

Issues problems of using social networking sites

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



Issues/Problems of using social networking sites Katina Billingsley Comp129
April 4, 2013 The internet has a greater impact on people today than ever before. It has been a constant source of news, entertainment, and education for users around the world for more than twenty years. However, the most revolutionary of its technologies, social media, did not achieve mainstream popularity until about ten years ago. As a result of this new development, Facebook, Twitter, and similar services are becoming the most visited destinations on the internet. These websites allow users to quickly and easily share pictures, links, ideas and messages with other users. The question is do these self-proclaimed social networking tools actually encourage human healthy human interaction? The evidence suggests that they do. These services, through a combination of accessibility, simplicity, and intuitive design promote positive social behavior by encouraging interaction among friends, relatives, and coworkers. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is " a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2. 0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (p. 61). As a result of the developments, the manner in which the majority if internet users were forced to use email, instant messages services, or obscure message board posts in order to interact with one another. However, due to the emergence of these new communication forums, users can now share messages, pictures, and links almost instantly. Despite the accessibility, shallow learning curve and simplicity these sites offer, users must consider the overall impact their online social activities have on their offline social circles. What effect does spending time on these websites have on real-world

relationships? According to survey data reported by Raine, Purcell and Smith (2011), " 33% of...internet-using active group members say the internet has had a major impact on their ability to find groups that match their interests" (para. 4) When people can easily connect with other individuals who hold similar interests, increased participation in group activities is a natural result. Gone are the days in which hobbyists with obscure interests were relegated to pursuing their passion in solitude, trolling local hobby shops, or paying for newspaper listings. With groups reflecting nearly every possible interest imaginable, social media sites allow users to find an online niche where they can swap stories, techniques, and even coordinate social events with nothing more than internet access and a computer. So does spending more time in front of the computer mean an individual has less time to pursue interests? According to Raine, " 46% of the internet users who are active in groups say the internet has helped them be active in more groups than would otherwise be the case" (2011). This indicates that just under half of social media site users derive some form of social benefit through the use of these sites. Whether that benefit is due to site accessibility or design remains to be seen; however recent research has indicated it can be achieved intentionally through the structure of the website. According to Keenan and Shiri (2009), " Facebook encourages sociability by creating a comfortable, private and familiar social environment. This is accomplished in several ways: using legal names; restricted profile access; social desktop environment; and simple media interface" (p. 443). Keenan and Shiri's research suggests that Facebook users are more inclined to use the site to converse with friends because it mimics traditional offline social settings in an online environment.

This simplicity and commonality between our online and offline worlds is likely one of the largest factors that has enticed Facebook's more than 600 million users. (MSNBC, 2011, para. 1) With the rise of online social networks, the question must be asked whether users who spend large amounts of time with these sites fulfill their basic psychological need for membership in groups. Are online social networks representative of those formed through offline relationships? Perhaps; however, in order to understand the similarities and differences between these two types of social networks, an in-depth examination is necessary. According to Dunbar, "the expected size of social groups in humans, based on our big brains, should be about 150"(Fowler, 2009, p. 247). This information indicates that, regardless of how popular a person is, the human brain only has the capacity to form relationships with approximately 150 other people. These 150 people are not necessarily closely tied to that individual either. What conclusion can we draw from these findings? That, despite occurring in different environments, online social networks tend to follow the same rules and limitations found in offline circles. Therefore, if both types of networks naturally gravitate towards the same social structure we can conclude that social media site users are deriving at least some of the same benefits from these sites as from traditional social networks, specifically the sense of community that accompanies membership in a group. ----- [2].

In contrast people believe they have more interests [3]. Research was conducted by Dunbar