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**STAGE 2: TEMPLATE & GUIDELINES**

**Introduction**

In the last two decades, technology has been developed rapidly and significantly, which has shifted our world to a new era of information. A lot of big tech companies with their modern services and devices that affect human daily’s activities have emerged, and Facebook is one of those. Facebook has some magnificent benefits that only a small number of users know about. This following article will go over some of the most significant ones.

**My Claim**

In the past decade, Facebook has changed the world in positive ways, including providing a space for promoting the information flow, connecting people regardless of distance and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities.

**Importance**

People might ask themselves: why do we need to know the benefits of using Facebook? Can we just use without knowing it? As being one of the most popular social media platforms, Facebook was accused of contributing multiple negative impacts to human life. With the ubiquity of social media, Shakya and Christakis has shown in their research that “the use of Facebook was negatively associated with well-being” (Shakya and Christakis, 2017). When using in moderations, Facebook would have some redeeming quality for users. Understanding the advantages of using Facebook would eliminate its negative impacts or the chance of becoming its “slave” while allow us to still be able to enjoy it in a healthy way every day.

**Reason 1**

First, Facebook provides an efficient space to share information publicly.

**Details**

The way that Facebook is designed is for supporting the broadcast of information easily between users. Since Facebook is based on users’ social networks, with a simple post on a user’s wall, all the users within the same social group can easily see that post within a minute. And if a post is in public mode, people that are not in the same group on social graph can also view it. Besides informational posts from an individual user, there are also verified groups or pages on Facebook which provides helpful information and knowledge to users such as iFact, Tasty, Samsung, etc. Visiting or following the pages can give users new knowledge while entertaining them in their free time. During the pandemic, Facebook has created their own pages to “support the global public health community’s work to keep people safe and informed during the coronavirus health crisis” (Jin, 2020). Also, in order to improve people’s mental health, Facebook has introduced “Emotional Health, a centralized resource center on the Facebook app with tips and information from leading experts. The resource will be available globally, with locally relevant information from mental health officials” (Jin, 2020). Thanks to those support from Facebook, users can be informed and updated with valid and accurate pandemic information anywhere and anytime. Another feature on Facebook that not many users notice is that Facebook inform the users about the special event dates through their Facebook logo based on their locations such as Fourth of July, Christmas, etc. Not only can users get informed within their countries, but they can also easily access the information around the world through various pages on Facebook.

**Counter-arguments to my reason**

On the other hand, people might think that for them to get updated or informed by Facebook, they must constantly check on posts, which would result in bad performance in school and workplaces. Also, not all information on Facebook is legit or correct since everyone has freedom of speech. This could result in the spread of fake news/misinformation easily.

**Rebuttal**

Users don’t need to constantly check on updated news since Facebook recently has the feature to notify users when new information is posted on Facebook from specific groups or pages that users subscribe or follow. In addition to that, users might know briefly about the content of the post via the notification. From there, they can choose either to read or ignore it. In terms of dealing with fake news/misinformation, Facebook gives users the right to choose a legit source of information and the right to report and eliminate the unverified or incorrect information to Facebook. When Facebook receives a report about falsified or incorrect information from users, there will be a team to work on and resolve them to make sure that no more users can see that information again. In addition, Facebook has its own guidelines and tips for users to spot fake news such as “be skeptical of headlines or look closely at the link or investigate the source or check the evidence” (Facebook’s guidelines).

**Reason 2**

Secondly, expanding users’ social network is one of the strongest Facebook’s features that attracts users, which helps users connect and build a lot of meaningful relationships.

**Details**

The core of Facebook lies in connecting users with their social networks. Facebook has offered an online platform which facilitates the users’ connection with each other and helps them build meaningful friendships. Based on the article “A Brief History of Facebook, Its Major Milestones,” Facebook was originally “to allow Harvard students to use their ‘.edu’ email addresses and photos to connect with other students at the school” (McFadden, 2020). Indeed, Facebook has created a lot of algorithmic features that helps users easier to connect to people that have mutual connections to their friends. Moreover, Facebook has created a feature that allows users to filter by locations, schools, or number of mutual friends to find new friends that have close relation to users. For example, in my personal experience using Facebook, as an international student in the U.S, I was able to connect with other Vietnamese student to chat and share with each other tips for studying and personal experiences studying abroad. Facebook has broken the physical distance issue and helps build strong and meaningful relationships as well as maintain those relationships, especially during the pandemic. Truly, Facebook’s chat or video call features allows users to virtually meet and talk to each other’s. For example, international students who are living far from home like me can communicate with their families anytime and anywhere. Not only Facebook’s communication features help build users’ meaningful friendships, but a single comment or reaction to your friends’ posts also helps maintain users’ friendships since users can actively follow and see the status of their friends.

**Counter-arguments to my reason**

In contrast, people argue that Facebook collects users’ personal information and use them without their awareness to make profits, through online advertising, selling to other data companies, etc. This can cause some troubles for users such as spamming mails, calls or even leaking information to criminals, especially hackers.

**Rebuttal**

The issue of users’ information privacy is happening in a lot of social media platforms, not excluding Facebook. There is a “rule of thumb” that we shouldn’t share too much personal information such as credit cards, social security numbers, etc., on any kind of social media including Facebook. Moreover, users have the right to read Facebook’s policy about data privacy to be more aware of how their personal information can be used and secured. Recently, Facebook also had some movements regarding users’ privacy. Indeed, by the article “Facebook Shares New Insights into its Evolving Data Privacy and Protection Effort, “Facebook has [provided an update](https://about.fb.com/news/2021/04/our-privacy-progress/) on its efforts to improve its data privacy policies, and ensure that user information is protected in every aspect” (Hutchinson, 2021).

**Reason 3**

Thirdly, one of the silent Facebook’s benefits that not many users recognize is that Facebook helps amplifying the voices of marginalized communities.

**Details**

Facebook is not only created for expanding your social network, but it also supports broadcast communication. Indeed, like and comment features on Facebook help facilitate practicing freedom of speech for users. Regardless of users’ identity (race, color, or sex), they would have an equally right to speak, share and express their opinions on any topics, from their personal stories to political or economic issues in the world. This matters because public opinions affect the way that our society structure, since public opinions are considered as “a synthesis of the views of all or a certain segment of society” (Davison, 2020). For example, on Facebook, there are a lot of LGBT+ groups through which the members can express themselves strongly in the past decades because of Facebook’s popularity. Through those groups, the LGBT+ or disabled people find themselves and are able to share their stories and express with audiences around the world. Also, another factor that allows Facebook to support the amplifying of the marginalized communities’ voices is the “share” button. With a click on the “share” button, everyone in your social network can see, express their opinions, or even share it again on their Facebook wall for their social network to see.

**Counter-arguments to my reason**

Users may talk about some restricted topics or contents, such as riots or threats to the government. People can also use violent words or offensive content to target a certain person or a group. Indeed, during the time of Mr. Trump's posts, there was a clear, immediate risk of harm and his words of support for those involved in the riots legitimized their violent actions” (Bond, 2021).

**Rebuttal**

To resolve those issues, Facebook gives the users the right to directly report these contents. Following that, Facebook has specific rules and a special team to resolve the uses of Facebook for illegal activities, such as creating riots or violence in real life or threats to the government. For example, “Facebook indefinitely [suspended Trump's accounts](https://www.npr.org/sections/insurrection-at-the-capitol/2021/01/07/954453630/facebook-bans-president-trump-from-posting-for-the-rest-of-his-presidency) in January after a mob of his supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol, [saying](https://www.facebook.com/zuck/posts/10112681480907401) he used his account to ‘incite violent insurrection’” (Bond, 2021).

**Connections**

Even though Facebook has some drawbacks, its efforts to change our lives in a positive way outweigh its disadvantages, especially during the pandemic time. Most importantly, the disadvantages listed above are solvable by the new policies or adjustments from Facebook's team, with the intention to make Facebook a safer, refined, and progressive media platform.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, Facebook has changed the world significantly in the last few decades and bring a lot of advantages to users such as connecting people around the world, promoting the information flow efficiently and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. However, relying too much on Facebook would cause some negative impacts in real-life for users. Thus, using Facebook in moderation will maximize its benefits.

**Citations**

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