

Assignment 3: voyeurism or narcissism

Sociology



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Prof's Voyeurism and Narcissism in Social Networking. Social networking has become one of the most important things to be studied in the science of sociology – it is an emergent field of human interaction that acts in entirely novel and interesting ways. For one thing, it provides new forms of social interaction that have yet to be fully understood. But if one examines the structure of social networking's most popular site, facebook, it becomes apparent that it exists simply to fulfill two desires in its populace: voyeurism and narcissism. Everything about Facebook's design highlights these two issues.

The most apparent thing about Facebook is that it allows for, or even encourages, voyeuristic behavior based on its structure. "To Creep," as in to observe scrumptiously, has recently been added to the Oxford English Dictionary, a new meaning that it gained mostly through use of the slang phrase, "to Facebook creep," which means to learn about someone on Facebook without their knowledge (OED online). Everything about Facebook's design encourages this usage: its default settings allow friends of friends to observe each other's profile, so that one can observe things about people one has possibly never met. Furthermore, there is no way to know who is reading your profile, to observe someone on facebook is an entirely one-way street, almost the very definition of voyeurism. Furthermore, the most available information, pictures, is the best able to satisfy a voyeuristic fetish, which is probably why facebook has endeavored to keep photos so integral to its usage.

While one side of the structure of facebook is entirely outwards looking, and voyeuristic, the otherside is entirely inwards looking, and narccisistic. The structure of one's own profile, especially after the change to a "timeline
<https://assignbuster.com/assignment-3voyeurism-or-narcissism/>

format” makes everything seem as if it circles around you. When you log on, your friends comments all appear in news feeds on your home page, which makes it seem that everything that they do in some way relates to you. This has grown even more insidious with the “ timeline” feature, where everything that has ever happened to you is arranged chronologically on your facebook profile in a highly searchable, scrollable manner. This makes all the interactions you have with other people on facebook seem like merely a part of your life, it makes other people’s actions towards you subservient to your existence. For instance, if you entered into or ended a relationship, or someone tagged you in a comment, that all becomes solely about you, rather than about the interaction between you and other people.

Facebook has long been seen as a way to increase interaction between people, but this actually is not its fundamental purpose at least from its design. The design does not encourage interaction, in which two people are on equal footing, but rather encourages narcissism and voyeurism, both practices where others are put in a lower station than one’s self. This is an interesting sociological phenomenon that should be observed more closely over time.

Works Cited

OED Online. “ Creep: definition” (2012).