

# CLOSEOUT FILES



Resolved: That, on balance, social networking Web sites have a positive impact on the United States.

# Introduction

In the midst of economic crisis, shifts of global power, and the rise of Obama, we've been handed the topic Resolved: That, on balance, social networking Web sites have a positive impact on the United States. While the topic may not be timely, there is no arguing that it has an impact on at least our lives. Discussing Facebook might not be of the same caliber as universal health care or nuclear energy but if this topic had to be debated then this is as good a month as any. As you will notice from reading the evidence, the people who do research about this topic or profess themselves to be "experts" are generally less qualified than all of us to make assertions about social networking Web sites. With this in consideration, being successful at the topic depends on your ability to present critical analysis with real insight as opposed to just stating evidence. Considering this in addition to a lack of effective evidence, the number of cards in the files might be fewer; however, they are all you will need in a round. The evidence coupled with our analysis and blocks will be enough to overwhelm your opponents and convince the judge.

The wording of the resolution could cause some confusion even though the intent is rather obviously. The term "on balance" means that you need to compare the positive and negative aspects of social networking Web sites. Think of it as a scale; the heavier side wins. This allows you to set up a cost-benefit analysis in which whatever side has the larger impact gets the ballot. One could even put a cost-benefit analysis into your case in which you recognize the negatives or benefits, depending on which side you are, but state that your side outweighs them. When debating this topic beware of just disregarding your opponents arguments by saying that yours have a larger impact; that is not enough to win a round. To ensure clash, first you need to refute your opponents case, then argue that their points are outweighed by your own. Next, the phrase "on the United States" will cause some debaters to try to give abusive definitions. In the context of the round, "on the United States" should mean an impact on its people or its society. Call anyone out claiming the physical land or trying to confine the resolution to something other than the two prior meanings.

Since most of the evidence are quotes or statements from so called "experts," be careful not to fall into the trap of just shouting "he said" "she

said” back and forth during the round. Offer some actual analysis because that is what is going to stick with the judge and the end of the round.

Thank you for purchasing the Closeout Files and please e-mail us at [closeoutfiles@yahoo.com](mailto:closeoutfiles@yahoo.com) with any questions or suggestions. Also make sure you join our facebook account for updates regarding the Closeout Files. Good luck debating.

## Definition and Background

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>

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We define social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

While we use the term "social network site" to describe this phenomenon, the term "social networking sites" also appears in public discourse, and the two terms are often used interchangeably. We chose not to employ the term "networking" for two reasons: emphasis and scope. "Networking" emphasizes relationship initiation, often between strangers. While networking is possible on these sites, it is not the primary practice on many of them, nor is it what differentiates them from other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC).

What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between "latent ties" (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection. On many of the large SNSs, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are

already a part of their extended social network. To emphasize this articulated social network as a critical organizing feature of these sites, we label them "social network sites."

While SNSs have implemented a wide variety of technical features, their backbone consists of visible profiles that display an articulated list of Friends<sup>1</sup> who are also users of the system. Profiles are unique pages where one can "type oneself into being" (Sundén, 2003, p. 3). After joining an SNS, an individual is asked to fill out forms containing a series of questions. The profile is generated using the answers to these questions, which typically include descriptors such as age, location, interests, and an "about me" section. Most sites also encourage users to upload a profile photo. Some sites allow users to enhance their profiles by adding multimedia content or modifying their profile's look and feel. Others, such as Facebook, allow users to add modules ("Applications") that enhance their profile.

The visibility of a profile varies by site and according to user discretion. By default, profiles on Friendster and Tribe.net are crawled by search engines, making them visible to anyone, regardless of whether or not the viewer has an account. Alternatively, LinkedIn controls what a viewer may see based on whether she or he has a paid account. Sites like MySpace allow users to choose whether they want their profile to be public or "Friends only." Facebook takes a different approach—by default, users who are part of the same "network" can view each other's profiles, unless a profile owner has decided to deny permission to those in their network. Structural variations around visibility and access are one of the primary ways that SNSs differentiate themselves from each other.

After joining a social network site, users are prompted to identify others in the system with whom they have a relationship. The label for these relationships differs depending on the site—popular terms include "Friends," "Contacts," and "Fans." Most SNSs require bi-directional confirmation for Friendship, but some do not. These one-directional ties are sometimes labeled as "Fans" or "Followers," but many sites call these Friends as well. The term "Friends" can be misleading, because the connection does not necessarily mean friendship in the everyday

vernacular sense, and the reasons people connect are varied (boyd, 2006a).

The public display of connections is a crucial component of SNSs. The Friends list contains links to each Friend's profile, enabling viewers to traverse the network graph by clicking through the Friends lists. On most sites, the list of Friends is visible to anyone who is permitted to view the profile, although there are exceptions. For instance, some MySpace users have hacked their profiles to hide the Friends display, and LinkedIn allows users to opt out of displaying their network.

Most SNSs also provide a mechanism for users to leave messages on their Friends' profiles. This feature typically involves leaving "comments," although sites employ various labels for this feature. In addition, SNSs often have a private messaging feature similar to webmail. While both private messages and comments are popular on most of the major SNSs, they are not universally available.

Not all social network sites began as such. QQ started as a Chinese instant messaging service, LunarStorm as a community site, Cyworld as a Korean discussion forum tool, and Skyrock (formerly Skyblog) was a French blogging service before adding SNS features. Classmates.com, a directory of school affiliates launched in 1995, began supporting articulated lists of Friends after SNSs became popular. AsianAvenue, MiGente, and BlackPlanet were early popular ethnic community sites with limited Friends functionality before re-launching in 2005-2006 with SNS features and structure.

Beyond profiles, Friends, comments, and private messaging, SNSs vary greatly in their features and user base. Some have photo-sharing or video-sharing capabilities; others have built-in blogging and instant messaging technology. There are mobile-specific SNSs (e.g., Dodgeball), but some web-based SNSs also support limited mobile interactions (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, and Cyworld). Many SNSs target people from specific geographical regions or linguistic groups, although this does not always determine the site's constituency. Orkut, for example, was launched in the United States with an English-only interface, but Portuguese-speaking Brazilians quickly became the dominant user group (Kopytoff, 2004). Some sites are designed with specific ethnic, religious, sexual orientation,

political, or other identity-driven categories in mind. There are even SNSs for dogs (Dogster) and cats (Catster), although their owners must manage their profiles.

While SNSs are often designed to be widely accessible, many attract homogeneous populations initially, so it is not uncommon to find groups using sites to segregate themselves by nationality, age, educational level, or other factors that typically segment society (Hargittai, this issue), even if that was not the intention of the designers.

The rise of SNSs indicates a shift in the organization of online communities. While websites dedicated to communities of interest still exist and prosper, SNSs are primarily organized around people, not interests. Early public online communities such as Usenet and public discussion forums were structured by topics or according to topical hierarchies, but social network sites are structured as personal (or "egocentric") networks, with the individual at the center of their own community. This more accurately mirrors unmediated social structures, where "the world is composed of networks, not groups" (Wellman, 1988, p. 37). The introduction of SNS features has introduced a new organizational framework for online communities, and with it, a vibrant new research context.

In their examination of LiveJournal "friendship," Fono and Raynes-Goldie (2006) described users' understandings regarding public displays of connections and how the Friending function can operate as a catalyst for social drama. In listing user motivations for Friending, boyd (2006a) points out that "Friends" on SNSs are not the same as "friends" in the everyday sense; instead, Friends provide context by offering users an imagined audience to guide behavioral norms. Other work in this area has examined the use of Friendster Testimonials as self-presentational devices (boyd & Heer, 2006) and the extent to which the attractiveness of one's Friends (as indicated by Facebook's "Wall" feature) impacts impression formation (Walther, Van Der Heide, Kim, & Westerman, in press).

#### PEW INTERNET PROJECT DATA MEMO

BY: Amanda Lenhart, Senior Research Specialist & Mary Madden, Senior Research Specialist

RE: Social Networking Websites and Teens: An Overview

DATE: January 3, 2007

A social networking site is an online location where a user can create a profile and build a personal network that connects him or her to other users.

Among the key findings:

- 55% of online teens have created a personal profile online, and 55% have used social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook.
- 66% of teens who have created a profile say that their profile is not visible by all internet users. They limit access to their profiles.
- 48% of teens visit social networking websites daily or more often; 26% visit once a day, 22% visit several times a day.
- Older girls ages 15-17 are more likely to have used social networking sites and online profiles; 70% of older girls have used an online social network compared with 54% of older boys, and 70% of older girls have created an online profile, while only 57% boys have done so.

Teens say social networking sites help them manage their friendships

- 91% of all social networking teens say they use the sites to stay in touch with friends they see frequently, while 82% use the sites to stay in touch with friends they rarely see in person.
- 72% of all social networking teens use the sites to make plans with friends; 49% use the sites to make new friends.
- Older boys who use social networking sites (ages 15-17) are more likely than girls of the same age to say that they use social networking sites to make new friends (60% vs. 46%).
- Just 17% of all social networking teens use the sites to flirt.
- Older boys who use social networking sites are more than twice as likely as older girls to say they use the sites to flirt; 29% report this compared with just 13% of older girls.

In Facebook, users are encouraged and often required to register using their real name, effectively connecting the user with their offline identity. Even with the new openness, Facebook is still primarily organized around real-world physical communities – first college campuses and later high schools, employers and geographic regions.

# Public Forum Article

Once evidence preparation is finished, case writing is the next critical step. Many people feel that cases are the most important part of the debate round but in actuality they play a minimal role in the decision of a judge. Cases do not need to be perfect nor should they be essays on the topic; they are meant to be persuasive speeches that use evidence and rhetoric to convey your side. With that in consideration, let us go over how cases should be organized and what they need to contain.

While we understand that there is an aspect of case writing that depends on your geographical location and the norms within your district, there is a specific style that universally works at national tournaments. We will be discussing what we have seen and successfully used at major competitions so that the most information can be extracted and implemented for your own use.

Let us start from the beginning with your introduction. While some people just start their cases by delving right into information and evidence, there is a more effective way to gather interest from your judges. We suggest that you start out your cases with a light introduction containing something to make you, the judge, and your opponents smile; a joke or funny line that relates to the topic. This will separate you from the majority of your competition and will take the tenseness out of the room. From there, the rest of your introduction should give some commentary or background about the topic. Some people try to include definitions within your cases, and while I'm sure many of you think this is necessary, it only takes away time from your case that should otherwise be promoting your arguments. That is not to say that you shouldn't have definitions for all of the controversial phrases because you should just not in your cases. The fact of the matter is that if you need to define something then you are planning on abusing it.

Many debaters struggle when writing cases because they think they are the most important thing in a round; however, the only purpose of cases are to lay out the points you will be debating for the rest of the round. Cases should contain your best arguments and should be presented in a persuasive style. To ensure you are only using optimal arguments, case writing should be one of the last things that you do as far as preparation goes. This way you have acquired all of the knowledge you are going to

acquire before the tournament and should understand all potential arguments and their responses. As a standard, you should only run three to four arguments in your case as to not overwhelm the judge or limit yourself. The greatest arguments are those with the least effective response and serve to further your own side rather than rebutting an opponent case. Too many people run points that serve more as a block than it does as an argument that stands on its own. To win a round you cannot just make a point but you need to be able to respond to your opponents counterpoint so make sure you are prepared to do that.

For the most parts, debate cases can be very bland but there are steps you can take to make it flow as more of a speech. Don't get caught up listing statistic after statistic or quote after quote because it causes the judge to lose track of what you are saying. Make your case have elements of a speech, containing elements of rhetoric and presenting it with enthusiasm and inflection. On balance, your case should contain only enough pieces of evidence needed with the rest being ear-pleasing analysis.

# Pro Analysis

We have entered the twenty-first century and a new digital age. While most people have agreed for decades that networking is absolutely essential the debate comes down to whether it is still beneficial on balance in its new digital form. The answer should be a resounding yes. It is hard to deny that the advent of the internet has made it easier for people to connect to people in ways that were never possible before it is analogous to the way Ezra Cornell's telegraph company revolutionized communication between distant cities. I imagine comparable concerns were raised back then as well in regards to privacy and security, but that doesn't change the fact that in retrospect few if any would argue that the telegraph had a drastic negative impact on the United States. It is essential that you harp on how easily social networking sites can facilitate a process that has been perceived as positive for decades. There are several other arguments and points for the pro; however, this is the essence of the debate. In addition, it is important to minimize the largely hypothetical threats poised by the con against social networking sites.

## **Social Capital**

Social networking sites lead to an increase in social capital just like any other form of socialization or networking. The sites' features and popularity drastically increase the scope of these benefits. Social networking sites have been shown to make the user feel better about themselves while helping them maintain and create new relationships. They help create essential support groups for people that might not otherwise have help when they need it most. Finally, social networking sites are used as a valuable means to share/spread information, so can be a positive educational asset.

## **Benefits Democracy**

In addition to the basic benefits of helping people stay connected with friends and build new relationships. Social networking sites have been shown to empirically help increase political participation and bring out the vote. Barack Obama revolutionized the way candidates campaign online

(to great success as well). Few people would argue that increased political participation has a negative impact on the United States without coming off as a total elitist. Social networking sites allowed candidates to connect with the people in a brand new way never experienced in the past. You might want to specifically mention the CNN/YouTube debates considering you'll be debating yourself and judges will probably see it as a positive.

### **Benefits the Workplace**

There's evidence that social networking sites actually increases productivity in general; however, that is questionable. It is hard to deny though that social networking sites can be used as a positive resource by both employers and hopeful employees. The former can use these sites as an additional resource/background check in order to ensure they are hiring good employees, and on the other side employees can use social networking sites as a means to find jobs and employers when they might not have otherwise. I have a feeling that the round is going to become a discussion of just Facebook and Myspace which is somewhat appropriate in many ways because they are by far the most popular and have the most research on them. It might be easy to forget that the realm of social networking sites is much larger, but don't. There are myriad other sites that can be used to your advantage such as LinkedIn which is used to help businessmen exclusively. Finally, social networking sites can help increase productivity by making it easier for people and companies to market things with less labor which effectively helps level the playing ground between big and small businesses.

# Con Analysis

Just like the main focus of the pro is the creation and maintenance of social ties, the con's main focus should be on the privacy/security harms that social networking sites create. Also the con should emphasize how the benefits cited by the pro can be achieved through other means, so are not really unique benefits to social networking sites. As I already stated earlier, the debate will probably focus primarily on sites like Facebook and Myspace; however, that doesn't mean you shouldn't reference other popular sites as well such as Adult Friend Finder.

## **Security Threat**

Social networking sites pride themselves in general with their capabilities to connect people. The problem is what happens when all too often you are connected to people that don't have your best interests in mind. The information posted on social networking sites can be used to compromise a person's identity. Look to the evidence to see just how easy it is for criminals to use basic information in order to calculate a person's social security number. In addition, sexual predators have turned to social networking sites in order to gather information on their prey. This should really resonate with a judge because the groups most commonly targeted are woman and children which are typically perceived as being more vulnerable. While many would argue that people post information under their own discretion this doesn't mean it is safe, and all too often there is a disconnect between intent and behavior in terms of protecting oneself online.

## **No Separation of Private and Public Life**

Social networking sites blur the gap between private and public life. Everyone should be entitled to their privacy; however, social networking sites take this away. It is common practice for possible employers or schools to look into their applicants personal lives via social networking sites which many believe is wrong/unfair. In addition, social networking sites are often used as a tool for slander which turns what use to be playground bullying into a global display. Social networking sites can also

create unnecessary social stress and harm friendships. It sounds ridiculous, but how many friendships have been tainted because of the existence of Myspace's "Top 8"?

### **Addictive and Inefficient**

No one would really deny that social networking sites are addictive to some degree which is a bad thing. It's somewhat counterintuitive, but many would argue that social networking sites have gradually made people less sociable. They are substituting actually going out and seeing people with interacting with them in a very non-stimulating manner online. It is no wonder there is a childhood obesity problem in this country given how little people get out these days. Social networking sites serve as a distraction. They are a disturbance in a work environment and are a very prevalent tool used by students to procrastinate. The basic trend is that social networking sites suck a lot of time out of the user's life. The concept of social networking sites might have good intentions, but they are forfeited when you look at just how long people waste on them. In all honesty, I wouldn't be all that surprised if "Facebook stalking" became just as an accepted expression as "googled" and "TiVo-ed."

# Pro Blocks

## **Helps only experienced/privileged users**

Most people have the ability to participate in SNSs considering there are facilities available, such as the public library, for people to use the internet if they don't have personal access. Look to the evidence that shows that there is no correlation between socio-economic class and SNS use.

Furthermore, you are not arguing that SNS should be perfect for anyone, just that in the way it currently exists is beneficial as a whole. People have the ability to participate as much or as little as they want and if the user does not believe that they will benefit then they will not join. It's just common sense; however, clearly they do have something to gain and that is exactly why they have been joining.

## **No separation of private life and public**

First off deny that this takes place. The fact of the matter is that people choose to put the information they do on these sites; therefore, they are willing to let that information be public. No one is forced into showing information in which they are not comfortable thus a lack of separation between private and public life is not a problem for them. Discuss how SNSs lead to higher social capital in the people who use them making those people feel better about themselves. It ties into the Google way of life; a happy employee is a good employee.

## **Tool for slander**

You have to look at it in perspective. Hypothetically a person could use SNSs as a tool for slander, but it is by no means the norm. In addition those same bad apples are going to do bad things with or without SNSs they might just use different means otherwise. Not a unique harm. In addition, just because something can be used in a negative manner doesn't make the thing inherently bad. Gloves can be used by a criminal to conceal fingerprints, but does that mean gloves are bad and should be illegal? No.

## **Businesses use SNSs to screen job candidates**

Argue that this is actually good for the overall system and these businesses. They are able to cross check the information gained in interviews and resumes with what is available on SNSs. What a person allows to be shown on their profile can be an indicator of their character; accordingly, businesses can hire better workers who will be more of an asset to the company. Think about the potential benefit if a business could identify an employee who has violent tendencies before they hired him. Overall, the ability to screen potential employees is actually better for the companies thus leading to a more efficient workplace and in turn economic growth.

## **Employers lose chance at potentially beneficial employees**

Think about what is gained in the process of screening employees. While they might lose out on some potentially achieving employees, businesses are decreasing their variability of employee efficiency. Businesses have a higher probability of hiring someone who will be beneficial to the company; therefore, this process is better for the corporation.

## **Enables sexual predators**

SNSs do not “enable” sexual predators. Yes, sexual predators have in the past used SNSs in malicious ways. These sick deranged people did comparable things long before the rise of SNSs as well though. Also the extent in which these sites are used by predators is drawn way out of proportion according to the evidence. In addition in the recent past SNSs have been used to help crack down on these criminals and establish justice. The existence of sexual predators is not the norm when it comes to these sites, and even with that their existence is over estimated, on balance the sites are still beneficial. Also consider which would we rather have, people looking at pictures online or acting it out in real life? Unfortunately, these disgusting people will continue to exist and while we would like that it doesn't if it has to occur I would be surprised to find any mother that would rather have a sexual predator watching their child on the playground opposed to looking at photographs online.

## **Less sociability**

Evidence states that people on SNSs tend to be more social than those without. The prevalence of students on SNSs has gotten to the point where individuals who do not partake generally have minimal contact with the outside world. Kids use SNSs to keep in contact with friends and organize meetings and events thus promoting sociability. Over the course of time, what constitutes sociability has changed with regard to a change in lifestyles. I would argue that activity on social networking sites in itself can be seen as a form of socializing, especially when you consider that it allows people to stay in contact when it would otherwise be difficult to stay in contact.

## **Addiction**

Definitely not the prevailing force that keeps people going to SNSs nor does it occur to a large percentage of its users. Only a small number of people become “addicted” to Myspace or Facebook so it is not a powerful negative. There is nothing inherent about SNSs that make them addictive so it is not a unique problem to SNSs. People can become addicted to nearly anything in society but that doesn’t make that detrimental as a whole. There has been a phenomenon in recent years of people becoming addicted to karaoke, but does that make karaoke a negative activity?

## **Creates Social stress**

Link this to SNSs leading to a higher social capital in its users. The fact is that middle school pre-teens are overly dramatic and will look for anything to add excitement to their lives, whether it is drama in school, or sports, or what their friends are doing on Myspace. They bring this stress upon themselves, it is not actually the system that causes it; if anything it would be their peers who use SNSs that cause the stress. Overall, it is just a phase of growing up, that looking at the whole has very little impact on their lives.

## **Too much information about people/Allows for stalking**

Since no one is forcing a person to put information they don't want available, it is all a person's choice of what they allow others to see. For the most part people are conscious of posting comprising information; consequently, there is very little that one could use to stalk someone else. Just think about it, there is no purpose for someone to put their address online and people always have the option not to answer a phone call or log off on AIM.

# Con Blocks

## **Helps out the Government**

Creating networks for discussion for employees of the government is hardly what one would consider to be social networking web sites. It is a stretch to try and link organizing charity events to helping out the government as a whole considering the government didn't have any intention of addressing the issue of the charity event. If their argument is that the government can regulate or oversee what people do on SNS, no one likes "big government" and there is a reason why there was such a backlash against the Patriot Act.

## **Helps companies gather information**

In what way does helping companies target costumers benefit the US? Companies focus primarily on gaining information about consumers from sources other than social networking sites such as through focus groups and surveys. Social networking sites are just an additional way to gain information and allow for more advertising, both of which do nothing to help out society as a whole.

## **Increases Political Participation**

Even though there may have been an increase in youth vote, doesn't mean this was due to social networking sites. Overall among the youth populous there was an obsession about Obama. An increase of youth voters is most likely due to the current state of the nation and people's view of the importance of this election. Many young voters choose to like him primarily because of what their friends said, thus his popularity grew because of word of mouth. Facebook only played the part as a communication device, the same could have been accomplished with Instant Messaging, E-mail, texting, or good old fashioned face to face contact. The information would have spread without social networking sites and the unique harms that come with them. There is nothing special about being able to "poke" your favorite politician. Facebook did not cause a spread of support for Obama, or convince swing voters, rather it was just a method for people already

keen on Obama to discuss. Much of the efforts to encourage youth to vote was done by the Non-Profit Rock the Vote. Their antics primarily consisted of in person soliciting, E-mailing, and advertising on television. Don't cite this but their Facebook group only has about 4200 members but 52,000 fans on their Facebook Non-profit page.

Turning to the nature of political information available on social networking sites, it is not in your face like an advertisement on television it. Because of that, individuals must seek out the information on their own accord, thus those who are already going to vote are finding information resulting in no net gain as far as number of voters goes.

### **Reconnect/stay connected with friends**

The time and the manner in which they stay connected isn't really beneficial to the whole of the United States. Ask your opponents how that is resolitional if it is just a characteristic of social networking sites but doesn't have an impact on the US. Link your response to a privacy point regarding how many times that availability of information can lead to negative continuing contact. People can become obsessive over what former friends or significant others are doing. This can lead to stalking that is negative to both parties involved. The properties of social networking sites not only allow for this kind of stalking behavior but in a way it actually encourages it. There are many other ways to keep in contact with people, written letters, phone calls, e-mails, instant messaging, or texting that all lead to the same outcome of staying in contact but they do not have the harms of social networking web sites.

### **Build new relationships**

While these sites do have the ability to build new relationships, often the relationships these sites lead to are exactly the problem. SNS provide the perfect conduit for sexual predators to attack especially our nation's youth. It grants them access to valuable personal information that can be used abusively in the wrong hands and the sites give them the perfect means to create an alias. There are other tried and true methods of meeting people that people have relied on for centuries. Divorce rates are at an all time high. Another thing to consider is for every one successful relationship how

many countless one's end in failure? Think about all the emotional harm, maybe long lasting harm, these sites can also have, especially on women when things don't turn out as they had hoped.

### **Support groups**

These sorts of groups represent only a minute portion of social networking sites and the effectiveness of support groups would be much higher for groups that actually met in person. Most of these support groups would exist in forums which might not really be considered social networking sites because most of the time you don't have to build a profile or something of the sort. Overall they contribute very little to society considering more effective means of treatment and support are readily available. There are also negative support groups that promote ideas such as eating disorders, self-mutilation, and suicide.

### **Promotes group organizations.**

Don't be ignorant in thinking that every group or event created on Facebook was done with good intentions. With the same ease that one can promote a charity event one can also organize an act that terrorizes the community. These can be in the form of vandalism, crime, trespassing, and many other crimes. The point is social networking sites can be used just as detrimentally as it can be used beneficially.

### **Less labor needed to market a message.**

This could be looked at as either less jobs or less community involvement. The ease at which information can travel means less people need to work to get that message out. Less people working for charity organizations is a sign of less political involvement. People would also be more likely to respond positively to fundraising for charity if it was done with face to face contact. Even if you can reach a broader network of people via social networking websites, I would argue that doesn't necessarily help out the cause. There are better ways to market groups such as through google adsense.

**People more sociable.**

While studies might try to make the link that people who are on social networking sites actually tend to be more sociable. This statement takes into account people who have a profile rather than how much time is spent on social networking sites. Discuss how people are becoming increasingly addicted to Facebook and Myspace spending hours a day checking their profile. Despite what studies might say, explain to the judge the simple fact that when people are spending large amounts of time online that is time that could have been spent socializing. Extend your response to encompass how people's time spent on social networking websites decreases their productivity in work and school. Social networking sites make money by having people on their sites due to advertisements, so they are going to try to take any measure to keep you there the longest. The features offered on these sites are intended to make you stay on the site thus they can be very addictive.

**Employers can hirer better workers, due to background checks**

There are other means of performing background checks plus I think a lot of people would complain that it is inappropriate for those companies to look into people on their personal profiles. People lead private lives that do not necessarily affect their ability to be a productive worker. In essence, social networking sites allow for employers to be prejudice when it comes to hiring for positions. Also being able to check peoples profiles does not mean the the company will benefit; they could mistakingly not hire an individual who has the possibility to be a very efficient employee despite what he does in the private life.

**Exchange of information**

Just because people can does not mean that there is going to be beneficial discussion that takes place. We see all the time, derogatory, racist, sexist, and just plain stupid posts on social networking sites. Is that what your opponents see as a valuable spread of information? There are also myriad other ways to spread information such as websites, e-mail, or blogs. The information can be disseminated without the unique harms of SNS.

**Increases social capital**

Look to the evidence that says this is actually not true, then link to harms of SNS, cyber-bullying, sexual predation, stress, etc. Ask if these help to improve social capital.

**Sites make people feel better about themselves**

There are large amounts of evidence stating that just the opposite occurs; social networking sites are filled with negative feedback. Since the information is unregulated and for the most part there is a sense of anonymity, there is nothing to stop someone from posting a flippant remark or malicious messages and they are very difficult to remove once they are on the site. Obviously negative feedback, just like it does if it occurred in person, causes self-consciousness and low self-confidence. Social networking sites also cause teenagers social stress with features such as top friends (you're going to have to reassure the judge that this is actually true). This type of competition for approval exists online just as it does in the personal contact. Another problem is that if people do feel better then they become more comfortable and are more willing to share sensitive information.

**Learn social cues and interaction habits**

Ask your opponents if they are really trying to say that people should be learning their social skills online. Wouldn't the obvious and most effective way to learn social skills would be to get off of the computer and spend time around people? Much of what people put on social networking sites is contrived information and false actions that do not mirror their normal personality, hence people would not be learning how to actually interact with people but rather how to have the most superficial friends on Myspace. Even watching television would be a better way for kids to learn about how to act in society. One of the problems with society today is that people are substituting technology for real forms of socialization. Kids these days would rather listen to their Ipods in public than engaging the people around them. Since people now choose to live inside on the internet, they no longer socialize like people used to, perhaps this is why there is such a childhood obesity problem.

## **Start new businesses**

All of the new businesses able to survive because of social networking sites does not mean that there will be more jobs overall. Considering the current unemployment rate, we should have been seeing an increase in overall jobs if the issue was as simple being able to start a business online. Given the current economy, we are not in a position to be starting new businesses because of a lack of spending. If anything, the creation of jobs online is just taking jobs away from other areas of the economy; that concept works with businesses as well.

## **Ease job search**

Another argument in that social networking sites, such as LinkedIn, allow for people to find jobs or for employers to find workers. The people most likely to use these sites are skilled workers who are less likely to be unemployed. The majority of the unemployed are unskilled workers which typically will not be using social networking sites to try and obtain new jobs. The jobs hired from social networking sites would just be taking an already employed person away from a prior job thus no net gain of employment. If we look to reality, this isn't how most employers find their employees.

## **Learn web design**

Let's be honest here, the middle school kids pimping out their Myspace pages are not learning HTML or internet coding. They are just copying and pasting from other virus-ridden websites and are not learning any beneficial skills in the process. A cut and paste youth does nothing to support the future or benefit America in the slightest. There is nothing inherent about SNSs that teaches web design or web skills if anything you have to possess those things to access them in the first place. SNSs have allowed for the inappropriate viral spread of copyright material as anyone would notice if they have ever been on Youtube. How is teaching kids to participate in illegal activities a positive thing?

## Mock Crossfire

Once again this month the main strategy should be to establish as much credibility with the judge as possible by not claiming anything too radical. The debate isn't a question of whether or not social networking web sites have positive and negative impacts but rather which outweighs the other.

On the pro, you should admit that these sites do pose the potential to be used inappropriately in terms of privacy or security; however, you have to minimize the impact and put it in perspective. The pro can accomplish this by hammering in just how prevalent this risk is in reality and should put it in perspective of the benefits that nearly every person receives. In addition, the steps that have been made in the right direction should be vocalized. If the pro starts to list off numbers of how rare certain incidents happen as a way to justify how social networking sites are still good, the con should dwell on the potential for disaster. Also while .08% may be a small number, it is .08% too many and it is still a negative consequence of the unique nature of social networking sites while the benefits can and have been achieved through other safer means for centuries.

P: Considering a majority of people report social networking sites to have positive effects how can we not affirm the resolution?

C: Just because a thing can have some positive effects doesn't mean there aren't even more negative effects outweighing it. Also do you believe if you asked a person addicted to cocaine if cocaine had a positive or negative impact on him he would answer that it had a negative impact? It just goes to show that a person's perception of the reality of the situation can be clouded. Isn't it probable that the people aren't always entirely aware of the dangers around them?

[Personally, I've never been a strong believer in the credibility and relevancy of polls, but that isn't to say debaters don't like them for some reason.]

P: Wouldn't you agree that social networking sites, to some degree, teach important technology skills?

C: No. Nothing about social networking sites inherently teaches people technology skills, but let's pretend for a second they did. If these skills are then used to upload copyrighted material, as they far too often are, then can it be considered a positive?

C: Can you explain to me the positive impacts of poking someone on Facebook?

C: How many countless times have you found yourself online when in retrospect you probably should have been studying?

P: So if sharing your birth date and zip code is enough to compromise your security hypothetically should we stop celebrating birthdays as a means of protecting our information?

# Pro Outline

SNSs promote political participation	28
SNSs are a unique communication device	29
SNSs help youth political participation	30
SNSs increase social capital	31
SNSs indirectly affect civil and political engagement	33
Role in the Creation and Benefits of Social Capital	34
Allows candidates to reach more people	35
Users Have Larger Networks of Close Ties to Draw From	37
SNSs help small businesses	37
SNSs create a diverse network of contacts	38
Less privacy is better	40
SNSs encourage voting	41
People on SNSs are more sociable	42
SNSs allow for job screening	43
Sexual predators are not that much of a problem	44
Sexual Predator Prevalence Blown Out of Proportion	45
SNSs help companies to find jobs	46
SNSs help out the government	47
SNSs allow for group organization	48
SNSs serve as a tool to spread information	49
SNSs can serve as a support group	50
SNSs allow for people to stay in contact	51
No socio-economic or race divide	52
People learn social skills on SNSs	53
Cost benefit analysis	54
People will still have personal contact	56
A lifestyle change due to SNSs is not negative	57
SNSs provide economic benefits	58
Kids don't share compromising personal information	58
Marriages from online connections are more successful	59
Maintenance/Reinforcement of Relationships Main Motive	60
Librarians against Facebook Ban	60
Fashion and Signal Theory	61
Non-Participants Don't Understand/Not Simply Information	62
Empirical vs. Anecdotal Evidence and Benefits of SNSs	63
Large Steps Have Been Made in Eliminating Security Risk	63
Newest Crime-Busting Tool	64
Increases Efficiency in the Workplace	62

# Con Outline

SNSs do not increase political participation	65
SNSs do not increase social capital	67
Facebook's Privacy Policy Fine Print	68
SNSs hurt people's character	69
Government seeks ban on SNSs in schools	70
SNSs enable hackers	70
SNSs enable sexual predators	71
SNSs serve as a distraction	72
SNSs do not provide a positive community	73
SNSs do not create meaningful relationships	74
SNSs cause people to lose out on meaningful friendships	75
People don't need to know that much	75
Used to Maintain not Create Relationships	76
SNSs lead to less social interaction	76
Teenagers do not learn skills from SNSs	77
Too much personal information is spread	77
SNSs community creates unneeded stress	78
System in Which Denying People is "Socially Awkward"	79
Too much personal information is spread	79
How Accessible is Valuable Information and How Can It Be Used	80
Users Don't Typically Change Default Settings	81
30% of Facebook Users Are Willing to Accept a Random Stranger	81
Detailed Look at the Threat Possibility	82
Disconnect Between Desire and Behavior Towards Security	83
Bigger Scale (Once Local Slander Becomes Global)	84
Benefits of online dating services low	84
SNSs cause cyber-bullying	85

# Pro Evidence

## **SNSs promote political participation**

The American Political science Association Conference and Social Networking and the Future of Politics and Administration Panel, August, 2008, Kimberly D. Martin, Hans E. Schmeisser, University of Florida, Department of Political Science.

For example, Robert Putnam argues that the internet is fundamentally individualistic: Because there is no limit to someone's ability to express an opinion, the quality of political discourse is lowered (Putnam, 2000). Overall, this camp claims that creating a sense of community requires people to be in the same physical space, sharing common experiences, and developing interests and solutions to problems (Davis, et al., 2002).

Nevertheless, there are studies which have found that online political communication has engendered greater political participation. Among these, Johnson and Kaye (2003) find that internet use related directly to political engagement during the 1996 general election. Others argue that exposure to online political information are positively associated with campaign knowledge and voting (Drew & Weaver, 2006; Tolbert & McNeal, 2003).

In this line, Nisbet and Scheufele (2004) discover that levels of political knowledge and electoral participation are precluded by certain levels of interpersonal discussion on the internet; i.e. social capital. These groups are often the meeting houses for political debate: as a virtual political arena, individuals from around the world can sign-on, read what others have posted, and even participate in the dialogue.

While these results seem obvious, the "real world" implications are numerous: As youth voters become politically active on social networking sites, our data shows that they are more likely to perform numerous activities that allow them to gather information about candidates. In turn, these social network users become increasingly aware of the political arena – making the more likely to become politically active citizens.

## **SNSs promote political participation (Cont'd)**

Don't Judge a Facebook by its Cover: Social Networking Sites, Social Capital, and Political Participation A Pilot Study !

Leticia Bode

Department of Political Science University of Wisconsin - Madison

April 4, 2008

First, it is not the mere association with a formal social network that seems to affect political participation, but rather certain skills which are gained by affiliation with that network. "What matters for participation is what happens in the institution - the acquisition of civic skills" (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995, 340).

## **SNSs are a unique communication device**

The Effects of Social Networking Websites and Youth Voter Participation  
The American Political Science Association Conference and Social  
Networking and the Future of Politics and Administration Panel, August,  
2008

Kimberly D. Martin, Hans E. Schmeisser, University of Florida, Department  
of Political Science.

The internet has the potential to produce patterns of communication unlike those found in print or broadcast mediums (Xenos & Foot, 2005). Early 2004 saw the development of several social networking websites which have become wildly popular among young citizens. In many ways social networking sites like MySpace, Facebook, and YouTube have changed the definition of social capital for college aged students who are on the internet daily.

## **SNSs help youth political participation**

The Effects of Social Networking Websites and Youth Voter Participation  
The American Political Science Association Conference and Social  
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2008

Kimberly D. Martin, Hans E. Schmeisser, University of Florida, Department  
of Political Science.

There are a number of striking features about the relationship between these social networking sites and the political arena. First and foremost, youth membership in these sites is nearly ubiquitous. With a participation rate approaching 97% of college aged citizens, these sites touch nearly every potential youth voter – more than any single information source other than television. Because of these rates, social networking sites have the potential to direct the attention and influence the attitudes of young people in new and powerful ways. A direct example of this phenomenon is the creation of virtual political groups and organizations on these sites. Nearly 60% of those surveyed indicated that they belonged to one of these groups. Membership in these organizations makes it possible to bring together interested individuals without the restrictions of geography, time, or institutional regulation. From any location and at any time, users can enter these groups, engage in direct discussions with others, share their opinions on matters of the day or read the opinions of others, be exposed to new political viewpoints (both those agreement or opposing), be directed to other information sources such as candidate websites or news outlets – the opportunities are limited only by the creativity of the participants.

A second direct example of the impact these sites are having is the viewing of political messages via streaming video. Of those surveyed, more than one-third indicated that they had utilized these social networking sites to watch a political message or video. The important thing to remember here is that participants are choosing to employ these sites in these ways. This means that the nearly 60% of those who responded that they are current members of an online political organization actively and purposefully sought out political engagement and information on their own accord. For Generation .com, it's no longer tuning-in and tuning-out, but logging- on and joining-up.

## **SNSs increase social capital**

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Preliminary research from the 2000 general election suggests that the internet does in fact provide citizens who are separated “by time and space” with a way to “reconnect and become more concerned about each other and their society.” Importantly, this study demonstrated that citizens were generating social capital without the help of the media or political institutions (Davis et al., 2002)

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/is-myspace-good-for-society-a-freakonomics-quorum/?hp>

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm New York Times

Is MySpace Good for Society? A Freakonomics Quorum

Nicole Ellison, assistant professor of Telecommunication, Information  
Studies and Media at Michigan State University:

Undergraduates who used Facebook intensively had higher bridging social capital scores than those who didn't, and our longitudinal data show that Facebook use preceded these social capital gains.

Bridging social capital reflects the benefits we receive from our “weak ties” — people we don't know very well but who provide us with useful information and ideas. These students were using Facebook to increase the size of their social network, and therefore their access to more information and diverse perspectives.

## **SNSs increase social capital (Cont'd)**

Lessons from Facebook: The Effect of Social Network Sites on College Students' Social Capital

Sebastián Valenzuela<sup>2</sup>, Namsu Park<sup>3</sup>, and Kerk F. Kee<sup>4</sup> University of Texas at Austin Submitted to the 9th International Symposium on Online Journalism Austin, Texas, April 4-5, 2008

Most interestingly, these authors found that Facebook usage interacted with students' psychological well-being, suggesting that it might provide greater benefits for users experiencing low self-esteem and low life satisfaction.

On one hand, there are studies that support a "rich get richer" perspective, where those that are psychologically better-off (e.g., have high self-esteem and life satisfaction, have more offline contacts, are more popular, etc.) gain more from using Internet services (e.g., Tian, 2003). On the other hand, there Lessons from Facebook 14 is research that supports a "poor get richer" perspective, where those that are less better-off gain more from the Internet than those who are better-off (Stern & Dillman, 2006).

Life satisfaction and social trust. As shown in Table 5, the block of demographic variables explained 2.6% of the variance in life satisfaction and 1.7% of the variance in social trust. In turn, social trust explained 4.1% of the variance in life satisfaction, while the latter explained 4.2% of the variance of the former. In comparison to these first two blocks, the contribution made by Facebook use was smaller but nevertheless statistically significant. Specifically, the scale measuring intensity of Facebook use was positively associated with life satisfaction and social trust, providing support for the first couple of hypotheses (H1 and H2). The relationship of Facebook use and life satisfaction was stronger than that between using the social network site and social trust. For example, the model predicted that the index of life satisfaction was, *ceteris paribus*, 14.5 percentage points higher for those with the highest score in the index of intensity of Facebook use compared to those with the lowest value. In comparison, social trust increased by 4.7 percentage points when the index of intensity of Facebook use was varied from the lowest value to the highest value.

## **SNSs increase social capital (Cont'd)**

Using survey data collected at different campuses, we predicted that there were positive relationships between intensity of Facebook use and Facebook Groups use and students' life satisfaction, social trust, civic and political participation. Our results provide consistent evidence that these positive associations exist and are not spurious.

These findings, of course, do not support the popular view that heavy Facebook users are more isolated and less connected than occasional users. In fact, the data show that the opposite holds true, a finding that is coherent with the study conducted by Ellison and her colleagues (2007).

## **SNSs indirectly affect civil and political engagement**

The Effects of Social Networking Websites and Youth Voter Participation  
The American Political Science Association Conference and Social  
Networking and the Future of Politics and Administration Panel, August,  
2008

Kimberly D. Martin, Hans E. Schmeisser, University of Florida, Department  
of Political Science.

Xenos and Moy (2007) test two competing models of internet use: (1) an instrumental approach which suggests that the effects of internet use are direct, and (2) a psychological approach which allows for contingent effects. Overall, their study finds that while internet use directly affects information acquisition, it only indirectly affects civic and political engagement.

## Role in the Creation and Benefits of Social Capital

<http://www.swinmc.net/documents/facebook.pdf>

Nicole B. Ellison, Charles Steinfield, Cliff Lampe  
Department of Telecommunicaiton, Information Studies, and Media  
Michigan State University  
2007

This study examines the relationship between use of Facebook, a popular online social network site, and the formation and maintenance of social capital. In addition to assessing bonding and bridging social capital, we explore a dimension of social capital that assesses one's ability to stay connected with members of a previously inhabited community, which we call maintained social capital. Regression analyses conducted on results from a survey of undergraduate students (N = 286) suggest a strong association between use of Facebook and the three types of social capital, with the strongest relationship being to bridging social capital. In addition, Facebook usage was found to interact with measures of psychological well-being, suggesting that it might provide greater benefits for users experiencing low self-esteem and low life satisfaction.

Social capital has been linked to a variety of positive social outcomes, such as better public health, lower crime rates, and more efficient financial markets (Adler & Kwon, 2002). According to several measures of social capital, this important resource has been declining in the U.S. for the past several years (Putnam, 2000). When social capital declines, a community experiences increased social disorder, reduced participation in civic activities, and potentially more distrust among community members. Greater social capital increases commitment to a community and the ability to mobilize collective actions, among other benefits. Social capital may also be used for negative purposes, but in general social capital is seen as a positive effect of interaction among participants in a social network (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004).

## **Allows candidates to reach more people**

The Effects of Social Networking Websites and Youth Voter Participation  
The American Political science Association Conference and Social  
Networking and the Future of Politics and Administration Panel, August,  
2008 Kimberly D. Martin, Hans E. Schmeisser, University of Florida,  
Department of Political Science.

However, because young citizens are concurrently the most prevalent users of internet and are the most likely demographic group to gather information online, the internet provides candidates opportunities to reach young voters in new and innovative ways (Delli Carpini, 2000; Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996).

The features offered on social networking sites allow candidates, political parties, interest groups, and friends to post political information and have it readily available for other members. Participation in these online networks allow candidates to include information about their policy stances, legislative agenda, governing experience, religion, relationship status, favorite movies, books, quotes, and a wealth of other personal information similar to what young users have on their own profile. Importantly, candidates can include information about how to register or get transportation to polling places. Clearly, these sites possess a strong potential for facilitating communication between youth voters and candidates. If this potential is actualized, we believe that it is promising that such communication is likely to result in increased levels of political participation among the youth.

## **Allows candidates to reach more people (Cont'd)**

The second striking feature of the relationship between these sites and real-world politics is how underutilized they are when it comes to political parties and candidates. Due to the nature of these networks, those who viewed the political messages, joined political groups, or posted political icons did so because a “Friend” suggested it to them. Previous investigations on the affect of contact on political behavior has indicated that when an individual has been contacted by another and given political information, that the individual is more likely to cast a vote (Gerber & Green, 2000). Candidates and parties are more than aware of this trend, as evidenced by the increasing amount of time, effort, and (most importantly) money sacrificed to contact and persuade citizens (Herrnson, 2004). As evidenced in the 2008 primary season, the candidates repeatedly asked voters to visit their websites during campaign stops in the hopes of attracting online donations and to establish information channels that were more thorough than stump speeches.

If candidates are looking for cheap and effective methods of establishing relationships with voters, we believe they ought to pay attention to Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube. Most importantly, membership on these sites is free: it costs nothing to establish and maintain a profile, online group, or Friendship network. Secondly – and we believe most importantly – the contact process is dramatically more efficient than other mediums available. Currently, candidates are spending millions on television advertisements.

## **Users Have Larger Networks of Close Ties to Draw From**

<http://www.swinmc.net/documents/facebook.pdf>

Nicole B. Ellison, Charles Steinfield, Cliff Lampe  
Department of Telecommunicaiton, Information Studies, and Media  
Michigan State University  
2007

These new connections may result in an increase in social capital; for instance, a 2006 Pew Internet survey reports that online users are more likely to have a larger network of close ties than non-Internet users, and that Internet users are more likely than non-users to receive help from core network members (Boase, Horrigan, Wellman, & Rainie, 2006).

## **SNSs help small businesses**

What Is The Impact of Social Networking on Small Business?

October 24th, 2008 by Social Guy

<http://www.sociableblog.com/2008/10/24/impact-of-social-networking-on-small-business/>

When SurePayroll asked small business owners if they believe online social networking has a place in the business world, 55% said yes. What's more, the survey indicates that one out of every five of the small business owners polled had actually obtained at least one new customer as a direct result of using social media.

## **SNSs create a diverse network of contacts**

The Effects of Social Networking Websites and Youth Voter Participation  
The American Political Science Association Conference and Social  
Networking and the Future of Politics and Administration Panel, August,  
2008

Kimberly D. Martin, Hans E. Schmeisser, University of Florida, Department  
of Political Science.

While most connections are made between people that have (or had) a real-world relationship, many individuals on these sites are “Friends” with people whom they met via the online network. Despite the fact that these individuals have never actually met outside of cyber space, many have developed meaningful relationships. Because these websites allow users to search for or establish groups with other people that have similar interests (regardless of geographical location), these connections have the potential to inspire social and civic activity in ways that are new and exciting. These sites make it possible for information to be exchanged between individuals who otherwise would not have the opportunity or ability to do so.

[http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/dmal.9780262524834.119?  
cookieSet=1](http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/dmal.9780262524834.119?cookieSet=1)

Why Youth Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics  
in Teenage Social Life

danah boyd

University of California, Berkeley, School of Information

Yet, for all of the social discomfort, these Friends help provide group structure, further indicating the meaningful identity markers of the individual. In choosing Friends, teens write their community into being, which is precisely why this feature is so loved and despised.

## **SNSs create a diverse network of contacts (Cont'd)**

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/lange.html>

Patricia G. Lange, School of Cinematic Arts  
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While some media circuits support existing social networks that began in-person, other social networks would not exist as such without online media circulation. For example, one YouTube celebrity expanded his network after posting videos for dispersed, unknown others to see. When a YouTube participant posts a video, viewers may "friend" the celebrity or comment on the video to garner the celebrity's attention. Several interviewees reported that an intelligent comment on their video usually prompted them to examine the commenter's work. In an environment where friending practices can become liberal, in that some participants routinely automatically accept friendship links, participants often post comments to increase their social visibility and connection to a video maker.

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/is-myspace-good-for-society-a-freakonomics-quorum/?hp>

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm Is MySpace Good for Society? A  
Freakonomics Quorum  
New York Times

Judith Donath, associate professor at the M.I.T. Media Lab:

Weak ties (e.g., casual acquaintances, colleagues) may not be reliable for long-term support; their strength instead is in providing a wide range of perspectives, information, and opportunities. As society becomes increasingly dynamic, with access to information playing a growing role, having many diverse connections will be key.

The big picture: social networking technologies support and enable a new model of social life, in which people's social circles will consist of many more, but weaker, ties. Though we will continue to have some strong ties (i.e., family and close friends), demographic changes, such as frequent household moves and the replacement of friends and family with market services for tasks such as daycare, are diminishing the role of social ties in everyday life.

## **SNSs create a diverse network of contacts (Cont'd)**

Social networking technologies provide people with a low cost (in terms of time and effort) way of making and keeping social connections, enabling a social scenario in which people have huge numbers of diverse, but not very close, acquaintances. Does this makes us better as a society? Perhaps not — we can imagine this being a selfish and media-driven world in which everyone vies for attention and no one takes responsibility for one another. But perhaps it does — we can also imagine this being a world in which people are far more accepting of diverse ways and beliefs, one in which people are willing to embrace the new and different.

### **Less privacy is better**

<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/dmal.9780262524834.119?cookieSet=1>

Why Youth Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics in Teenage Social Life

Danah Boyd, University of California, Berkeley, School of Information

In today's society, there is a push toward privacy. It is assumed that people are public

individuals who deserve the right to privacy rather than the other way around. With an elevated and idealized view of privacy, we often forget the reasons that enslaved peoples desperately wished for access to public life. By allowing us to have a collective experience with people who are both like and unlike us, public life validates the reality that we are experiencing. We are doing our youth a disservice if we believe that we can protect them from the world by limiting their access to public life. They must enter that arena, make mistakes, and learn from them. Our role as adults is not to be their policemen, but to be their guides.

## **SNSs encourage voting**

The Effects of Social Networking Websites and Youth Voter Participation  
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Kimberly D. Martin, Hans E. Schmeisser, University of Florida, Department  
of Political Science.

In terms of political activity, social networking sites have the potential to  
lessen the high  
costs of voting for young people. Many youth are hindered by institutional  
barriers such as registering, finding their polling place, and developing an  
understanding of party differences and issues (Plutzer, 2002).

Compounding the issue, many young people's real-world networks consist  
of other nonvoters who cannot assure them that voting is "easy, enjoyable,  
and satisfying" (Plutzer, 2002). By participating in these online networks,  
young citizens have the opportunity to expand their real-world network in a  
manner that is not only enlightening and simple, but also quite fun.

Don't Judge a Facebook by its Cover: Social Networking Sites, Social  
Capital, and Political Participation A Pilot Study !

Leticia Bode

Department of Political Science  
University of Wisconsin - Madison  
April 4, 2008

Tolbert and McNeal 2003 find the effect of mere access to the Internet to be  
quite substantial on voting turnout: "Internet access increased the  
probability of voting by [about] 7 percent in the 1996 presidential election  
and the 1998 midterm election and 12.5 percent in the 2000 presidential  
election" (183). Seeking information online also seems to correlate  
positively with turning out to the polls, especially for new voters. In 2004, 44  
percent of new voters reported finding political and election-related  
information on the Internet (Caputo and Trichter 2005, 4-5). Facebook also  
has structures designed to share political and election-related information,  
again lowering the cost of obtaining such material.

## **People on SNSs are more sociable**

Don't Judge a Facebook by its Cover: Social Networking Sites, Social Capital, and Political Participation A Pilot Study !  
Leticia Bode, Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin - Madison  
April 4, 2008

Other studies have discovered “long-term Internet usage is associated with more, not less, frequent sociability” (Katz, Rice, and Aspden 2001).

December 19, 2007, Amanda Lenhart, Senior Research Specialist, Mary Madden, Senior Research Specialist, Alexandra Rankin Macgill, Project Manager, Aaron Smith, Research Specialist

Teens who are most active online, including bloggers, are also highly active offline. Teens who are daily internet users blog in greater numbers than those who report less frequent internet use. As is the case with many online activities, teens who go online more tend to engage in a wider array of online pursuits, and blogging is no exception. One in three teens (32%) who go online daily keep a blog, compared with just 23% of teens who go online several times per week.

However, we have yet to see compelling evidence that these highly wired teens are abandoning offline engagement with extracurricular activities in favor of having more screen time. In fact, in many cases, those who are the most active online with social media applications like blogging and social networking also tend to be the most involved with offline activities like sports, music, or part-time employment.

Content creators are not devoting their lives exclusively to virtual participation. They are just as likely as other teens to engage in most offline activities and more likely to have jobs. One of the persistent concerns that arises in policy circles, among parent advocates, and among health professionals is that teens might be too wrapped up in virtual life and that might turn them away from engagement in real-world social and academic activities. Our survey shows that content creators are just as likely as non-creators to participate in a most offline extracurricular activities and more likely to participate in certain specific offline activities.

## **People on SNSs are more sociable (Cont'd)**

Compared with non-content-creating teens, those who create content are more likely to report participating in school clubs, with 42% of content creators participating compared with 26% of non-creators. Content creators are also more likely to have a part-time job than non-content-creators. Twenty-four percent of creators have a part-time job, compared with 18% of non-creators. Content creators are just as likely as non-creators to participate in a club or sports program that is not affiliated with their school, like a church youth group, recreation league, or community volunteer organization (60% of creators compared to 54% of non-creators), a school sports program (52% compared to 51% of non-creators), or some other extracurricular activity like band (42% of both creators and non-creators)

## **SNSs allow for job screening**

The Impact of Social Networking Tools and Guidelines to Use Them  
By LaJean Humphries, Published on January 15, 2007  
<http://www.llrx.com/features/goodgoogle.htm>

According to some reports as many as 50% of employers and 75% of job recruiters concerned about alcohol/drug use, violence, and similar problems check out potential employees on the web. Employers using social networking sites such as MySpace and FaceBook to find personal information about job candidates including drinking habits, nudity, general sleaziness, and criminal behavior ranging from shoplifting to violent assaults.

## **Sexual predators are not that much of a problem**

Monday, August 07, 2006

The Moral Panic over Social-Networking Sites

Critics call the Deleting Online Predators Act an election-year stunt that could do lasting damage to youth culture and education.

By Wade Roush

<http://www.technologyreview.com/Infotech/17266/?a=f>

But in fact, as Boyd and other opponents point out, the same report states that most solicitations come from other young people -- only 4 percent are from adults over 25 -- and that most kids deal with these solicitations simply by not answering or logging off. "To clamp down on a bunch of new networking sites really doesn't do anything" to stop sexual predators, says Cooper. "You might as well shut off the Internet entirely."

<http://amandaa87.wordpress.com/2007/10/06/effects-of-social-networking-sites/>

Psychologist Doctor Larry D. Rosen, from California State University, has done many studies on the effects of social networking sites, especially MySpace. He has found that the media and parents have over exaggerated the threat of sexual predators and harassment online.

He says in one study: 'Parents, and the media, should stop focusing on sexual predators and start assessing the MySpace actions of teens that may make their adolescent transition easier or may provide additional struggles in a time of a constant search for identity and direction.' (Rosen 2006).

Dr. Rosen found that stalking is in fact a very rare occurrence initiated through sites like MySpace and often, there was no lasting affect on the 'victim.' However, Dr. Rosen says: "My research shows that not only is it not a "major" problem, but the young internet users are both handling any attempted cyber bullying easily and appropriately but they are not upset by the online bullying."

## **Sexual predators are not that much of a problem (Cont'd)**

It appears that teens today are more aware of the dangers of the technology they use, not only through messages in the media, but also through their own use and experience. Dr. Rosen's study shows several responses by teens to being approached for sexual liaisons online.

Annaleise says: "There's always a tendency I think to get hyped up about the negative effects of new things, especially technology. This happened with TV, and now it's happening with the Internet and online networking sites.

"While people focus on all the negative aspects like bullying, social isolation and low self-esteem, they tend to neglect the numerous potential benefits of such technologies. For example, it is possible creating a MySpace page may increase a person's social support network, decrease their social anxiety, and increase their self-esteem and computer confidence.

## **Sexual Predator Prevalence Blown Out of Proportion**

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>

Danah M. Boyd (School of Information, University of California-Berkeley)  
Nicole B. Ellison (Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies,  
and Media, Michigan State University)  
October 2007

Although one out of seven teenagers received unwanted sexual solicitations online, only 9% came from people over the age of 25 (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006). Research suggests that popular narratives around sexual predators on SNSs are misleading—cases of unsuspecting teens being lured by sexual predators are rare (Finkelhor, Ybarra, Lenhart, boyd, & Lordan, 2007). Furthermore, only .08% of students surveyed by the National School Boards Association (2007) met someone in person from an online encounter without permission from a parent.

## **SNSs help companies to find jobs**

The Impact of Social Networking Sites on Executive Recruiting  
Recruiting Trends

December 3, 2007 By Mark M. Anderson

<http://www.recruitingtrends.com/online/thoughtleadership/713-1.html?type=pf>

In the employment market, there are two distinct market segments to consider, and each tends to be located toward a different end of this spectrum. The first is entry and lower level jobs. In this segment, employers are seeking some basic qualifications and the talent is largely untested, making it a bit of a numbers game for employers. Finding more applicants who can then be given a chance to prove themselves leads to greater success over time. Like the hammer and the proverbial nail, candidate sourcing at this level is well matched with the strengths of large social and business networks that tout millions of members.

On the opposite end of this spectrum, is the job market for skilled positions, including executives. In this arena, there is clearly little room for trial and error. The costs to an organization of having the wrong person in an executive position are enormous in terms of lost opportunity and momentum – not to mention employee morale and retention.

The critical function in this type of job search is not to compile a lengthy list of prospects, but rather, it is the more subtle art of finding the perfect fit. If identifying the right executive candidate is akin to finding a needle in a haystack, the vacuum cleaner is out. In its place, there's a role for someone a bit like an archaeologist, a job that's been described as digging a large hole with a small toothbrush, as the goal is not so much to have a hole, as it is to carefully search for potentially priceless artifacts.

<http://www.roanoke.com/business/wb/183432>

The Roanoke Times

November 9, 2008

Networking sites are the newest platform for an old practice, said Granovetter. Between 50 percent and 70 percent of jobs are discovered through networking, according to Granovetter's research.

## SNSs help out the government

Gartner Says Citizen Social Networks Will Complement, and May Replace, Some Government Functions Analysts Explore Social Networking Impact on Government at Gartner Symposium/ITxpo 2008, 3-7 November in Cannes, France Egham, UK, October 23, 2008 — <http://www.gartner.com/it/page.jsp?id=784212>

"The current global financial turmoil bolsters the case for government adoption of social networks as technology-budget cuts make tapping into societal resources, such as voluntary groups, philanthropists, associations and social network groups essential to complement weaker government action in some critical areas," said Andrea Di Maio, vice president and distinguished analyst at Gartner.

Today, the primary role of social networks for governments is to facilitate the exchange of information and to establish novel collaboration patterns, often across organizational boundaries. "For example, a case manager in human services is responsible for identifying clients in need through outreach or referral, and conducting a comprehensive social and financial assessment. In the future, he or she will be part of a more complex socio-ecosystem, including a voluntary sector, online communities and individuals who play a fundamental role through all the different phases. Their role will shift from managing a case to ensuring that community resources are complemented where needed," said Mr Di Maio.

Gartner points out that the benefits of social computing — when accrued — will rarely occur in the context of government-driven initiatives. For example, governments' desire to retain ownership and control of the network, through restrictive participation policies, will be detrimental to magnetism.

Gartner recommends that governments engage selected employees in finding external social networks relevant to the agency and its domain of government. They should also ensure that the use of social computing inside and between government organizations is based on a clear and compelling purpose — which is likely to be something that they cannot 'engineer'. "Instead, they should recognize that spontaneity is needed for success," said Mr Di Maio.

## **SNSs allow for group organization**

<http://horizonproject.wikispaces.com/Impact+on+Science+Environment+Health+SocialNetworking>  
The Horizon Project

Experts and Founders of social network sites which aim to change the environment hope that all the 'thin' population of environment activists which are spread across a wide range of separate networks might eventually come together and could cause a big movement in our current environmental issue. If this would happen in the near future, then not only are we going to change the environment, but also create a social network which goes beyond the normal standard of social networking of people meeting each other globally, but people getting together and causing a change.

Current social networking sites, for example MySpace (being one of the biggest networks) has also made groups where people who are very interested in science can join and either discuss current issues or talk about some of the many scientific theories. There are many different social networking websites related to science, recently a new social networking website was created by grad students to "improve collaboration across disciplines in the sciences." Students of this BioX program will create their own version of social networking website which can let students to combining life sciences to network with peers, professors and employers. This BioX network links science students together.

Social Networks have been looking at how companies work and interact with each other. Netwiki was created to provide ways for companies to gather information and deter competition. This wiki is a scientific wiki that uses tools from graph theory, statistical mechanics, and dynamical systems to study the real-world networks in different areas.

For example RealMentalHealth.com is a social networking site that focuses to help people on their mental health treatment and wellness. There are community groups, such as health diaries, that people can join online to share their advice, stories, websites, and recommend doctors with information about diseases.

## **SNSs allow for group organization (Cont'd)**

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/is-myspace-good-for-society-a-freakonomics-quorum/?hp>

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm

Is MySpace Good for Society? A Freakonomics Quorum

By STEPHEN J. DUBNER

New York Times

Nicole Ellison, assistant professor of Telecommunication, Information Studies and Media at Michigan State University:

However, tools that enable us to engage in online self-presentation and connect with others will be increasingly part of our social and professional landscape, as social network sites continue to be embraced by businesses, non-profits, civic groups, and political organizations that value the connections these tools support. IBM, for instance, has created an internal social network site, "Beehive," to encourage more collaboration and communication across teams. In India, Babajob harnesses social networking tools to pair employers with those who seek work. We will continue to see these trends grow as social networking features are employed for fun, profit, and social good.

## **SNSs serve as a tool to spread information**

Lessons from Facebook: The Effect of Social Network Sites on College Students' Social Capital

Sebastián Valenzuela<sup>2</sup>, Namsu Park<sup>3</sup>, and Kerk F. Kee<sup>4</sup> University of Texas at Austin

Submitted to the 9th International Symposium on Online Journalism  
Austin, Texas, April 4-5, 2008

At the same time, sites like Facebook allow them to exchange news and discuss issues, both public (e.g., the 2008 U.S. presidential election) and private (e.g., movie tastes).

## **SNSs can serve as a support group**

Social Networking in Science, Environment, and Health

<http://horizonproject.wikispaces.com/Impact+on+Science+Environment+Health+SocialNetworking>

The Horizon Project

Many people use these community groups to help support each other such as sending other members of the community group a virtual hug. For example teens use Facebook and Myspace to connect and talk about serious issues, like how the disease has affected their life and how their identity has changed over the period. Even though teens don't actually met those friends but they communicate and understand each other. Social Networking is a good way to help people form and develop their identities also help them to realized there are people like themselves.

Danah Boyd, Ph.D. candidate at the School of Information, University of California-Berkeley, and fellow at the Harvard University Berkman Center for Internet and Society:

These sites are tools. They can and have been used for both positive and negative purposes. For homosexual teens in rural America, they can be tools for self-realization in the battle against depression. Thanks to such tools, many teens have chosen not to take the path of suicide, knowing that there are others like them. For teens who are unable to see friends and family due to social and physical mobility restrictions, social media provides a venue to build and maintain always-on intimate communities. For parents whose kids have gone off to college, social media can provide a means by which the family can stay in meaningful contact through this period of change.

## **SNSs allow for people to stay in contact**

Lessons from Facebook: The Effect of Social Network Sites on College Students' Social Capital

Sebastián Valenzuela<sup>2</sup>, Namsu Park<sup>3</sup>, and Kerk F. Kee<sup>4</sup> University of Texas at Austin

Submitted to the 9th International Symposium on Online Journalism  
Austin, Texas, April 4-5, 2008

Existing research shows that young people are motivated to join these sites to keep strong ties with friends, to strengthen ties with new acquaintances, and, to a lesser degree, to meet new people online (Acquisti & Gross, 2006).

This proposition was empirically tested by Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) using survey data from a small sample of undergraduate students in the U.S. Applying Putnam's (2000) framework of "bridging" and "bonding" social capital, Ellison and her colleagues found that use of Facebook had a strong association to maintaining or solidifying existing offline relationships, as opposed to meeting new people.

First, and foremost, online social networks are useful structures for connecting people, allowing them to create content and participate in public affairs in a meaningful way. Second, SNS are not just a place for "hanging out" but are useful tools for collective action.

## **No socio-economic or race divide**

<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/dmal.9780262524834.119?cookieSet=1>

Danah Boyd, University of California, Berkeley, School of Information

Interestingly, I have found that race and social class play a little role in terms of access beyond the aforementioned disenfranchised population. Poor urban black teens appear to be just as likely to join the site as white teens from wealthier backgrounds, although what they do on there has much to do with their level of Internet access. Those who only access their accounts in schools use it primarily as an asynchronous communication tool, while those with continuous nighttime access at home spend more time surfing the network, modifying their profile, collecting friends, and talking to strangers. When it comes to social network sites, there appears to be a far greater participatory divide than an access divide.

Pew Internet and American Life Project, December 19, 2007

Amanda Lenhart, Senior Research Specialist, Mary Madden, Senior Research Specialist, Alexandra Rankin Macgill, Project Manager  
Aaron Smith, Research Specialist

Teens from lower-income and single-parent households are more likely to blog. Beyond gender and age, two new developments emerged in this survey in the demographics of teens who blog. While there was little or no variation in blogging activity among teens according to household income or family structure in 2004, both variables have become important indicators in the 2006 data. Teens living in households earning less than \$50,000 per year are considerably more likely to blog than those living in higher-income households; fully 35% of online teens whose parents fall in the lower income brackets have created an online journal or blog, while just 24% of those in the higher income brackets have done so.

An even more pronounced contrast is evident when looking at teens who live with single parents vs. those who live with married parents. Online teens living in single-parent homes are far more likely to have shared their writing through a blog; 42% of these teens keep a blog compared with 25% of teens living with married parents.

## People learn social skills on SNSs

<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/dmal.9780262524834.119?cookieSet=1>

Why Youth Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics  
in Teenage Social Life

danah boyd

University of California, Berkeley, School of Information

By looking at others' profiles, teens get a sense of what types of presentations are socially appropriate; others' profiles provide critical cues about what to present on their own profile.

Building an intricate profile is an initiation rite. In the early days of their infatuation, teens spend innumerable hours tracking down codes, trading tips, and setting up a slick profile. Through this process, they are socialized into MySpace—they learn both technological and social codes. While technological information gives them the wherewithal to craft a profile, the interpretation and evaluation of this performance is dictated by social protocols. MySpace profiles become yet another mechanism by which teens can signal information about their identities and tastes.

In mediated environments, bodies are not immediately visible and the skills people need to interpret situations and manage impressions are different. As Jenny Sundén argues, people must learn to write themselves into being. Doing so makes visible how much we take the body for granted. While text, images, audio, and video all provide valuable means for developing a virtual presence, the act of articulation differs from how we convey meaningful information through our bodies. This process also makes explicit the self-reflexivity that Giddens argues is necessary for identity formation, but the choices individuals make in crafting a digital body highlight the self-monitoring that Foucault describes.<sup>37</sup>

## **Cost benefit analysis**

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/is-myspace-good-for-society-a-freakonomics-quorum/?hp>

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm

Is MySpace Good for Society? A Freakonomics Quorum

By STEPHEN J. DUBNER

New York Times

Nicole Ellison, assistant professor of Telecommunication, Information Studies and Media at Michigan State University:

I believe the benefits provided by social network sites such as Facebook have made us better off as a society and as individuals, and that, as they continue to be adopted by more diverse populations, we will see an increase in their utility. Anecdotal evidence of positive outcomes from these technologies — such as political activities organized via Facebook or jobs found through LinkedIn — is well-known, but now a growing corpus of academic research on social networks sites supports this view as well.

Social technologies never have predictable and absolute positive or negative effects, which is why social scientists dread questions like these. In considering the effects of social network sites, it is clear that there are many challenges to work through — the increasing commercialization of this space, the need to construct strong privacy protections for users, and safety issues — but I believe the benefits we receive as a society provided by these tools far outweigh the risks.

## **Cost benefit analysis (Cont'd)**

Danah Boyd, Ph.D. candidate at the School of Information, University of California-Berkeley, and fellow at the Harvard University Berkman Center for Internet and Society:

This is not to say that all of the products of social media are positive. We can all point to negative consequences: bullying, gossip mongering, increased procrastination, etc. Our news media loves to focus on these. Even the positive stories that do run often have a negative or sensationalist angle, such as those who used Twitter to track the California fires. Unfortunately, those who do not understand social media look to the news, see the negative coverage, and declare all social media evil.

It's easy to look at a lot of elements of today's society and cry foul. It's equally easy to look at the new technology that we don't understand and blame it as the cause for all social ills. It's a lot harder to accept that social media is mirroring and magnifying all of the good, bad, and ugly about today's society, shoving it right back in our faces in the hopes that we might face the underlying problems. Technology does not create bullying; it simply makes it more visible and much harder for adults to ignore.

## People will still have personal contact

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/is-myspace-good-for-society-a-freakonomics-quorum/?hp>

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm, New York Times

William Reader, professor of psychology at Sheffield Hallam University and social networking site researcher:

Some doom-mongers have suggested that social networking technologies will eventually lead to a society in which we no longer engage in face-to-face contact with people. I don't see it. Face-to-face contact is, I believe, very important for the formation of intimate relationships (and most of us crave those). The reason for this is that friendships represent a considerable burden on our time, and our physical and emotional resources. Friends are, therefore, a big investment, and we want to be pretty sure that any friend is prepared to invest as much in us as we are in them. We therefore monitor potential friends for signals of their investment in us, and some of the best indicators of people's investment in us are those that we experience face to face.

Pew Internet and American Life Project, December 19, 2007

Amanda Lenhart, Senior Research Specialist, Mary Madden, Senior Research Specialist, Alexandra Rankin Macgill, Project Manager  
Aaron Smith, Research Specialist

Face-to-face contact still matters. All of these technology-based communication methods still do not replace face-to-face communication for many teenagers.<sup>17</sup> In the general teen population, 31% of the teens in this survey reported that they spent time with friends in person doing social activities outside of school every day, 34% of teens reported that they did so several times a week, and 24% of teens reported that they spent time in person with friends after school at least once a week. Older teens – the very people who are more often using other forms of communication like cell phones or instant messaging – are more likely to report spending time with friends in person doing social activities outside of school every day or several times a week than younger teens.

## **People will still have personal contact (Cont'd)**

Across the spectrum, the communication activity that changes the least is the frequency of face-to-face encounters; 31% of all teens have this kind of interaction with friends every day outside of school; 34% of cell phone owners do so; 35% of multi-channel teens have such encounters; and 38% of social network site users have in-person meetings with friends every day.

## **A lifestyle change due to SNSs is not negative**

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/is-myspace-good-for-society-a-freakonomics-quorum/?hp>

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm

Is MySpace Good for Society? A Freakonomics Quorum

By STEPHEN J. DUBNER

New York Times

Martin Baily, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and an adviser to the McKinsey Global Institute:

Powerful new technologies provide great benefits, but they also change the way we live, and not always in ways that everyone likes. An example is the spread of air conditioning, which makes us more comfortable, but those who grew up before its invention speak fondly of a time when everyone sat on the front porch and talked to their neighbors rather than going indoors to stay cool and watch TV.

## **SNSs provide economic benefits**

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/is-myspace-good-for-society-a-freakonomics-quorum/?hp>

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm Is MySpace Good for Society? A  
Freakonomics Quorum  
By STEPHEN J. DUBNER  
New York Times

Martin Baily, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and an adviser to the McKinsey Global Institute:

New social networking services are counted in our measure of G.D.P., and will likely show up as an increase in productivity. Their effect is not large enough yet to move the needle by much, but it will be in the data, although in a rather strange way.

## **Kids don't share compromising personal information**

Pew Internet and American Life Project  
Teens and Social Media, December 19, 2007  
Amanda Lenhart, Senior Research Specialist, Mary Madden, Senior Research Specialist, Alexandra Rankin Macgill, Project Manager  
Aaron Smith, Research Specialist

Few teens disclose their full name on public profiles. Overall, 14% of online teens post both their first and last name to their online profile. Looking at the data another way, 26% of teens with online profiles post their full names. However, most of these teens who include their full name restrict access to their profile; just 6% of online teens and 11% of profile-owning teens post their first and last name to a publicly viewable profile that is visible to anyone online. Just 7% of online teens say they post their full name, a photo of themselves, their school name, and the city or town where they live to their online profile. This represents 13% of all profile-owning teens. Again, most of these "transparent teens" restrict who has access to their profile; just 3% of online teens, and 5% of profile-owning teens disclose all of these details on a publicly viewable profile.

## **Marriages from online connections are more successful**

([onlinedatingmagazine.com](http://onlinedatingmagazine.com) - February 18, 2004) According to [Match.com](http://Match.com), a January 2004 survey of more than 800 married people in two distinct groups -- those who met on [Match.com](http://Match.com) and those who met through any means other than an online dating service -- almost all [Match.com](http://Match.com) marriages were reported to be happy, loving, romantic and likely to continue, measuring stronger in these qualities than the sample group that did not meet using an online dating service.

According to Dr. Andrea Baker, Associate Professor of Sociology at Ohio University, "Online couples can potentially have a higher success rate or longevity than offline couples, or those who did not meet first online."

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/top-stories/2008/08/14/news-115875-20696541/>

The Mirror

LOOKING FOR TRUE LOVE..GO ON INTERNET

Single men and women are more likely to find true love on the internet than at work or at a party - especially if they are over 45. A poll of 10,000 married couples in 2006/2007 found 19 per cent met online compared with 17 per cent who got together at work and 17 per cent who paired up through pals. Of these, 31 per cent aged 45 to 54 met online, against 18 per cent of 20 to 44-year-olds. Galen Buckwalter of online matchmaker eHarmony, California, said: "Wanting to get married and not going online will soon be seen as equivalent to trying to find an address by driving around randomly - rather than using a map." In contrast a similar poll of 5,000 couples who married between September 2004 and August 2005 found that 14 per cent met online, compared with 20 per cent at work and 17 per cent through friends.

## **Maintenance/Reinforcement of Relationships Main Motive**

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>

Danah M. Boyd (School of Information, University of California-Berkeley)  
Nicole B. Ellison (Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies,  
and Media, Michigan State University)  
October 2007

Given that SNSs enable individuals to connect with one another, it is not surprising that they have become deeply embedded in user's lives. In Korea, Cyworld has become an integral part of everyday life—Choi (2006) found that 85% of that study's respondents "listed the maintenance and reinforcement of pre-existing social networks as their main motive for Cyworld use" (p. 181). Likewise, boyd (2008) argues that MySpace and Facebook enable U.S. youth to socialize with their friends even when they are unable to gather in unmediated situations; she argues that SNSs are "networked publics" that support sociability, just as unmediated public spaces do.

## **Librarians against Facebook Ban**

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>

Danah M. Boyd (School of Information, University of California-Berkeley)  
Nicole B. Ellison (Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies,  
and Media, Michigan State University)  
October 2007

Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis (2007) found that librarians are overwhelmingly aware of Facebook and are against proposed U.S. legislation that would ban minors from accessing SNSs at libraries, but that most see SNSs as outside the purview of librarianship. Finally, challenging the view that there is nothing educational about SNSs, Perkel (in press) analyzed copy/paste practices on MySpace as a form of literacy involving social and technical skills.

## Fashion and Signal Theory

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/donath.html>

Judith Donath  
MIT Media Lab  
October 2007

While an outsider might see as wasted the time expended on profile updates and exchanges of the latest pictures and URLs, another interpretation is that these seemingly trivial activities are examples of online fashion, signals of social position in an information based society (Donath, in press; McCracken, 1998; Thornton, 1996).

Fashions, the constant change in the way of doing something, are signals whose form—the currently popular object or saying—changes frequently, while the meaning—social position—remains the same. There are fashions in clothing, slang, and management techniques. Their individual instantiations are easily-copied conventional signals; it is the constant evolution of forms that creates the reliable signal. Fashion is about information, about knowing the changing social meaning of an object or way of doing things.

Being in fashion—whether via physical clothing or online linking—signals fitness in the continuously changing information world. It signals status in a society where "information prowess"—i.e., having access to information, the ability (often termed taste) to distinguish between good and bad information, and the willingness to adapt to the changes brought by new information—is a fundamental part of the culture.

Twenty years ago, students might have gathered after school; today, they spend less time together in person, but stay in constant touch by instant messenger and are aware of the daily events in each other's lives through updates on their profiles. The relationships may not be markedly different from pre social technology (bullying, famously, has migrated to the online world), but they have adapted the signals they use to indicate and infer popularity, romantic interest, and social adeptness to this ubiquitously connected space (Herring, 2008).

## Non-Participants Don't Understand/Not Simply Information

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/lange.html>

Patricia G. Lange, School of Cinematic Arts  
University of Southern California

People who do not regularly participate on YouTube may not understand why people watch seemingly poor quality or odd videos on the site. Yet those videos may serve important social functions, and their utility is not necessarily judged by technical criteria. Media utility is often assessed in terms of the bandwidth or quality of information that a particular medium affords (Nardi, 2005). However, in the context of instant messaging, Nardi (2005) demonstrates how certain exchanges are not focused on information gathering. Rather they strive to establish an "affinity," which Nardi defines as a "feeling of connection" between people who "[experience] an openness to interacting with another person" (p. 92). Evaluating an instant message in terms of novel information ignores how short, similarly worded messages may transmit feelings of openness and affinity to the people to whom they are circulated. How and why media like instant messages or videos are viewed, enjoyed, and forwarded reveal much about the participants and their relationships. How they are shared also provides insight into distinctions between public and private.

For example, an aunt of two boys that I interviewed posted a comment on one of their videos. Living several states away, the boys rarely see her. But by viewing her nephews' videos and posting comments, she re-affirms her position in a familial social network. When the boys read her posted comments, they complete a media circuit that began with an experience that was encoded in video, displayed, and commented upon by their aunt, who participated from afar. In this case, the media circuit helps maintain a social network that already exists. Media circuits take different forms and not only help maintain, but can also help create connections and negotiate relationship changes, as described below.

## **Empirical vs. Anecdotal Evidence and Benefits of SNSs**

<http://www.swinmc.net/documents/facebook.pdf>

Nicole B. Ellison, Charles Steinfield, Cliff Lampe  
Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies, and Media  
Michigan State University  
2007

Our empirical results contrast with the anecdotal evidence dominating the popular press. Although there are clearly some image management problems experienced by students as reported in the press, and the potential does exist for privacy abuses, our findings demonstrate a robust connection between Facebook usage and indicators of social capital, especially of the bridging type. Internet use alone did not predict social capital accumulation, but intensive use of Facebook did.

The strong linkage between Facebook use and high school connections suggests how SNSs help maintain relations as people move from one offline community to another. It may facilitate the same when students graduate from college, with alumni keeping their school email address and using Facebook to stay in touch with the college community. Such connections could have strong payoffs in terms of jobs, internships, and other opportunities. Colleges may want to explore ways to encourage this sort of usage.

## **Large Steps Have Been Made in Eliminating Security Risk/Used to Ferret out Sex Criminals Today**

<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,21775032-11869,00.html>

Agence France-Presse  
May 22, 2007

MySpace said that since innovative "Sentinel SAFE" software began running "24 hours a day" on the website May 2, 2007 it has ferreted out about 7,000 profiles posted by convicted sex criminals.

MySpace deleted the profiles but saved information about them for law enforcement officials, said MySpace chief security officer Hemanshu Nigam

## **Newest Crime-Busting Tool**

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/29260684.html>

Erica Perenz

(Milwaukee-Wisconsin) Journal Sentinel

October 3, 2007

Facebook.com and MySpace.com are the newest crime-busting tools in a police officer's repertoire, particularly for campus police, who are using the sites to investigate student crimes and violations and gather information about where students live and whom they know. In some cases, the information they find is making its way into court.

## **Increases Efficiency in the Workplace**

<http://biz.yahoo.com/prnews/081111/aqtu085.html?.v=73>

AT&T Inc.

November 11, 2008

AT&T Inc. (NYSE: <http://finance.yahoo.com/q/h?s=t> "News") announced that the use of social networking tools as part of everyday working life has led to an increase in efficiency, according to an independent market report released by AT&T. The pan-European survey of more than 2,500 people in five countries, conducted by Dynamic Markets, shows that of those employees using social networking tools in the workplace, 65% say that it has made them and/or their colleagues more efficient. In addition, 46% say that it has sparked ideas and creativity for them personally.

# Con Evidence

## **SNSs do not increase political participation**

The Effects of Social Networking Websites and Youth Voter Participation

The American Political science Association Conference and Social Networking and the Future of Politics and Administration Panel, August, 2008

Kimberly D. Martin, Hans E. Schmeisser, University of Florida, Department of Political Science.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that the characteristics of the users themselves play a role in information acquisition and participation (Bimber, 2003). This approach to internet use suggests that the more sophisticated internet user will have the expertise to gather political information from the internet, prohibiting less experienced users from benefiting.

As noted, prior research suggests that the more sophisticated internet user will have the expertise necessary to efficiently gather political information from the internet (Bimber, 2003). This is of great concern when we refer to youth voters. Although young adults are viewed as the most proficient internet users and more likely to use the internet as an information source (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996), it does not necessarily follow that they will seek out political information while they are surfing the web. Those who use the internet must choose to visit political websites, unlike television where political advertisements cannot be avoided. Davis (1999) comments that "it may not occur to proponents of the internet revolution that control over information may cancel out the positive effects of the readily available information."

## **SNSs do not increase political participation (Cont'd)**

Don't Judge a Facebook by its Cover: Social Networking Sites, Social Capital, and Political Participation A Pilot Study !

Leticia Bode

Department of Political Science

University of Wisconsin - Madison

April 4, 2008

The potential of Facebook to have positive effects on political participation is not a given, however, and this literature review would be incomplete without making note of certain possible limitations on its ability to have such effects. Most importantly, "having access to the wealth of political information and communication available through the Internet is not by itself connected with participation" (Bimber 2001, 61). The simple act of lowering the cost of information is not responsible for increasing political participation. Information must be coupled with interest to result in positive participation effects. Additionally, online talk has not been shown to result in opinion change (Muhlberger 2005b). However, since the scope of this study is limited to measures of participation, rather than opinion, this does not pose a direct problem for this particular work.

## **SNSs do not increase social capital**

The Effects of Social Networking Websites and Youth Voter Participation

The American Political science Association Conference and Social Networkign and the Future of Politics and Administration Panel, August, 2008

Kimberly D. Martin, Hans E. Schmeisser, University of Florida, Department of Political Science.

Shah, et al. (2001) found that while social capital increased among users who primarily use the internet for information gathering, it decreased among those who used it solely for recreational purposes.

Don't Judge a Facebook by its Cover: Social Networking Sites, Social Capital, and Political Participation A Pilot Study !

Leticia Bode

Department of Political Science

University of Wisconsin - Madison

April 4, 2008

There is evidence, however, that the conditions necessary to produce alloy social capital are present in other realms of the Internet as well. For instance, Bennett and Givens 2006 find that 60 per cent of members of organizations who use face-to-face interactions to coordinate efforts also report using email to do so.

## **SNSs do not increase social capital (Cont'd)**

Lessons from Facebook: The Effect of Social Network Sites on College Students' Social Capital

Sebastián Valenzuela<sup>2</sup>, Namsu Park<sup>3</sup>, and Kerk F. Kee<sup>4</sup> University of Texas at Austin

Submitted to the 9th International Symposium on Online Journalism  
Austin, Texas, April 4-5, 2008

Admittedly, the relationship is not large, as revealed by the incremental R-squares of the regressions. After all the other variables are taken into consideration, the Facebook variables explain an additional 2.7% of the variance in social capital at most. This should not come as a surprise. Previous research has demonstrated that individual's life satisfaction, trust and participation is influenced by their personality, life experiences, socialization into adulthood, press coverage and a host of other variables. In fact, it would be quite troubling that a sole Lessons from Facebook 32 technological platform such as Facebook could influence to a large extent young adults' stock of social capital.

## **Facebook's Privacy Policy Fine Print**

<http://www.heinz.cmu.edu/~acquisti/papers/privacy-facebook-gross-acquisti.pdf>

Ralph Gross and Alessandro Acquisti  
Carnegie Mellon University

The Facebook is straightforward about the usage it plans for the participants' personal information: at the time of this writing, its privacy policy [30] reports that the site will collect additional information about its users (for instance, from instant messaging), not originated from the use of the service itself. The policy also reports that participants' information may include information that the participant has not knowingly provided (for example, her IP address), and that personal data may be shared with third parties.

## **SNSs hurt people's character**

The Impact of Social Networking Tools and Guidelines to Use Them

By LaJean Humphries, Published on January 15, 2007

<http://www.llrx.com/features/goodgoogle.htm>

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) more than half of all employers use some kind of online screening technology including social networking sites like FaceBook and MySpace.

Litigation firm investigators are using social networking sites to find information about parties to litigation, witnesses, and even opposing counsel. Many investigators say they have an obligation to use any legal tool to find all the information they can.

Facebook can ruin your life. And so can MySpace, Bebo...

The Independent

Sunday, 10 February 2008

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/facebook-can-ruin-your-life-and-so-can-myspace-bebo-780521.html>

At Cambridge, at least one don has admitted "discreetly" scanning applicants' pages – a practice now widespread in job recruitment. A survey released by Viadeo said that 62 per cent of British employers now check the Facebook, MySpace or Bebo pages of some applicants, and that a quarter had rejected candidates as a result. Reasons given by employers included concerns about "excess alcohol abuse", ethics and job "disrespect".

Viadeo's UK country manager, Peter Cunningham, said the results should act as a wake-up call to anyone who has ever posted personal information online. "Millions of people are leaving personal information online, much of which is cached and remains available via search engines even after the author has removed the web page," he said. "When people who are not the original intended audience – such as potential employers – find this information, it can have a major impact on their decision making process."

## **Government seeks ban on SNSs in schools**

<http://www.technologyreview.com/Infotech/17266/?a=f>

The Deleting Online Predators Act (DOPA), introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives in May by Michael Fitzpatrick (R-PA), was passed by a vote of 410 to 15 on July 26. It requires, with few exemptions, that facilities receiving federal aid block minors from accessing commercial social-networking sites and chat rooms, where they might encounter adults seeking sexual contact.

DOPA supporters frequently cite a 2000 report about online sexual victimization funded by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which concluded that one-fifth of children have been sexually solicited in chat rooms, by instant message, or by e-mail.

## **SNSs enable hackers**

Facebook can ruin your life. And so can MySpace, Bebo...

The Independent

People will post just about anything on social networking sites. And the information can be used against them. David Randall and Victoria Richards report

Sunday, 10 February 2008

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/facebook-can-ruin-your-life-and-so-can-myspace-bebo-780521.html>

Although MySpace, Facebook and Bebo do what they can to maintain the privacy of their users, there is a constant stream of security breaches related to the applications placed on the sites. These number in the tens of thousands, most of which have been devised not by corporations, but individuals. Virtually all of them require a user to sign away various bits of personal information in return for getting the application, and, to begin work, all an identity thief needs is a name, address, date of birth, and a pet's, parent's or sibling's name.

## **SNSs enable sexual predators**

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The Independent

People will post just about anything on social networking sites. And the information can be used against them. David Randall and Victoria Richards report

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And the use of social network pages to perpetrate serious sexual or anti-personal crime is well known. Virtually every week a sexual predator is found to have used MySpace or Facebook pages to groom young girls.

That something as ubiquitous as social network sites (they have 13.7 million UK users) are exploited by paedophiles and other serious criminals is not surprising. Happily, the numbers affected are small. But the use of personal page content in civil disputes, divorces, employment and legal actions will affect far more of the millions now innocently sharing their thoughts and intimate moments with the online world.

Social Networking in Science, Environment, and Health

<http://horizonproject.wikispaces.com/Impact+on+Science+Environment+Health+SocialNetworking>

The Horizon Project

Even though Social networks provide teens to connect with their friends but also meeting strangers. Nowadays it is easy for someone to find out information about others due to the post of profiles online. Recent year youth risk in online social networking communities, such as Myspace, Xanga, Facebook have increased. Sexual predators, child pornographers, hate group recruiters and others can cause risk to teens. Myspace was once sued by parents of Sexual abuse of children by Adult MySpace users. There dangerous adults that are masters at manipulating vulnerable teens.

## **SNSs serve as a distraction**

Social Networking in Science, Environment, and Health

<http://horizonproject.wikispaces.com/Impact+on+Science+Environment+Health+SocialNetworking>

The Horizon Project

Many teens who use social networks visit them at least once a day or several times a day. Teenagers usually use social networks at home computers most often which usually distract them from school work. For some teens, this internet addiction behavior can lead to school failure. Not only it will distract teens from work also resulting in in lack of healthy involvement in major areas- family, exercise, and sleep.

'Facebook Suicide' Only Way Out for Some Web Addicts

Thursday, September 27, 2007

By Emma Justice

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,298166,00.html>

According to Facebook, users spend an average of 20 minutes a day on the site, although a survey by the British price-comparison Web site uSwitch.com found that some people spend more than 10 hours a week on social-networking sites, the equivalent of 24 days a year.

## **SNSs do not provide a positive community**

Social Networking in Science, Environment, and Health

<http://horizonproject.wikispaces.com/Impact+on+Science+Environment+Health+SocialNetworking>

The Horizon Project

Teens can be harmed not only by dangerous adults but also other adolescence. Posing harmful material online or direct threats can cause major emotional harm to teens which can result in depression, school failure, violence, and suicide. Dangerous communities online can easily "control" teens mind to do stupid things. Youth in this dangerous communities discuss and share information about suicide, anorexia, hate group activities, bomb-making and more. Teen suicide is becoming more common each year around the world. They are confused and overwhelmed by problems in their life and joining these dangerous communities can result in more harmful thoughts and activities which can be harmful to themselves and others.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/scienceandtechnology/3357741/Facebook-and-MySpace-generation-%27cannot-form-relationships%27.html>

Facebook and MySpace generation 'cannot form relationships'

By Rebecca Smith, Medical Editor

Last Updated: 9:14PM GMT 10 Nov 2008

Dr Himanshu Tyagi, a psychiatrist at West London Mental Health Trust He said teenagers who socialize online put less value on their "real world" selves which puts them at risk of impulsive and even suicidal behavior.

## **SNSs do not create meaningful relationships**

Lessons from Facebook: The Effect of Social Network Sites on College Students' Social Capital  
University of Texas at Austin  
Texas, April 4-5, 2008

Donath and boyd (2004) were among the first to hypothesize that online social networks may not increase the number of "strong ties" (i.e., long-term, sustained interactions) a person may have, but may increase the "weak ties" (i.e., infrequent, casual interactions) a person could form because the technology is suited to maintain these ties cheaply and easily.

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm New York Times  
Is MySpace Good for Society? A Freakonomics Quorum  
Judith Donath, associate professor at the M.I.T. Media Lab:

The bad: they devalue the meaning of "friend." Our traditional notion of friendship embraces trust, support, compatible values, etc. On social network sites, a "friend" may simply be someone on whose link you have clicked.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/scienceandtechnology/3357741/Facebook-and-MySpace-generation-%27cannot-form-relationships%27.html>

Facebook and MySpace generation 'cannot form relationships'

By Rebecca Smith, Medical Editor

Last Updated: 9:14PM GMT 10 Nov 2008

Dr Himanshu Tyagi, a psychiatrist at West London Mental Health Trust  
A generation growing up with social networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace are unable to form lasting relationships and are at increased risk of behaving impulsively, an expert has warned.

He said teenagers who socialize online put less value on their "real world" selves which puts them at risk of impulsive and even suicidal behavior.

They may be less able to form relationships as they do not learn the physical clues involved with communication including body language, tone of voice and facial expressions.

## **SNSs cause people to lose out on potential meaningful friendships**

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/is-myspace-good-for-society-a-freakonomics-quorum/?hp>

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm

Is MySpace Good for Society? A Freakonomics Quorum

By STEPHEN J. DUBNER

New York Times

William Reader, professor of psychology at Sheffield Hallam University and social networking site researcher:

Given people's preferences for people who are like them, it could be that friendship networks become increasingly homogeneous. Is this a bad thing? It might be if, by choosing potential friends via their Facebook profiles, it means that folk cut themselves off from serendipitous encounters with those who are superficially different from them, ethnically, socio-economically, and even in terms of musical taste.

## **People don't need to know that much**

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/15/is-myspace-good-for-society-a-freakonomics-quorum/?hp>

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm New York Times

Is MySpace Good for Society? A Freakonomics Quorum

By STEPHEN J. DUBNER

Steve Chazin, former Apple marketing director and current chief marketing officer at DimDim.com:

I believe social networking technology has changed our lives for the better, but at a cost. Social networking tools have made it nearly effortless for me to keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. I can know what's on their minds (MySpace), who else they know (Facebook/LinkedIn), and even what they are doing at this very moment (Twitter). On the other hand, I'm not sure I need to know any of that.

## **Used to Maintain not Create Relationships**

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>

Danah M. Boyd (School of Information, University of California-Berkeley)  
Nicole B. Ellison (Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies,  
and Media, Michigan State University)  
October 2007

Although exceptions exist, the available research suggests that most SNSs primarily support pre-existing social relations. Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe (2007) suggest that Facebook is used to maintain existing offline relationships or solidify offline connections, as opposed to meeting new people. These relationships may be weak ties, but typically there is some common offline element among individuals who friend one another, such as a shared class at school.

## **SNSs lead to less social interaction**

Lessons from Facebook: The Effect of Social Network Sites on College Students' Social Capital  
Sebastián Valenzuela<sup>2</sup>, Namsu Park<sup>3</sup>, and Kerk F. Kee<sup>4</sup> University of Texas at Austin  
Submitted to the 9th International Symposium on Online Journalism  
Austin, Texas, April 4-5, 2008

Survey research by Nyland, Marvez, and Beck (2007) found that heavy users of MySpace felt less socially involved with the community around them than light users. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of respondents were using this social network for entertainment, as opposed to maintaining or strengthening offline relationships. This line of research echoes one of the most pervasive criticisms against SNS, which is that they lead to users' isolation (e.g., Hodgkinson, 2008).

## **Teenagers do not learn skills from SNSs**

<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/dmal.9780262524834.119?cookieSet=1>

Why Youth Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics  
in Teenage Social Life

danah boyd

University of California, Berkeley, School of Information

A copy/paste culture emerged, as teens began trafficking in knowledge of how to pimp out their profiles. Although most teens' profiles are altered, it is important not to assume technological literacy—few teens hand-code their pages; most use a helper site or beg friends to do it for them.

## **Too much personal information is spread**

<http://blog.wired.com/business/2008/11/zenos-paradox-a.html>

Wired

We've all heard of Zeno's paradox, where you can never actually arrive anywhere because there's always a halfway point between where you are and where you're going. Maybe its opposite is the new "Zuckerberg's Law"?

The Times reports that at the Web 2.0 summit last night the precocious and enigmatic Facebook CEO described how he thinks internet users will continue to expand the amount of information they share on the Web. In fact, he quantified it, saying, "I would expect that next year, people will share twice as much information as they share this year, and next year, they will be sharing twice as much as they did the year before."

## **SNSs community creates unneeded stress**

<http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/dmal.9780262524834.119?cookieSet=1>

Why Youth Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics  
in Teenage Social Life

danah boyd

University of California, Berkeley, School of Information

The desire to be cool on MySpace is part of the more general desire to be validated by one's peers. Even though teens theoretically have the ability to behave differently online, the social hierarchies that regulate "coolness" offline are also present online. For example, it is cool to have Friends on MySpace but if you have too many Friends, you are seen as a MySpace whore. These markers of cool are rooted in the social culture of MySpace. One of the ways that coolness is articulated is through bulletin posts meant to attack those who have status online and offline. One such post is a satirical Top 10 list of "How To Be Cool On MySpace," which includes material like "Your MySpace name MUST contain symbols and incorrect spelling" and "All your blogs have to be about how bad your day was." While this post is meant to dismiss these common practices, when these posts are spread around, they simultaneously reinforce these norms in the process of mocking them.

The reason that the Top Friends feature wreaks social havoc on teens' lives is because there are social consequences in publicly announcing one's friends, best friends, and bestest friends. Feelings are hurt when individuals find that someone that they feel close with does not reciprocate.

February 15, 2008, 1:18 pm New York Times

Is MySpace Good for Society? A Freakonomics Quorum

Judith Donath, associate professor at the M.I.T. Media Lab:

The ugly: for teens, who can be viciously competitive, networking sites that feature a list of one's best friends and space for everyone to comment about you can be an unpleasant venue for social humiliation and bullying. These sites can make the emotional landmines of adolescence concrete and explicit.

## **System in Which Denying People and Protecting Yourself is “Socially Awkward”**

[http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue11\\_12/boyd/index.html](http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue11_12/boyd/index.html)

Danah Boyd  
First Monday  
December 2006

Top Friends requires participants to expose backstage information. In a culture where it's socially awkward to reject someone's Friendship, ranking them provides endless drama and social awkwardness.

## **Too much personal information is spread**

<http://blog.wired.com/business/2008/11/zenos-paradox-a.html>

Wired

We've all heard of Zeno's paradox, where you can never actually arrive anywhere because there's always a halfway point between where you are and where you're going. Maybe its opposite is the new "Zuckerberg's Law"?

The Times reports that at the Web 2.0 summit last night the precocious and enigmatic Facebook CEO described how he thinks internet users will continue to expand the amount of information they share on the Web. In fact, he quantified it, saying, "I would expect that next year, people will share twice as much information as they share this year, and next year, they will be sharing twice as much as they did the year before."

## How Accessible is Valuable Information and How Can It Be Used

<http://www.heinz.cmu.edu/~acquisti/papers/privacy-facebook-gross-acquisti.pdf>

Ralph Gross and Alessandro Acquisti  
Carnegie Mellon University

To whom may identifiable information be made available? First of all, of course, the hosting site, that may use and extend the information (both knowingly and unknowingly revealed by the participant) in different ways (below we discuss extracts from the privacy policy of a social networking site that are relevant to this discussion). Obviously, the information is available within the network itself, whose extension in time (that is, data durability) and space (that is, membership extension) may not be fully known or knowable by the participant. Finally, the easiness of joining and extending one's network, and the lack of basic security measures (such as SSL logins) at most networking sites make it easy for third parties (from hackers to government agencies) to access participants data without the site's direct collaboration (already in 2003, LiveJournal used to receive at least five reports of ID hijacking per day, [23]).

How can that information be used? It depends on the information actually provided - which may, in certain cases, be very extensive and intimate. Risks range from identity theft to online and physical stalking; from embarrassment to price discrimination and blackmailing.

## **Users Don't Typically Change Default Settings**

<http://www.heinz.cmu.edu/~acquisti/papers/privacy-facebook-gross-acquisti.pdf>

Ralph Gross and Alessandro Acquisti  
Carnegie Mellon University

Prior research in HCI has shown that users tend to not change default settings [19]. This makes the choice of default settings by website operators very important.

It would appear that the population of Facebook users we have studied is, by large, quite oblivious, unconcerned, or just pragmatic about their personal privacy. Personal data is generously provided and limiting privacy preferences are sparingly used.

## **30% of Facebook Users Are Willing to Accept a Random Stranger**

<http://www.heinz.cmu.edu/~acquisti/papers/privacy-facebook-gross-acquisti.pdf>

Ralph Gross and Alessandro Acquisti Carnegie Mellon University

The surprisingly high success rate of this practice was recently demonstrated by a Facebook user who, using an automatic script, contacted 250,000 users of the Facebook across the country and asked to be added as their friend. According to [15], 75,000 users accepted: thirty percent of Facebook users are willing to make all of their profile information available to a random stranger and his network of friends.

Online social networks are both vaster and looser than their offline counterparts. It is possible for somebody's profile to be connected to hundreds of peers directly, and thousands of others through the network's ties. Many individuals in a person's online extended network would hardly be defined as actual friends by that person; in fact many may be complete strangers. And yet, personal and often sensitive information is freely and publicly provided.

## Detailed Look at the Threat Possibility

<http://www.heinz.cmu.edu/~acquisti/papers/privacy-facebook-gross-acquisti.pdf>

Ralph Gross and Alessandro Acquisti  
Carnegie Mellon University

An additional re-identification risk lies in making birthdate, hometown, current residence, and current phone number publicly available at the same time. This information can be used to estimate a person's social security number and exposes her to identity theft. The first three digits of a social security number reveal where that number was created (specifically, the digits are determined by the ZIP code of the mailing address shown on the application for a social security number). The next two digits are group identifiers, which are assigned according to a peculiar but predictable temporal order. The last four digits are progressive serial numbers.<sup>16</sup> When a person's hometown is known, the window of the first three digits of her SNN can be identified with probability decreasing with the home state's populousness. When that person's birthday is also known, and an attacker has access to SSNs of other people with the same birthdate in the same state as the target (for example obtained from the SSN death index or from stolen SSNs), it is possible to pin down a window of values in which the two middle digits are likely to fall. The last four digits (often used in unprotected logins and as passwords) can be retrieved through social engineering. Since the vast majority of the Facebook profiles we studied not only include birthday and hometown information, but also current phone number and residence (often used for verification purposes by financial institutions and other credit agencies), users are exposing themselves to substantial risks of identity theft.

## **Disconnect Between Desire and Behavior Towards Security**

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>

Danah M. Boyd (School of Information, University of California-Berkeley)  
Nicole B. Ellison (Department of Telecommunication, Information Studies,  
and Media, Michigan State University)  
October 2007

Acquisti and Gross (2006) argue that there is often a disconnect between students' desire to protect privacy and their behaviors, a theme that is also explored in Stutzman's (2006) survey of Facebook users and Barnes's (2006) description of the "privacy paradox" that occurs when teens are not aware of the public nature of the Internet. In analyzing trust on social network sites, Dwyer, Hiltz, and Passerini (2007) argued that trust and usage goals may affect what people are willing to share—Facebook users expressed greater trust in Facebook than MySpace users did in MySpace and thus were more willing to share information on the site.

In another study examining security issues and SNSs, Jagatic, Johnson, Jakobsson, and Menczer (2007) used freely accessible profile data from SNSs to craft a "phishing" scheme that appeared to originate from a friend on the network; their targets were much more likely to give away information to this "friend" than to a perceived stranger. Survey data offer a more optimistic perspective on the issue, suggesting that teens are aware of potential privacy threats online and that many are proactive about taking steps to minimize certain potential risks. Pew found that 55% of online teens have profiles, 66% of whom report that their profile is not visible to all Internet users (Lenhart & Madden, 2007). Of the teens with completely open profiles, 46% reported including at least some false information.

## **Bigger Scale (Once Local Slander Becomes Global)**

<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/donath.html>

Judith Donath  
MIT Media Lab  
October 2007

One of the consequences of these changes is that information that was once local is becoming global. The dramas of high school friendships, blind date traumas, and mundane job irritations, once hot gossip only to the immediate circle of the people involved, are now published for worldwide consumption on blogs and network sites.

## **Benefits of online dating services low**

<http://www.analog-rf.com/eharmony.shtml>

James Long, Ph.D., P.E. Analog and RF Consulting Engineer

A recent survey of happily married couples with internet access showed that only 3% of them met on dating sites. The rate on eharmony is under 1% per year.

## **SNSs cause cyber-bullying**

Pew internet and American Life Program

<http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP%20Cyberbullying%20Memo.pdf>

BY: Amanda Lenhart, Senior Research Specialist

RE: Cyberbullying and Online Teens

DATE: June 27, 2007

About one third (32%) of all teenagers who use the internet say they have been targets of a range of annoying and potentially menacing online activities – such as receiving threatening messages; having their private emails or text messages forwarded without consent; having an embarrassing picture posted without permission; or having rumors about them spread online.

Of all the online harassment asked about, the greatest number of teens told us that they had had a private communication forwarded or publicly posted without their permission. One in 6 teens (15%) told us someone had forwarded or posted communication they assumed was private. About 13% of teens told us that someone had spread a rumor about them online, and another 13% said that someone had sent them a threatening or aggressive email, IM or text message. Some 6% of online teens told us that someone had posted an embarrassing picture of them without their permission.

### The gender gap

Girls are more likely than boys to say that they have ever experienced cyberbullying – 38% of online girls report being bullied, compared with 26% of online boys. Older girls in particular are more likely to report being bullied than any other age and gender group, with 41% of online girls ages 15 to 17 reporting these experiences. Teens who use social network sites like MySpace and Facebook and teens who use the internet daily are also more likely to say that they have been cyberbullied. Nearly 4 in 10 social network users (39%) have been cyberbullied in some way, compared with 22% of online teens who do not use social networks.

## **SNSs cause cyber-bullying (Cont'd)**

Fewer communications are private anymore.

The most commonly experienced bullying is having someone take a private email, IM or text message and forwarding it on to someone else or posting the communication publicly. Nearly 1 in 6 (15%) of online teens said they had experienced unwanted forwarding of private communication. Older teens (ages 15-17) say they are more likely to have had someone forward or publicly post private messages – 18% of older teens have experienced this, compared with 11% of younger teens.

Fewer teens, some 6%, reported that someone had posted an embarrassing picture of them online without their permission. Not surprisingly, given the number of photos posted on social networking websites, users of those sites are more likely to report that someone had posted embarrassing pictures of them online without their permission –9% of social network users reported this, compared with just 2% of those who do not use social networking sites. Similarly, teens who post photos themselves are more likely to report that someone has posted an embarrassing photo of them without their permission.

Online teens who have created content for the internet – for instance, by authoring blogs, uploading photos, sharing artwork or helping others build websites – are more likely to report cyberbullying and harassment than their peers. Content creators are also more likely to use social networks – places to create and display and receive feedback on content creations, and social network users are also more likely to be cyberbullied.

The Impact of Social Networking Tools and Guidelines to Use Them  
By LaJean Humphries, Published on January 15, 2007  
<http://www.llrx.com/features/goodgoogle.htm>

A word of warning though: once you create a page or make a posting, it may exist forever. It is extremely difficult to get information removed from the Internet. Even if false information about you has been put on the Internet by others, it's still difficult to get rid of it. Generally companies say they can't help remove any information on the web.