don’t provide “correct” answers, affirm good reasoning instead

**What this game accomplishes:**

- Reinforces safety thinking in a playful way
- Shows that situations are often nuanced (the “depends” category from earlier)
- Builds collective wisdom, people learn from each other’s reasoning
- Normalises thinking before acting online

**When to use this game**

- During the workshop as a bridge between learning and hands-on practice
- As a closing activity to reinforce concepts
- In future follow-up sessions
- As a take-home activity for practicing with family or friends

**Closing the Workshop (10-15 minutes)**

**Key takeaways**

Summarise together, asking learners what they’ll remember:

- Different platforms serve different needs—there’s no “best” one
- You have rights: to privacy, to be offline, to leave spaces that don’t serve you
- Safety is about developing judgement and trusting your instincts
- Observing before participating is smart
- You’re in control of your digital community experience



## Concrete next steps:

- Take home your safety checklist
- Explore platforms at your own pace
- Use the Digital Community Champion game to reinforce learning
- Start by observing communities that interest you
- Try watching for a week before participating
- Reach out for help when needed

## Assessment

Assessment happens throughout the scenario:

### 1. Observational assessment

- Monitor participation, reasoning quality, and contributions during discussions and activities
- Observe learners as they identify privacy settings, compare platforms, and evaluate community safety
- Note the questions they ask and the connections they make

### 2. Application through games

- Learners apply judgement in realistic situations
- They explain the reasoning behind their safety decisions
- They distinguish safe vs. risky sharing

### 3. Self-Assessment (Safety Checklist)

- Learners propose meaningful safety rules and explain their importance
- They identify personal boundaries for digital participation

Key indicators of success:

- Learners can name at least two differences between platforms
- Learners can identify at least three privacy or safety considerations
- Learners understand they have the right to stay offline or leave communities
- Learners demonstrate critical thinking about context (“it depends”)
- Learners feel more confident (not overwhelmed) about digital community options



## Things to note

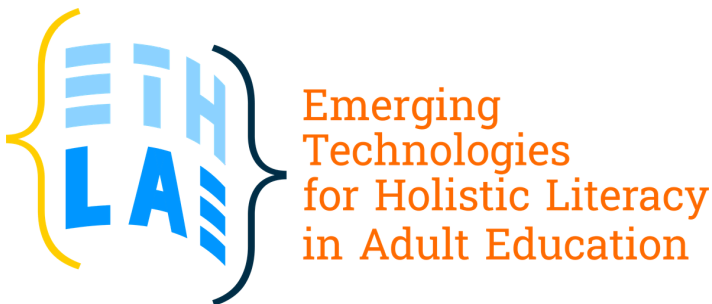
### Adjusting the scenario to different learner needs

Make easier:

- Focus on only one platform instead of three
- Use more time for hands-on exploration with teacher guidance
- Create a word bank of key terms to reference
- Spread content over more meetings

Make more difficult:

- Add hands-on practice time where learners actually create accounts and explore
- Have learners research and present on a community they find
- Add more complex scenarios with ethical dilemmas
- Include discussion of misinformation and how to evaluate information quality
- Explore privacy settings in greater depth



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