Discussion 13A

It is no secret that what you do or say on social media can affect you in the job search and many other areas in your life. What advice would you give to your fellow classmates concerning posting personal information (pictures, comments, etc.) on your social media sites.

As a daily Facebook user, I’ve observed that most social media patrons fall into three categories. There are the posters, social butterflies of the digital world which religiously share photos and on-going life updates. Next, there are the reactors who primarily follow the posters and will post on occasion. Finally, there are the observers who, like myself, seldom post content, primarily using social media to check on family, friends, world events, and to search out new memes. Whatever category you fall into, it’s important to remember the possible dangers of posting personal information onto the web.

I know from personal experience that sites like Facebook will never “delete” an account. A user may de-activate their profile, but Facebook will retain a record of all their profile information, pictures, comments, etc… It’s plausible that other social media sites follow the same suit. Also consider that once information is posted publicly on the web, anyone can save a copy that content, whether it be direct download or a screenshot. As such, any content posted to social media should be treated as if it can never fully be removed from the web.

Have you ever created an online account which required you to add password recovery questions? These questions generally go like this: “What is the name of your first pet?” “What is your Mother’s maiden name?” “What is the make/model of your car?” These, and other pieces of personal information, could be gathered by hackers by studying their target’s social media posts, thus allowing them to break into the victim’s other online accounts.

Despite the dangers, it’s also worth mentioning the positive. A regularly updated social media page can serve as a great personal journal. I’ve often imagined what it might be like for a young teenager, one-hundred years from now, to look at their great-great-grand-parent’s Facebook page. It’s possible that social media sites will become a primary tool for genealogical research. On this point, once again consider the permanency of posted content. Not only may your present friends, family, employers, etc... characterize you from your social media posts, but they also might define your life-legacy to individuals in the far future.

Resources:

1. <https://gulfnews.com/opinion/op-eds/the-dangers-of-social-media-that-no-one-likes-to-admit-1.2087285>
2. <https://www.allprodad.com/5-dangers-of-social-media-for-teens>

