

De La Salle University  
College of Liberal Arts  
Department of Philosophy

A Major Requirement of Science, Technology, and Society 2 Course

A Study on the behavior of DLSU Students regarding internet privacy and how they practice it

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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Description of the Issue**

Starting from grade school, children are taught that technology is the application of science; that its purpose is to help or solve problems and to make people's lives easier. Seldom do teachers talk about the negative effects and connotations of technology. The truth is, technology is value free. It is neither good nor bad. Its value depends on the user and how he uses it.

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were made with the purpose to bridge people from all around the world. The aim of each of these are quite similar. That is to decrease the cleavages between different people and to promote socialization and communication. Barriers of time and space are no longer a problem. With social media, people are able to share their experiences, thoughts, feelings, and moments instantaneously even when the person they are talking to are on the other side of the planet. The problem with this is that most of the "socialization" and "communication" users do on the internet are in fact gathered and stored within databases of each social media company. Once you post something on the internet, it is almost impossible to eradicate it. Moreover, these Social Medias over time have created a void between what is public and private.

A new social system has been materialized where in the perceptions of privacy of the past may no longer be applicable. In order to understand the issue, we should define what private and public means. According to Merriam-Webster, private is defined as "intended for or restricted to the use of a particular person, group or class" while public is defined as "exposed to general view: open" (n.d.).

With these definitions given, one can see a clear distinction between the two but due to the changing culture caused by social media, this clear line has become more and more blurred. Combine that with social media sites encouraging users to provide information, this creates a rift between users on whether they are safe online or not. Online privacy is a very touchy subject and the group aims to do research on how DLSU students perceive this topic and how open they are to sharing their information.

### **B. Stakeholder Analysis**

#### **1. Users**

a. Digital natives

The people born during the boom of digital technologies. The users classified under digital natives can easily adapt to new emerging technologies and understand how different forms of technologies can affect their lives. These types of users are the main focus of this study.

b. Digital immigrants

The people born before the boom of digital technologies. The users classified under digital immigrants have a difficult time adjusting to ever changing forms of technologies and are not able to understand the impact of these new technologies in their lives clearly. Although these users are not the focus of this study, they are still related to the issue of information sensitivity.

2. Companies

a. Service providers

Companies that provide services categorized as “free” in exchange for access to the users personal information. These companies include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other similar social media companies that store, analyze or make use of the personal information provided by its users.

b. Information consumer companies

Companies that make use of personal information of users for different purposes. Some companies use personal information for advertising purposes, whilst other companies use them for research and analysis purposes.

**C. Research Problem and Questions**

Research Problem

The awareness of students from De La Salle University - Manila towards information sensitivity in an online media and its impact on their lives.

Research Questions

1. Are the students from DLSU-M aware of the difference between public information and private information?
2. What do the students of DLSU-M classify as private information and public information?
3. Are the students from DLSU-M aware, unaware, care, or do not care about the consequences of sharing private information?

## **D. Data Gathering Method**

### **1. Review of Related Literature**

#### **Public Perception of Privacy and Security**

The group researched on the public's perception of privacy and security after the infamous Edward Snowden leak. The report done in the US states that most are aware of the government monitoring their communication and there is a concern on how they have lost control on how their personal information is collected. Majority of the respondents also agreed that they find it hard to remove false information about them online. There is also a general lack of distrust among them regarding the government and advertisers accessing data they share on social networking sites.(Madden,2014)

#### **Privacy**

Trepete (2012) defines privacy as a basic human need. He said that privacy is defined as people having their own secrets and own personal connections with their family and friends to themselves, and not to everyone else. If a person were to lose his personal identity and connections to others, it might lead to psychological problems. In addition to that, in Westin's privacy theory, "Developmental theories have hardly ever considered the importance of privacy for the development of individuality" (as cited in Trepete, 2012, p.223). While according to Rapoza (2010), privacy is something people want even though they post personal information online.

In order to set a standard meaning of privacy in this research, the researchers concluded that privacy is an important and fundamental condition that humans need. With the advent of social networking sites, the definition of privacy

over time has changed. Even so, humans still find privacy as an important factor of their lives. Just as Papacharissi (2011) said, “just because people are adopting tools that radically reshape their relationship to privacy does not mean they are interested in giving up their privacy.”

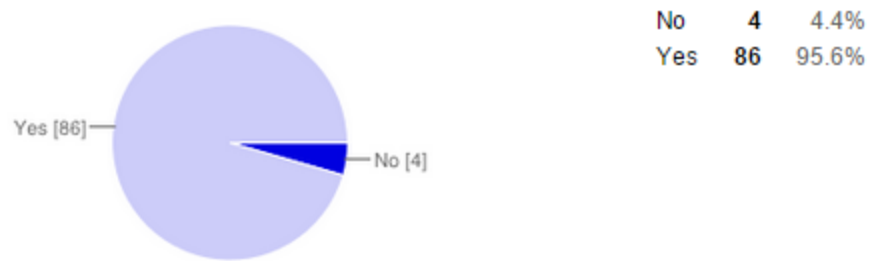
## **2. Survey/Questionnaires**

The researchers used online survey forms to gather data for their research. Google Forms was the tool used for this because it is the most convenient and it is easier to use especially for most students of De La Salle University. According to Merriam-Webster, its meaning is “to ask a question or a series of questions in order to gather information about what most people do or think about something” (n.d.). It is one of the most common data gathering methods most people use. Surveys are also used in gathering data from several people as representatives of the whole population, which in this case is the De La Salle University students (Sincero, n.d.).

The first part of the survey asked the participant if he/she is from DLSU it is to ensure that all respondents are from DLSU-M. The types of questions used by the group in the second part of the survey were personal but optional meaning only the ID number and college were required to be answered. This was to test the participants on how willing they are to give out their information online given that most of the questions used were shady at best and some information can even be used for identity theft. The third part of the survey asked the participants general questions about their social media use on how they use it, why they use it and what they share with it.

## **II. Data Presentation/Results**

The researchers distributed the online survey form through google forms. The first part of the survey is to filter the respondents to students that are currently studying in De La Salle University (DLSU). The second part of the research is an experiment in order to know if the respondents are informed and/or practicing what they know about privacy threats. The purpose of the last part of the survey is to know if the respondents are active in social networking sites, and about their knowledge and view on privacy threats.



Graph 1: Summary of answers for question “Are you currently studying in De La Salle University?”

The survey gathered 90 respondents all in all, but not all the data gathered will be used and analyzed for this research since four of the respondents are not from DLSU. The remaining 86 respondents will be used as the set of students to better understand the population of DLSU for this research.

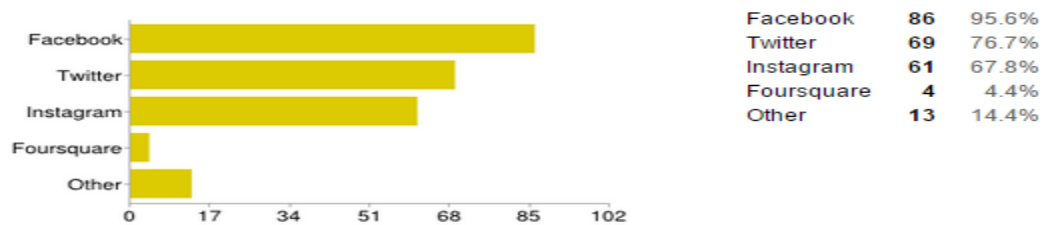
In the second part of the survey, the researchers only set two questions as required to answer by the respondent. Namely the ID number and college the student is from. The google form clearly sets an asterisk (\*) in red beside the questions that are required to answer but during the distribution of the survey form, most of the respondents asked if they are required to answer all the questions in the second part of the survey. The researchers simply answered back with “double check the survey form.” This shows that some of the respondents are in doubt and might not have clearly read the survey form.

The results of the second part of the survey shows that 49 of the 86 respondents gave their full name. They simply followed the example given by the researchers in the google form while 51 of the respondents gave their nickname. For the ID number required to be answered, two gave their ID numbers with only the year or the first three numbers of the ID number (113, 114) while the rest gave their ID numbers in whole (11350000).

In terms of asking for their likes and personal information, 82 of the respondents answered the range of their allowance. One of the respondents did not answer what her favorite color is. 44 of the respondents gave the name of their pets. In terms of personal information, 70 out of 86 gave their place of birth. 71 of the respondents provided the city they currently live in.

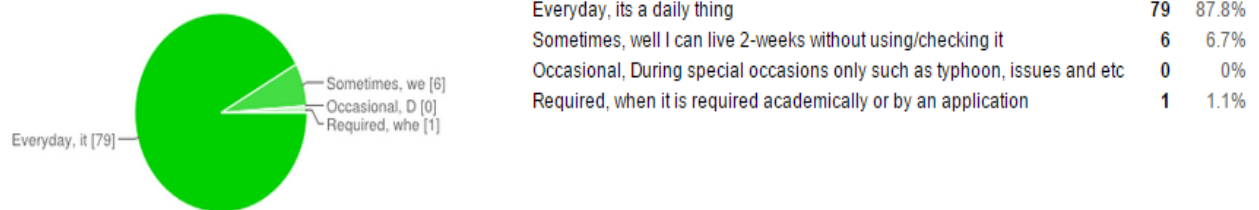
The results for the third part of the survey shows that users have different opinions and different uses of social networking sites.

#### What Social Networking Sites do you use?



Graph 2: Summary of answers for question “What Social Networking Site do you use?”

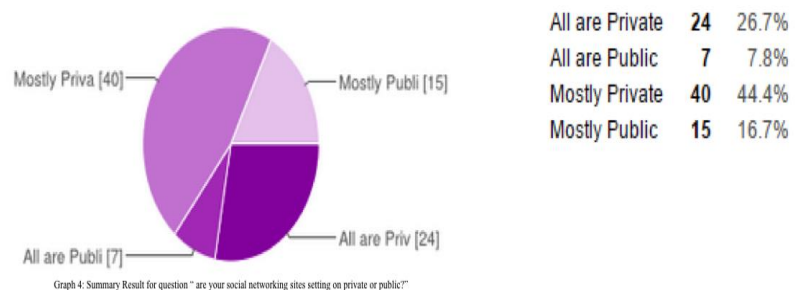
#### Are you active on these Social Networking Sites?



Graph 3 : Summary of answers for question “Are you active on these SNS?”

The social networking sites that most of the respondents have is Facebook, with 95.6% of the respondents using it, and Twitter (76.6%) comes next followed by Instagram (67.8%) (See Graph 2). 87.8% of the respondents use these social networking sites everyday (See Graph 3) and 44.4% of the respondents’ accounts are mostly in private while 26.7% answered that their accounts are all in private (See Graph 4). On the other hand, 86.7% of the respondents use their social networking sites (SNS) to read other peoples’ posts and 85.6% of the respondents use their SNS to check for important announcements (See Graph 5). For the most of the respondents, the main reason for having a sns account is to connect with their friends. 91.1% respondents answered this (See Graph 6) while the least reason for using SNS sites (7.8%) is to get attention, followed by peer pressure (10%), and other reasons with 12.2%.

#### Are your Social Networking Sites settings on private or public?



Graph 4: Summary Result for question “are your social networking sites setting on private or public?”

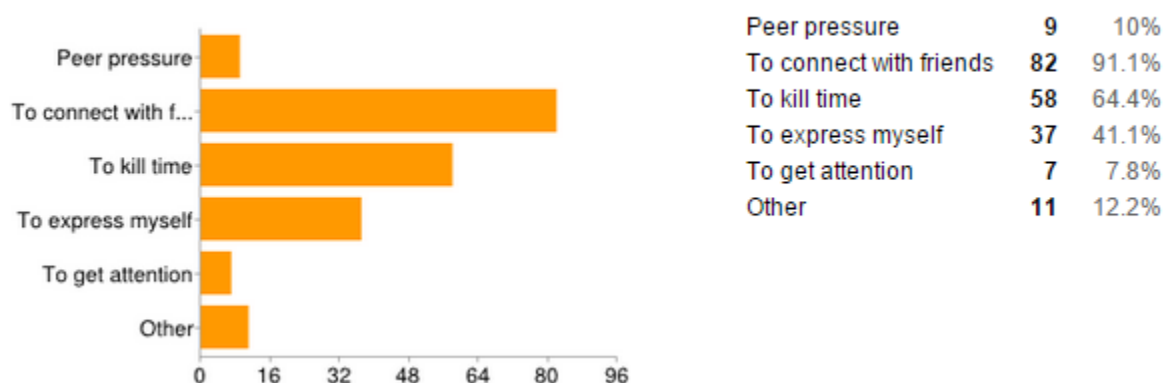


### What do you mostly do on the Social Networking Sites



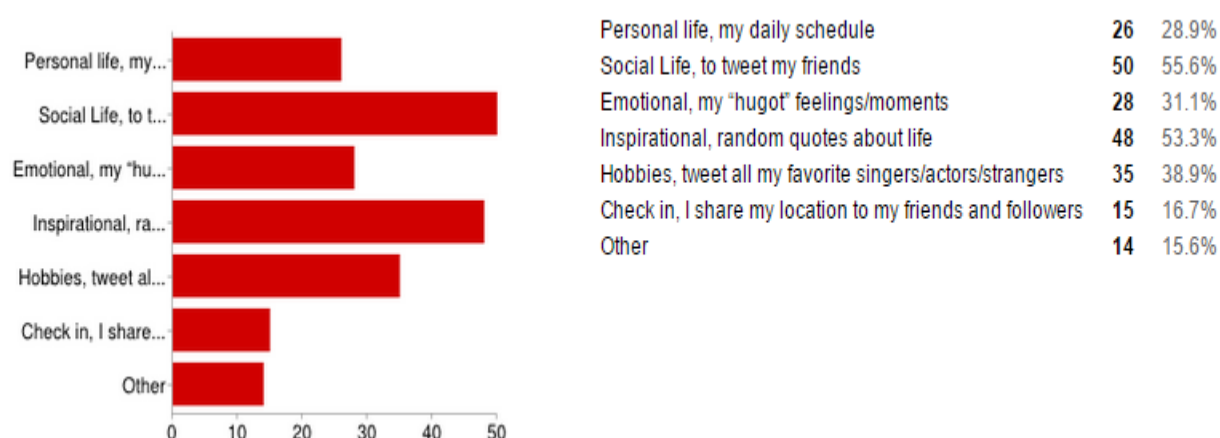
Graph 5: Summary of answers for question “What do you mostly do on SNS?”

### Why do you use Social Networking Sites?



Graph 6 : Summary of answers for question “What do you use SNS?”

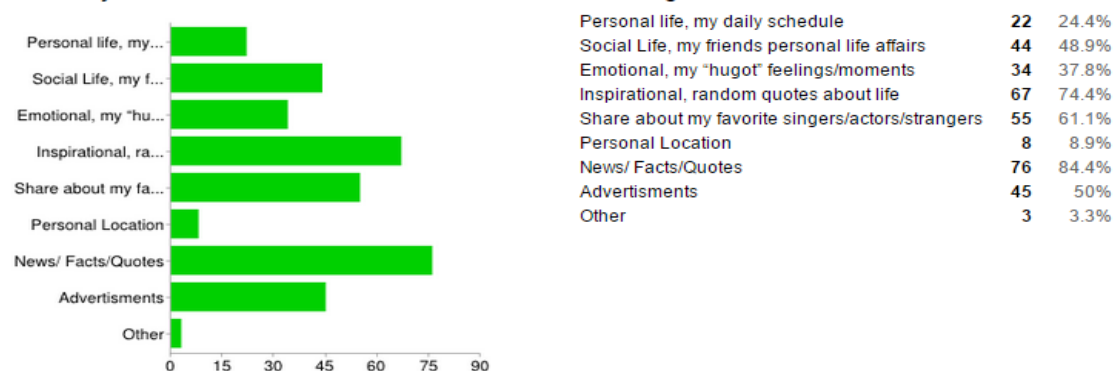
### What do you normally Share/Post on these Social Networking sites?



Graph 7: Summary of answers for question “What do normally Share/Post on these SNS?”

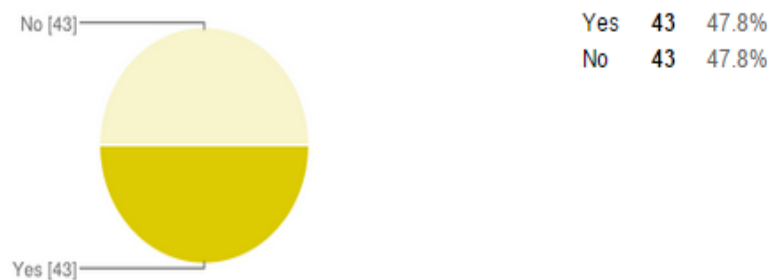
The questions on what the respondents mostly do on the social networking sites and what should be shared on SNS sites show that most of the respondents use these SNS sites to tweet/share to their friends (55.6%); some use SNS sites to read inspirational quotes (53.3%) (*see graph 7*); 84.4% of the respondents think that facts/news/quotes should be the one shared on SNS sites; personal location (8.9%) and others (3.3%) come last (*see graph 8*), and when it comes to their comfort ability in sharing personal information, the result for this questions is a tie in 47.8% (*see graph 9*).

**What do you think should be/ can be shared on Social Networking Sites?**



Graph 8: Summary of answers for question “What do you think should be/can be shared on SNS?”

**Are you comfortable with sharing personal (issues, hobbies, daily schedules) information online?**

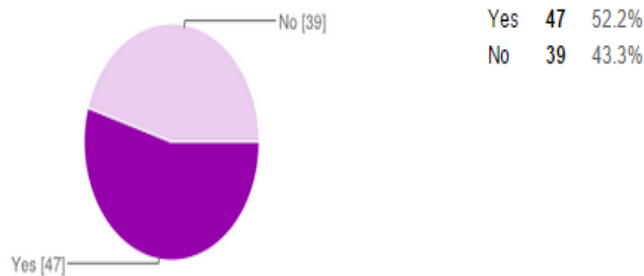


Graph 9: Summary of answers for question “Are you comfortable with sharing personal information online?”

Furthermore, the survey form asks the respondents regarding their knowledge on security threats and privacy settings on social networking sites. The respondents (52.2%) think that if their SNS sites are in private, then only their followers/friends can view their

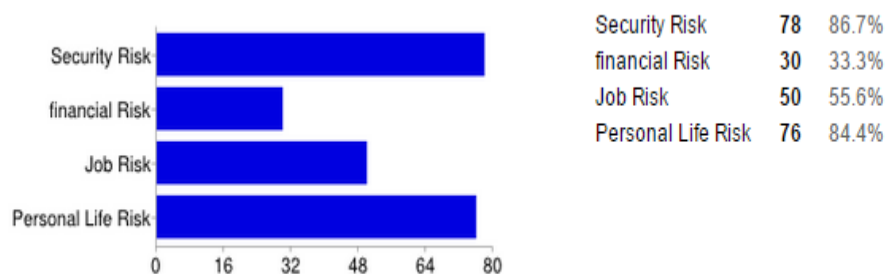
personal information while 43.3% of the respondents think otherwise (See Graph 10). Lastly, 86.7% of the respondents answered that they are aware of security threats; the least security threat/risk they know about is the financial threat with only 33.3% of the respondents answered that they know about it (See Graph 11).

**If your settings are on private, do you think that your information is secure and can be viewed by your friends and followers only?**



Graph 10: Summary of answers for question “If your setting are on private, do you think that your information is secure and can be viewed by your friends and followers only?”

**Are you aware that sharing/posting about your personal life and other stuff on SNS can lead to threats on the ff.?**



Graph 11: Summary of answers for question “Are you aware that sharing/posting about your personal life and other stuff on SNS can lead to threats on the ff.?”

Lastly, the researchers asked the respondents on how they can protect themselves from these privacy threats and what mediums they think can be used to increase the awareness on privacy threats. The respondents mostly answered self-control and being responsible on what a person posts on social networking sites. Other suggestions on how to increase the awareness on privacy threats include opening seminars, and using the internet (SNS) to relay more information on privacy and security threats and as to how users can practice protecting themselves from these threats.

### **III. Discussion**

It is quite humorous how the second portion of the survey is an irony of the result of the third portion of the survey. As stated above, the purpose of the second portion of the survey is to know how willing a person is in giving out his personal information while the third portions tests the person's knowledge about internet privacy, its risks and threats, as well as his perception of how private he is on the internet.

The results shows that half of the respondents said that they are not comfortable in sharing their private lives but nevertheless, they gave out their personal information so easily on the second portion of the survey. Most of the respondents' answers in the survey contradict each other, not because the respondents answered the survey carelessly but rather because of their perception and implementation of the said topic.

It is so easy to say and to believe that privacy does exist on the internet. Social media users are fooled to believe that once they turn on their private settings on their social media accounts, they are already "private" when in fact, whatever has been posted, shared, liked, captured, etc. are permanently stored within the company's database/cloud. As shown in the survey, most if not all of the respondents are aware of the risks/threats of posting in social media accounts but ironically more than half of them believe that they are secure and safe in these social media websites. The contradiction of these two proves how most people today know about privacy and risks but cannot fathom its application in real life.

Since the respondents of the survey are current Lasallian students, it can be assumed that the generation of the respondents grew up in the technological era. This would mean that the rapid advancement of technology had already existed when they were born. These students grew up having the internet present in half of their lives. In the past, it was much easier to become private and know what should be private or not, but since the boom of social media sites, the line between private and public has increasingly become blurred. This statement can be proven on the way the respondents have answered the questions. The survey shows that the respondents know what privacy means and its risks. Furthermore, many of them stated that they are private or want to be private when it comes to their personal life, offline and online, but at the same time they have shared/posted their personal life, social life, schedules, and locations on their social

media accounts. It seems as though the current generation know and understand what “privacy” is but do not apply it in their lives. They know the risks of posting/sharing personal information but are not truly aware of the impact of it. They know these things in theory but are not good in applying them in their lives.

#### **IV. Policy Recommendations**

The group come up with the solution of creating a website to increase awareness and teach the students on how they can protect themselves against privacy, security and identity theft. The website is entitled “what you don’t know about privacy” and you can access it with the link <https://whatyoudontknowaboutprivacy.wordpress.com/>.

The website contains the following:

- articles
- poster/pictures
- videos
- links
- facts and figures

With the creation of this website, the group does not only aims to bring awareness to social networking users about their consumption of social networking websites, but also give real life examples and social media experiment videos that will help show the true impact and consequence of lack of internet privacy.

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## Appendix

### A. Survey Questionnaire

*All questions with \* are required*

#### A. Introduction and Control of Respondents

Good day! We are College of Computer Studies Students from De La Salle University-Manila currently taking up Society, Science and Technology (SOCTEC2). One of the requirements of the course is for us to conduct a survey to support our research. It would be a big help to us if you could answer the survey as honestly as possible.

1. Are you currently studying in De La Salle University? (This survey is only for the students who are currently studying in De La Salle University, If you are not one, thank you very much for the effort and we hope to work with you next time.)\*
  - a. Yes (*continue to B*)
  - b. No (*end of survey*)

#### B. Experimental Part and Control of Test Samples

Good day! We are College of Computer Studies Students from De La Salle University-Manila currently taking up Society, Science and Technology (SOCTEC2). One of the requirements of the course is for us to conduct a survey to support our research. It would be a big help to us if you could answer the survey as honestly as possible.

1. Name  
Last, First Name M. (e.g. Lapidario, Marielle B.)  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. ID Number\*  
(e.g. 11345600)  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Favorite color
  - a. Red
  - b. Orange

- c. Yellow
- d. Green
- e. Blue
- f. Indigo
- g. Violet
- h. White
- i. Black

4. Course

(BS-Information Systems)

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5. Name of pet

(if any; if many please use a comma to separate each name)

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6. Place of birth

(e.g. Quezon City)

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7. City currently living in

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8. Allowance Per WEEK

- a. below 500
- b. 500- 1000
- c. 1000-2000
- d. 2000-5000
- e. 5000+

**C. Survey Proper**

The information that you just provided is part of our experiment for our research about The View of DLSU students on personal information and how they are practicing this. Again, the survey results will be confidential and will be used for academic purposes only, especially the personal information that you just provided (if you provided one).

If any problems/questions/concerns occurred after taking this survey, please don't hesitate to email us:



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1. What Social Networking Sites do you use?\*
- a. Facebook
- b. Twitter
- c. Instagram
- d. Foursquare
2. Are you active on these Social Networking Sites?\*
- a. Every day, its a daily thing
- b. Sometimes, well I can live 2-weeks without using/checking it
- c. Occasional, During special occasions only such as typhoon, issues and etc
- d. Required, when it is required academically or by an application
3. Are your Social Networking Sites settings on private or public? \*
- a. All are Private
- b. All are Public
- c. Mostly Private
- d. Mostly Public
4. What do you mostly do on the Social Networking Sites\*
- for others, please write separated by comma
- a. Read post/shares, I just read what other people share
- b. Check, to check important announcements
- c. Share all I want, my post/shares/tweets are more than 50-100k
- d. Like/Favorite/Retweet other people's post
5. Why do you use Social Networking Sites?\*
- for others, please write separated by comma
- a. Peer pressure
- b. To connect with friends
- c. To kill time

- d. To express myself
  - e. To get attention
  - f. others
6. What do you normally Share/Post on these Social Networking sites?\*
- for others, please write separated by comma
- a. Personal life, my daily schedule
  - b. Social Life, to tweet my friends
  - c. Emotional, my “hugot” feelings/moments
  - d. Inspirational, random quotes about life
  - e. Hobbies, tweet all my favorite singers/actors/strangers
  - f. Check in, I share my location to my friends and followers
7. Are you comfortable with sharing personal (issues, hobbies, daily schedules) information online? \*
- a. Yes
  - b. No
8. What do you think should be/ can be shared on Social Networking Sites?\*
- for others, please write separated by comma
- a. Personal life, my daily schedule
  - b. Social Life, my friends personal life affairs
  - c. Emotional, my “hugot” feelings/moments
  - d. Inspirational, random quotes about life
  - e. Share about my favorite singers/actors/strangers
  - f. Personal Location
  - g. News/ Facts/Quotes
  - h. Advertisements
9. If your settings are on private, do you think that your information is secure and can be viewed by your friends and followers only?\*
- a. Yes
  - b. No
10. Are you aware that sharing/posting about your personal life and other stuff on SNS can lead to threats on the ff.?\*

- a. Security Risk
  - b. financial Risk
  - c. Job Risk
  - d. Personal Life Risk
11. How do you/ will you protect yourself from these threats (Security Risk financial Risk, Job Risk, Personal Life Risk, deleted post, government)?\*
- (Open question)
12. What are the other mediums that you think can promote the privacy threats awareness to your colleagues/ other people and the best way you can practice privacy awareness?\*
- (Open question)
13. Realizations/Comments/Suggestions