If you have never met a person in real life but feel a strong connection to them, could you refer to your relationship as a real “friendship”? One definition of the word friend, as stated by Webster dictionary, is a person who you enjoy or like being with. So, when *only* meeting online, are you really “being with” the other person? We have concluded that this does not fit the definition. This is a mere shallow connection made on a social media platform because you have similar interests. These relationships lack the trials and tribulations that real friends have and persevere through together. Could you rely on your Facebook “friend” when you were in a situation of need? Would they babysit your children for you when you are crunched for time, care for you when you are ill, or even perform a task as simple as coming to see you when you are having a difficult day?

When only conversing online, people could be thousands of miles away from each other. Even if the two persons appear to live similar lives and have common interests, they could never validate what the other person is saying with exact certainty. Catfishing is the term used to refer to this practice; people are deceitful about their personal information especially their identity, but they are suave enough to convince others to believe their lies. To be friends, one of the qualifications is to be knowledgeable of the lifestyle and commonalities of the other person, so that you can make a good and conscientious decision when choosing your friends. Online, you run the risk of not knowing if everything you are told is true, and if your “friend” is actually as trustworthy as they claim to be.

Online, friendships can be dissolved with one click of a mouse and no face-to-face confrontation. One person can simply decide they need to shorten their friend list, and no one else has to agree to their deletions. Friendships are normally ended mutually and not in such an abrupt way, and one would not simply dispose of a friend without feeling some sort of remorse. These online relationships are quite often short lived and are easily replaced.

In contrast to online friendships, a real in-person friendship is one that allows for both parties to have a person they can rely on. It is a person that you are able to confide in and trust with anything. A true friendship is a form of love and affection that can only be achieved when frequent in-person meetings are held. When developing a relationship online, you are limited by the computer's ability to express emotion, like when it uses emojis. Much of the communication is left up to the interpretation of the recipient, and this can affect how one person portrays the relation. Tried and true friendships are enduring and they are valued by both people equally. Our online relationships lack the personable connections needed to match the criteria of being genuine friends.