

# Editorial 1: The Socially Net(worked)?

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By Nicole Harris

Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn. Sound familiar? These are just a few of the social networking sites that have emerged and gained popularity in our generation. Young 18-24 year olds spend many hours logged in to spaces that feed the self-indulged ego, the over-worked student, the business promoter, or the media craver. Is this true for you? When asked how much time I spend on these networking sites, I have no definite answer. With internet connections so accessible on my personal lap top, cellular phone, and desk top computer at work, I cannot escape tweeting, updating my Facebook status, or being caught up on the latest videos like “Bed Intruder” by the now famous Antoine Dodson.

Some might say, “These social networks are taking over youths ‘lives,” but are there more unstated pros with this issue? Social networks keep people connected but are they too invading? Are we losing ourselves behind screens of computers, cell phones, or tablets and spending less time on human interactions? When asking someone these questions, we have to consider the statistics behind this epidemic.

Nielsen, from nielsen.com, states that “the world now spends over 110 billion minutes on social networks and blog sites.” He also states, “This equates to 22 percent of all time online or one in every four and half minutes.” This could be recognized as a lot of productive time being wasted online tweeting, status updating, uploading pictures, etc.. Nielsen also states that “the average visitor spends 66% more time on these sites (Facebook, YouTube, and Wikipedia) than a year ago, almost 6 hours in April 2010 versus 3hours, 31 minutes last year.”

On average, social network users in the United States spend 6 hours and 43 minutes within the month of April in 2010 on social networks. When looking at time spent on these networking sites, one can wonder what else they could have been doing for that almost 7 hour time frame.

How is this effecting our generation?

Procrastination, lack of human interactions, health related issues, cyber bullying, among other things. When one realizes that there might be an excessive use of these sites, there may be valid reasoning to pick a different hobby. What ever happened to book reading?

But, there are many pros to using social networks. Staying connected, gaining knowledge about varying topics, entertainment, and even starting a revolution. The riot in Egypt over the need for democracy in a country that had one president for approximately 30 years, spearheaded from a Facebook group called “We Are All Khaled Saeed”. The power of a group on Facebook, from a discontent group of people, was able to ignite marches, rallies, protests, and lead to the resignation of this powerful presidential figure.

In this instance, Facebook transforms from a wasteful, stay connected to high school

buddies, status uploading engine into a powerful source to combine a nation of people with an ending goal of triumph.

Twitter can update its followers on the newly adjusted economic budget and unemployment rate that will affect the upcoming election of the president.

LinkedIn can allow you to post resumes and give you your own personal page for updated information concerning your experience.

Google can change your capacity of knowledge by researching a topic discussed in class concerning education reform on your internet ready phone.

Blogger can be used to express your feelings concerning political action, relationships, friendship, music, anything and everything.

The best way to decipher adequate use of sites that can be beneficial, are all in the way the users wish to impact their society. It all comes down to how the individual uses the space. When updating a status, thinking about how this status can potentially change health care reform or update your friends on your community issues is, essentially, up to you. When watching YouTube videos, or creating them, thinking about how this may impact you is important, because it is your time being used to do these things.

Making things beneficial to a generation is up to those within the generation. The Egyptian crisis has shifted people's views about sites such as these, now understanding how a simple uploaded post, with a cause, can help change your own world.