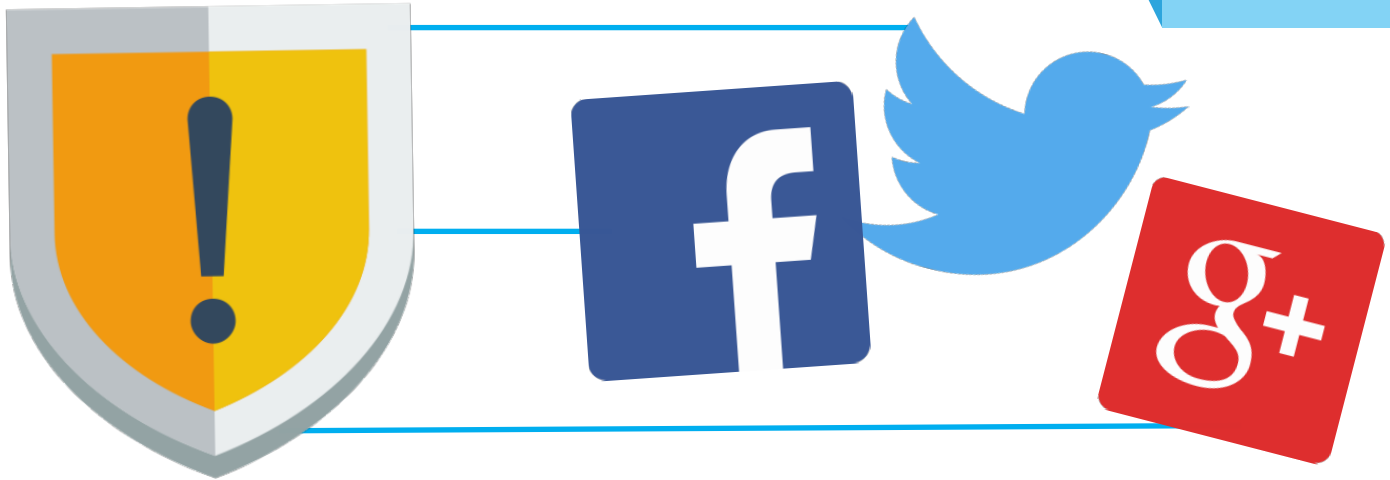


# ANTI-SOCIAL NETWORKING

RHEA  
THAKORE



If you asked someone 10 years ago what the term social networking meant you would get a very different answer than the one that you would get today. With a rapidly increasing number of people who have accounts on websites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (and more unknown platforms like Snapchat, LinkedIn, Skype, Tumblr, Vine, and WhatsApp), it is no surprise that this new technology is quickly taking over our natural method of communication. It seems as if our need to be able to communicate face to face with our friends and family, a method which we are so accustomed to, is depreciating, while the need to communicate through platforms such as Facebook are increasing. Now, what is so special about something like Facebook? And why is everyone so obsessed with it? With over 1.35 billion monthly active users, Facebook is the most used social networking site, with users ranging from the ages of 6 or 7 to those who are in their seventies, eighties and nineties. While there is an evident fondness and appreciation for different platforms of social media within our population, it is also important to understand the negative repercussions of these websites we think so dearly of.

To begin, an asset of social networking is that it spreads information faster than any other form of media, whether it be newspapers, magazines or TV. Over 50% of people learn about breaking news from social media and 65% of traditional media reporters and editors use sites like Facebook and LinkedIn for story research, and 52% use Twitter. This being said, social media also ables the spread of unreliable and false information. For example, Shashank Tripathi, tweeting as @ComfortablySmug, spread false information during the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy by tweeting that the New York Stock Exchange was flooding and that the power company would cut off electricity to all of Manhattan; this bogus information was picked up by national news outlets including CNN and the Weather Channel and resulted in mayhem across the state of New York and the rest of the United States. (Transition sentence to next paragraph help please??)

However, despite the unreliability of information on social networking websites, it is believed that largest con of social networking is the fact that social networking portals enable people to rely on websites and apps in order to talk to their loved ones. Although it is agreed that powerful new technologies provide great benefits, however, like stated previously, they also change the way we live, and not always in ways that everyone likes. An example is the spread of air conditioning. Air conditioning is a technology 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 neighbours rather than going indoors to stay cool and watch TV. This analogy is clearly transcribable to the topic of social networking as it is a technology that is well liked by the population, however, there are times when we do think back to the days that we would go and talk to someone face to face rather than sending them a Facebook message or a Snapchat.

By saying this, it is important to understand that social networking is an important tool. With its popularity growing day by day, there are always new ways to use it. Whether it be in the classroom or to run awareness campaigns, social networking is a means which gets the job done. However, it is important to understand the negatives of social networking as well, specifically the concept of being anti-social as a cause of social networking websites. Use social networking as a tool to aid you in your relationships, but do not rely on it fully and cut off your other senses fully. Keep social networking social, and do not turn it into anti-social networking.

