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Consequences of Social Networking Sites on Human Society.

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ABSTRACT

The biggest innovation of last century is computer, whose development has sensationally increased with every passing year. Before the development of computer there were only three mediums for communication i.e. Gestures, Speech, and Writing. But after the tremendous development of computer era the novel media Internet has come to existence. Now-a-days internet has become the fourth media of communication, which provides high speed communication. While in the internet world, in last decade revolution of the social networking has become the greatest means of communication. But with every new thing, there are some pros and cons, and same happen with social networking sites (SNS). The negativity of the social networking sites dominates its merits. This paper describes impact and effects of these sites. It also presents the statistical data regarding their pros and cons and to make these sites more secure for the human society.

Keyword: Computer, Websites, Social Networking Sites, Security, Internet.

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Introduction

In the present status there are several online mediums for communication such as e-mails, SMS facility etc., but social networking is most used by the people. Social networking sites, email, instant messaging, video- and photo- sharing sites and comment posting are all tools that help people to communicate and socialize with each other in very less amount of time [1]. The first social networking site was developed in 1997 i.e. SixDegrees.com. It allowed users to create profiles, list their friends and surf their friend's list [2]. After that various social networking sites developed but the revolution took place in 2006, Facebook launched as an Social networking site which got 100 million users in just 6 years. Now-a-days such websites provide various aspects by which people are getting closer to closer virtually and they also can comment and share recent photos, letters or chats etc. Basically this facility was also present in email, but with social networking the instant messaging has occurred. But these social networking websites have demerits as well. The negative impact of SNS is found not only in the adults but in teenagers also. In our survey we found the following statistics of most surfed social networking sites [3].

- Facebook: 1.06 billion monthly active users, 680 million mobile users, more than 42 million pages and 9 million apps
- Youtube : 800 million users, 4 billion views per day
- QQ: 700 million monthly users
- Qzone: 500 million users
- Twitter: 500 million total users,
- Google+: 343 million active users .

From the above statistics, we observe that in present status there are number of SNS available but the SNS which gives more features with instant messaging facilities attracts the users towards them.

Privacy and Security

In computer era security is the main issue which is on special demands day by day. Social networking sites have become very popular avenues for people to communicate with family, friends and colleagues from around the corner or across the globe. While there can be benefits from the collaborative, distributed approaches promoted by responsible use of social networking sites, there are information security and privacy concerns [5]. According to the Black's Law dictionary "right to be let alone , the right of a person to be free from unwarranted publicity and the right to live without unwarranted interference by the public in matters with which public is not necessary concerned". The volume and accessibility of personal information available on social networking sites have attracted malicious people who seek to exploit this information. The same technologies that invite user participation also make the sites easier to infect with malware that can shut down an organization's network, or keystroke loggers that can steal credentials. Common social

networking risks such as spear phishing, social engineering, spoofing, spamming, pornography, cyber stalking, defamation and human trafficking[8] and web application attacks attempt to steal a person's identity. Such attacks are often successful due to the assumption of being in a trusting environment which the social networks create. Security and privacy related to social networking sites are fundamentally behavioral issues, not technology issues. The more information a person posts, the more information becomes available for a potential compromise by those with malicious intentions. People who provide private, sensitive or confidential information about themselves or other people, whether wittingly or unwittingly, pose a higher risk to themselves and others. Information such as a person's social security number, street address, phone number, financial information, or confidential business information should not be published online. Similarly, posting photos, videos or audio files could lead to an organization's breach of confidentiality or an individual's breach of privacy. [4]. A study conducted by Pew Internet & American Life Project in 2007 found that 66 percent of teens restrict their online profile by making it private. They found 82 percent teens post their first name, followed by photos of themselves (79%), name of city (61%) and email address (29%). According to Pew study girls generally don't post information that could help in finding their physical location. On the other hand, boys are just opposite and post more information about their real location (Lenhart, & Madden, 2007) [7]. International concept of privacy-Article 12 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference neither with his privacy, family, home or correspondence nor to attack on his honour or reputation. Everyone has the right to protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Precautions

Below are some helpful tips regarding security and privacy while using social networking sites:

- Ensure that any computer you use to connect to a social media site has proper security measures in place. Use and maintain anti-virus software and keep your applications and operating system patches up-to-date.
- Use caution when clicking a link to another page or running an online application, even if it is from someone you know. Many applications embedded within social networking sites require you to share your information when you use them. Attackers use these sites to distribute their malware.
- Use strong and unique passwords e.g. banking, using the same password on all accounts increases the vulnerability of these accounts if one becomes compromised.
- Be careful when you add someone as a "friend," or what groups or pages you join. The more "friends" you

have or groups/pages you join the more users have access to your information/account.

- Do not assume privacy on a social networking site for both business and personal use. Confidential information should not be shared. You should only post information that are comfortable while disclosing to a complete stranger.

- People or parents should be aware of cyber bullying cases by which they can watch on their children.

- Configure privacy settings to allow only those people you trust to have access to the information you post. Also, restrict the ability for others to post information to your page. The default settings for some sites may allow anyone to see your information or post information to your page; these settings should be changed.

- Now a days, in the market several software's are used to prevent facebook crimes, like Friend Checker, which is a software program that, regularly compare your friend list with databases of criminal and sexual predators.

- Always review site's privacy policy. Some sites may share information such as email addresses or user preferences with other parties. If a site's privacy policy is vague or does not properly protect your information, do not use the site. [6]

Another service aimed at protecting minors is called MinorMonitor. It is a free service by Infoglide Software, which is the technology behind the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Screening program. The service allows parents to get a quick dashboard view of their children Facebook activity and friends.

Beside these above precaution parents should look after their children and must know what are they doing on SNS by person or with the help of software.

IT Act and Cyber Law

The crimes regarding SNS fall under the category of cyber crime. To counter the problem regarding issues in cyber crime the Government of India has enacted the Information and Technology Act 2000 but in its objectives it talks about "electronic commerce", which involve the use of alternatives to paper-based methods of communication and storage of information, which facilitate the electronic filing of documents with the Government agencies and it also amends certain provisions in the Indian Penal Code, the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 1891 and the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.[12]

If we go through section 66A of the Information and Technology Act 2000 which says: "Any person who sends by means of a computer resource or a communication device any information that is grossly offensive or has menacing character; or any information which he knows to be false, but for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience, danger, obstruction, insult, injury, criminal intimidation, enmity, hatred, or ill-will, persistently makes by making use of such computer

resource or a communication device, any electronic mail or electronic mail message for the purpose of causing annoyance or inconvenience or to deceive or to mislead the addressee or recipient about the origin of such messages shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and with fine."

If we go through its provision we come across the language and scope of its provisions used under Section 66A which is very wide and is capable of distinct interpretations. The provision of section 66A talks about sending any information which is grossly offensive or has menacing character, but it does not give any guidance as to what is 'grossly offensive' or has 'menacing character' [9].

Hence people are advised to be careful about the facts while publishing anything on the social networking sites. There is no need to control one's social networking status. However, certain restrictions should be there.

Conclusion

As the technology has rapidly increased the use of Social networking sites has also increased, but the negativity of such sites has increased manifold. With these very important issues, the user should firstly be mentally clear about the privacy settings otherwise no matter whatever software he is using it will be useless or unfruitful. In every country law is playing its role to maintain the peace in the society but with the tremendous changes in the society, the law should be amended to meet the present changes in the society. Similarly awareness of cyber security among the users should be raised. Because of social networking sites various other crimes such as human trafficking have also taken a new shape. It is estimated that about 73% cases have been found regarding human trafficking which are carried out with the help of social networking sites.

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