



STUDYDADDY

**Get Homework Help
From Expert Tutor**

Get Help



ETHICAL ISSUES

The Effects of Social Networking^{5,6}

Social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram have become wildly popular over the past few years. Students, parents, businesses, celebrities—and yes, even presidential candidates—are using these sites. People use social networking to stay in touch with family, friends, and colleagues and to update others on events in their lives.

By September 2013, 73% of online adults were using social networking sites: 78% of women and 69% of men. In 2011, 95% of U.S. teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 were using the Internet, and 81% of them were using social networks.

Celebrities often use Twitter as a way of reaching out to the general public. Oprah, Emeril Lagasse, and Martha Stewart all tweet information about their television shows' upcoming guests, new projects, or their favorite books or recipes. During the 2012 Presidential race, President Barack Obama and Governor Mitt Romney used social networking sites, including Facebook and Twitter, as major campaign tools, advertising debates and public appearances and campaigning to get out the vote.

The popularity of social networking sites has helped many, especially teenagers, to bridge social gaps. Teens who might normally be quite introverted can commu-

nicate through social networking and reach out to more peers. Social networking has made a huge difference for college students as well, who can connect with more than just the students whom they happen to meet in class. These sites are also a popular way to advertise parties, meetings, concerts, and other events that are taking place, so more students are aware of campus events and social gatherings.

There are, of course, downsides to any social media, and networking sites are no exception. For example, the information put on the sites may not be accurate. Social networking sites can be prime avenues for online humiliation and bullying, or *cyberbullying*. One in four teenagers has admitted to being cyberbullied. A new survey indicates that teenagers who spend more time on social networks are more likely to also develop addictions to alcohol or smoking. This finding does not confirm cause and effect, but it is worrisome.

A deeper question is this: Do the benefits of social networking outweigh the potential costs? These sites give people a much easier way to communicate, keep in touch with friends, and get important messages out to large groups of people. But users must be aware of the personal risks they are taking by participating in these forums.



STUDYDADDY

**Get Homework Help
From Expert Tutor**

Get Help