

# Social networking sites research papers example

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



## **Introduction: What are Social Networking Sites?**

Before moving into the actual description of social networking sites, perhaps it would be wise to explain what exactly social networking sites are. In simple terms, social networking sites refer to websites that essentially provide a virtual community particularly for individuals interested in a similar subject or subjects. A social networking site also provides a platform for people to hang out together, interact, share ideas and opinions and update each other about their on goings. A social networking site can be compared to a virtual clubhouse where when one becomes a member and later creates an official profile, one has the ability to connect and interact with friends and family through online features and activities such as email, chats, email, photo and status updates.

## **Overview of Relevant Websites**

**Facebook-** A social networking site that allows users to interact with each other, post updates, share pictures and videos and so on

**Twitter-** A social site to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent messages with friends through short messages or posts known as " tweets." (ww. twitter. com)

## **Instagram- A social site dedicated to sharing pictures between friends and family members**

**Tumblr-** A micro blogging social site that allows users to share texts, photos and videos and comment on other's posts

## **Vine- an application that allows users to post and watch six seconds video clips posted by other people**

### Guidelines for Evaluating Websites

The evaluation of the websites will commence with a brief evaluation of the websites and will then move on to describing how each of these websites work. First, the account opening procedure of each of these sites will be given. The trend of interaction or social networking of the sites will then be explored. This refers to aspects such as the sending and accepting of friend's request, following friends, unfriending, posting things such as updates, pictures, links, account settings, and so on.

### **User Security**

The user security in terms of privacy, access to other people's information and the limitation of information sharing of these websites will be evaluated.

### **Instructional Guide**

All parents should be interested in their child's online activities especially when it comes to social networking. One of the ways through which to do this is talk and discuss with your children about their online activities. Young people and teenagers who discuss issues pertaining to social networking sites with their parents often exhibit safer behaviors online (Mcafee, 2014).

In addition, it is good for a parent to have their accounts on some of the social networking sites and possible connect with their children in the form of friendship requests or followings. Although many teenagers may feel this to be completely outrageous to have their parents as friends on social networking sites, it is at least worth a try.

Let us now look at several social networking sites most popular amongst teenagers and young people and see how they work.

## **Facebook**

Facebook is most popular social networking site in the world currently. The interesting thing is that the site is not only popular amongst teenagers but also people of other ages who have identified it as a key tool for connecting with others.

### **The creation of a Facebook account is relatively simple.**

The first step is to visit “ Facebook. com” through a web browser such as Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox. Visiting the site will provide the platform for you to create an account in the “ sign up” section (American Majority, 2013).

There are several things that one will be required to provide. These include first and last names, email address, gender and birthday. One will also be required to provide a secure password, which will be used to access an account.

Facebook will then prompt you to complete the profile creation through the provision of other personal information such as college or high school and employer. A profile photo will also be required. This profile photo is very crucial, as it is usually the one through which potential friends can use to identify you especially if there are users who share your name (American Majority, 2013).

Gaining friends is easy on Facebook. The site has a search box in which one can search for friends using their names. In addition, Facebook gives one the

portion to add friends from your email addresses. There is also the “ mutual friends” whereby you can identify and add friends who are already friends with a person you have already added as a friend.

When the registration process is complete, one is free to start posting status updates or photos. Status updates are simply statements that update others about your activities or positions, for instance, one could update that he or she is travelling, that one is sick, that one graduated and so on. The platform could also be used to post inspiration quotes and so on. Your friends have the ability to comment on or like the status through the icons that appear beside the update.

Facebook also gives one an opportunity to post pictures and “ tag’ people to the picture. One again, friends have the ability to comment on these pictures.

Facebook is also used to post links. For instance, one may visit a different website and come across a publication or video that he may want to share with their friends. One can simply copy and paste the URL of this site and post it on Facebook as a status update from where friends can click on the link and access the video itself (American Majority, 2013).

## **Twitter**

This is another social networking site which just like Facebook has gained enormous popularity in recent years. The official definition on the site is “ Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co-worker to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent messages. People write short updates, often called ‘ tweets” of 140 characters or fewer. These messages are posted to you profile or your blog, sent to your followers, and

are searchable on Twitter search (<http://www.twitter.com>).

Just like Facebook, the creation of an account on Twitter is relatively easy. One simply has to go to the “Twitter.com” and click on the “Get Started-Join” icon.

The successful creation of an account is subject to the provision of key personal information like full names, a username of one choosing, a password and finally an email address.

Unlike Facebook whose major mode of interaction is through friend requests, Twitter allows one to “follow” others. Following someone means that you can access their tweets including pictures and links. One can also access their personal information including their short bio (Wylie, 2010).

One’s followers can reply to their tweets or better yet “retweet” the post. Retweeting is simply posting again, what another person has already posted so that you can share it with your followers, for example and at the same time indicate the original person who posted it.

The management of a Twitter account is very easy. One can simply alter their personal settings or profile by clicking on the two respective icons that appear on the user’s homepage.

## **Instagram**

This is another social site that has gained wide popularity in recent years particularly among teenagers. Its popularity rose so quickly that it attracted the attention of another social networking giant, Facebook that bought the site for a whopping one million dollars. Instagram has been applauded for being straightforward and simple.

Unlike other social sites, Instagram is mainly dedicated to the sharing of

photos between friends who like Twitter “ follow each other”.

The main mode of assessing Instagram is through smartphones, which are very popular with the young people currently. It is currently available on three major operation systems, and these are Android, IOS and Windows. However, Instagram can also be assessed through computers (Schryver, 2013).

The creation of an Instagram account, unlike other social networking sites, involves downloading the Instagram application, which is available from many online stores accessible through smartphones. The application gives one an opportunity to create an account after provision of personal information such as full names, birthdays and so on.

Once an account is registered, one can search for friends of family members and “ follow” them. Following them allows one to have access to their picture posts.

When posting a picture, one can choose to have an accompanying caption or post it without any caption; followers have the ability to “ like” the picture and leave comments on it.

The site constantly monitors photos posted, and user who posts any unethical or immoral things such as nude pictures receives a warning from the site’s support or worse yet have their account closed.

The site also has a specific feature known as ‘ filters’ that enable one to make changes to a certain photo to be posted. Tapping on a particular Filter enables one to adjust the picture and, for instance, make appear like was taken 50 years ago, like it was shot in black and white, like it was taken out of a scrapbook and so on.

## **Tumblr**

This is a relatively new and emerging site. This site can be considered to a kind of a cross between another major site Twitter and mini blog. The site is a streaming scrapbook of photos, texts, audio and video clips ((Schryver, 2013)).

One simply creates an account at "tumblr.com." The users create a short blog known as "tumblelogs" and follows similar blogs created by other users. The interesting thing about these blogs is that they are viewable by anyone who is online if the user chooses the blog to be public.

This site is very popular among teenagers since they can use it to share musings, videos, photos or general things that they find funny with friends.

This site is hugely unlimited and, therefore; it is very easy for kids to find offensive content such as pornography. In addition, unless the user creates a second profile, the first profile is usually open to the public.

One again, Tumblr allows reblogging or reposting of other people's posts meaning that one's posts can appear on thousands of other people's pages which is potentially dangerous if it contains sensitive information.

## **Vine**

This is a social media application that is also very recent and has been gaining a lot of popularity. It is an application that allows users to post and watch six-second video clips posted by other people (Schryver, 2013).

**The application is owned by Twitter, and the registration process is simple after one downloads the application.**

One primary issue of concern about Vine regards user privacy. Unlike other forms of social media which allows users to choose how much and with



whom to share, all the posts, accounts followed and comments made on videos are all-public by default.

**Another thing to note is that it is relatively easy to search for inappropriate content on this site.**

As observed, there are very many social networking sites of various forms that give users a lot of freedom. It is crucial that parents keenly monitor their child's activities on social networking to prevent any form of misuse.

As mentioned earlier, one of the ways of doing this is to create a personal site yourself. For instance, a parent can create a Facebook or a Twitter account. If they are unable to create an account themselves, they can ask for help from their children. The parents could then use their own accounts to track and monitor their children's accounts. Kids will be inclined to have better online behaviors if for instance they have their parents following them on twitter where any misbehavior can be tracked (Mcafee, 2014).

Another crucial thing is to have a sincere talk with the children especially the younger ones. Kids will always have a tendency to share various forms of information and make various connections. The kids should be made to understand that having a profile on social networking sites is like providing a window to one's own lives. They should be made to understand even when using social sites; they are required to protect their reputation and privacy (Mcafee, 2014).

In this regard, parents should discuss with their kids what is appropriate to share and what is inappropriate to be shared online.

Parents should also limit the time children spend on social media especially for addictive sites such as Facebook and Twitter (Mcafee, 2014).

Parents should also advise children to be aware of individuals whom they meet online and who they do not know. They may think that they are friends but may in the end prove to be online sexual predators or bullies (Mcafee, 2014).

Parents should constantly visit their children's pages and monitor any inappropriate postings. If they come across any posts that are inappropriate, they should tell them to take them down and make them understand why it is wrong to post such things.

In addition, parents should also ensure that the personal information shared is not one that poses a risk to the family. For instance, parents should ensure that kids do not reveal all things such as full names, schools, street address and so on.

However, the best way to monitor the behavior of children in regards to their online activities is to teach them to be responsible and realize that their activities on social media have various implications and when misused could lead to serious consequences.

## **References**

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#### Websites

<http://www.facebook.com>

<http://www.twitter.com>

<http://tumblr.com>

<http://vine.com>

<http://instagram.com>