

# Risks

## Privacy

A concern with social media is the privacy which it offers, or should I say lack of, as a lot of apps watch what the user does on their phones even when the app is either closed or in the background. As most people knew that this was happening, they were happy to accept this when Apple released their new iOS 14.5 update earlier this year. However, this change has only happened on iOS devices and not Android devices. This gave the user the choice of if they want an app (such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc) to track their phones' activity across other companies' apps and websites. In early May 2021, data was released which showed that 96% of the people who got the update did not let the apps track their phones, such as seeing what the user searches and then uses that data and gives targeted adverts. Another point with privacy is if you willing share an image or video with someone, it can be shared or forwarded to someone or group without your permission. Therefore, this becomes a breach of the original sender's privacy. Once the information has been shared to others which they did not want to have it, they loss control of that information and there is a risk of it being use in a different way than originally intended. One of the biggest risks that comes with privacy around social media is some people have very weak passwords for their accounts, for example password1234. If their account gets hacked they can then use your name and information from those platforms to then potentially commit crimes, such as identity fraud, seeking money from friends and family by acting as you.

## Productivity Loss

Productivity loss is also a risk that comes with social media as it can affect everyone whether you are a student at school/university, or at work, and social media is the main reason for this as it easily accessible from your phone, or computer and when on social media what feels like 10-15 mins may actually be 45 to an hour. This can have an impact on students as it can affect their marks and concentration, and businesses as an article from Business Today stated that 32% (or 2.35 hours) of employees' time in the day is going towards looking at social media platforms. This ends up creating a domino effect, where productivity is going down due to the time spent on social media, creating a loss in profits for businesses. In an effect to help reduce the impact that this has on a business's work force some have imposed a restriction on the computers and Wi-Fi, to block access to these websites and apps.

## Vigilantism

Vigilantism is probably one of if not the worst risks with social media, as vigilantism means to take the law into your own hands without legal authority. And that is what happened when someone on Reddit created a subreddit (of which initially had a small membership that grew and finally reached 3000 people) with the single aim to find the person who set off a bomb on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2013 during the running of the annual Boston Marathon. The bomb blast was responsible for the death of 3 people and injured hundreds, all of whom were in the wrong place at the wrong time. A couple of days after the bombing the FBI released some images of the suspect, from these images and research the subreddit believed they had

found the suspect, Sunil Tripathi a 22 year old student who had been missing most of March that year. Then one of Sunil's classmates tweeted that she also thought the image of the suspect was Sunil too. After these unofficial revelations people tried to contact Sunil's family, by leaving angry messages on his Facebook page, and calling ABC News. On the same day the two people who actually set the bomb off at the Boston marathon (Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev) killed a police officer. The following day someone from the subreddit decided to tweet that the Boston Police Department had named Sunil Tripathi and Mike Mulugeta as people they were looking for, which caught the attention of the mainstream media. From this the BBC named Sunil Tripathi as the standout suspect on social media before the FBI named the real suspects to be Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev. Unfortunately, the impact of all the attention and mis-information took its toll and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April Sunil was found dead from drowning. While this is one example of vigilantism through social media it is not the only one and will most likely continue not just in United States of America but also all around the world.

## Conclusion

These examples of the opportunities, risks, and choices shows that social media has a huge impact of the modern day society as it is a part of a lot of people daily routine. By this I mean that at some point of the day they go onto their phones and use some sort of social media platform. An example of this is in January 2021 Statista says that it is estimated 4.2 billion people in the world use social media. This just shows that social media whether it be good or bad, create opportunities, have risks or choices, has a big part to play in modern day society.

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