

The Impact of Social Networking Sites, Especially on the Youth: A Critical Study

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Abstract: “This article aims to spread an immense level of awareness amongst the people, especially the youth who are completely exposed to the Social Networking Sites today. The study examines the impact of Social Networking Sites, the most common ones which attract the people and particularly the youth maximum to it include Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, My Space, Skype etc. The Social Networking Sites offers a very straight forward way to the people so that they can ensure their social presence through web. These provide the people with a virtual social environment, enabling the people to share their each and every activity with their family, colleagues and now even with strangers. This open sharing of information on the web has enabled the hackers to easily steal the information scattered on these Social Networking Sites. Everything existing in this world is comprised of both pros as well as cons, and same is the case with the Social Networking Sites. So it has become imperative to know each and every aspect of these Social Networking Sites in order escape from the uncertainties that might take place at any time in future as it has become evident and usual sight witnessing the individuals mostly the youth, being intensively rapt in chatting even at the places of Worship, Highways, Schools, Colleges, Social gatherings such as Conferences and Seminars irrespective of the fact that what should be at priority. Thus, it is evident that the attention of the people has shifted from the real world and visible individuals to virtual world and invisible personalities.”

Key Words: Social Networking Sites, Youth, Security, Cyber Attacks.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Social Networking Sites are web based services and in other words, the simplest form of communication which enable the individuals to create their profile generally by filling up personal information which includes – Name, Surname, Date of Birth, Gender, Mobile Number, Email Address and a Password of their choice to login to the profile created by them. Once a profile is set up, the individual is required to fill up another set of information such as Uploading a Profile Picture, Adding up a Place or City to which he belongs, Educational Qualifications, Work Experiences, Marital/ Relationship Status, Hobbies, Interests, Inviting Friends by sending up Friend Request, and so on. Once a Friend request is accepted, and a person starts receiving Friend Requests from others, the process begins there where a person actually start spreading his own personal information by his own hands. The Most popular Social Networking Sites today are Sites like Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, My Space, Skype etc. People today can be seen to spend more than the usual hours on these Social Networking Sites to download, browse, share, chat, entertain themselves. These sites have spread an addiction amongst the youth and keeps them glued to their avatar for hours and hours together and make them forget the live physical world around them, due to which it has become difficult for them to concentrate on their work which could have been a priority. On one hand, some individuals have derived benefits out of these sites while on the other hand, majority of people are found to be trapped in the web. But today, only a few can be seen out of a lot who do not access or make use of any of the Social Networking Site. There is absolutely no doubt that the Social Networks have today, become an integral part of every individual’s life and trends are set such that it only targets to increase. Talking about Facebook which is the most pertinent example, is the World’s leading Social Networking Site and it consists such number of users which even exceed the population of many countries even the Countries are combined and as on 2018, there are 219.94 Million people using Facebook. [1]

The facts reveal that majority of the users who are indulged in Social Networking Sites post sensitive information online, being unaware of the privacy and security concerns.

2. IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:

• Impact on the education of the Youth

The article tries to portray that the Social Networking Sites such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, My Space, Skype etc. have gained popularity with the pace of time and due to the attractive features being offered by them, today’s generation is fascinated towards them and due to the rapid increase in the popularity of the Social Networking Sites, the youth is being distracted from their studies and professions.

- **Impact in transforming the minds of youth on social issues**

The study elucidates that men spend more time in comparison to the women, on the Social Networking Site [2] for the purpose of reviewing the social issues. It is evident today that the youth takes active participation in social issues and raise their voices to express their opinions upon the issues being circulated on the Social Networking Sites. According to the findings, the youth reciprocates the issues and take up the discussions even beyond the web once they sign off.

- **Impact on students**

Today, 53% of the Females are found to be indulged in Facebook, the Largest Social Networking Site while the Males range to 47% and an average Facebook user has a minimum of 155 Friends. Apart from this, 87% of the Facebook users age between 18–29 years. [3] The technology has also shown a rapid development by introducing small communication devices which can be used to access Social Networks at anytime and anywhere. These gadgets include Pocket Computers, Laptops, iPads and Mobile Phones. [4] As on 2016, it was found that 100 million hours of videos were watched on Facebook daily and the average monthly time being spent on Facebook by an individual amounts to 600 minutes. It is also astonishing to know that 48% of individuals belonging to the age group ranging between 18 – 29 years check their Facebook accounts as soon as they wake up early in the morning. In light of the above facts, it can be imagined that the young students are totally distracted from their academics and are immensely indulged in performing the said activities on the Social Networking Sites. It is hard to believe that apart from the search engines and other websites relating to education, the students can derive any benefit out of Social Networking Sites in relation to their academics.

3. MERITS AND DEMERITS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:

Social Networking Sites are more a demerit in comparison to merits in relation to Education.

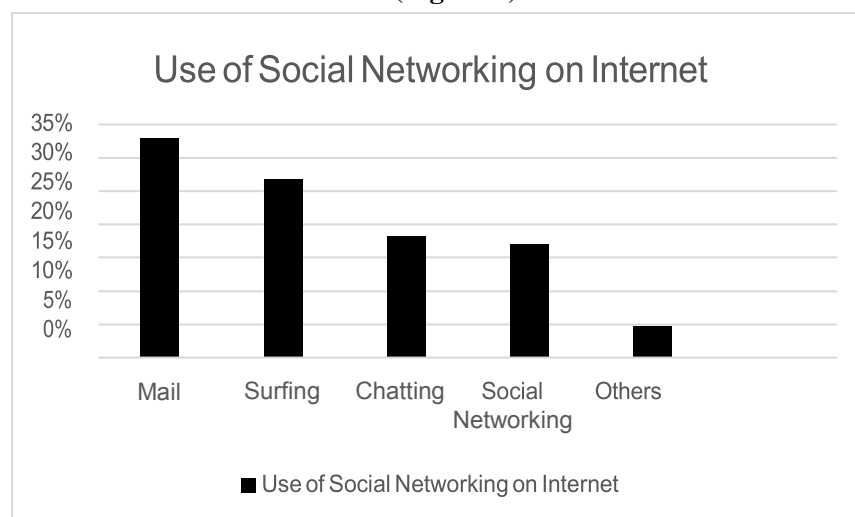
Merits –

- Enables the students to associate with each other resulting in help for the purpose of Homework or Assignments. [5]
- Students who feel shy to take interest in the classroom might express their thoughts easily on Social Sites.
- Teachers can make post on the Sites about class activities/ Notice/ Information/ Assignment which is helpful for students.
- Social Media Marketing can prepare young workers to become successful marketers.
- Access of Social Media enables the educator to utilize internet for productive purposes.

Demerits –

- It distracts the students from paying attention towards what is going in the class room. Moreover, even the teacher is also unable to recognize as to who is paying attention in the classroom. [6]
- Social Media breaks down when it comes to posting personal information on online site.
- In uncertain circumstances, there can be inappropriate information posted which might take the students towards wrong side.
- Only due to Social Media, Students lose the confidence of making face to face communication.
- Many a times, the bloggers and writers post wrong information which leads to the failure of the educational system.

(Figure 1)



Merits and Demerits of Social Networking Sites in relation to business

Merits –

- Helps to better understand the response from the side of the audience with the help of likes and dislikes received from Social Networking Sites.
- Helpful in promotion of business.
- Helps in retaining customers by way of providing useful services.
- Helps in increasing awareness amongst brands.

Demerits –

- Not entirely risk free as the followers might leave negative comments which would lower down the trust and reputation in the eyes of customers.
- Larger Organizations have found to become victims of hacking.
- Involvement with Social Media is time consuming and an organization becomes bound to hire a person exclusively for the purpose of bolstering the page and profile with significant content.
- Most of the Organizations fail to measure the results of Social Media Advertising.

Impact of Social Networking on Society

Positive Aspects –

- Helps to associate with people to whom they could have not met outside.
- Helps to share ideas beyond Geographical Boundaries.
- Enables the Writers and Bloggers to connect with their clients.
- Spreads awareness amongst Society that keeps the people updated with all the happenings around the world.

Negative Aspects –

- Most negative aspect of the Social Networking Sites is that it makes the individual addicted. People waste maximum amount of time on Social Networking Sites and get diverted from the tasks that ought to be at priority.
- Social Networking Sites can very easily influence the kids as the photos and videos posted on these sites sometimes might contain violent activities or Pornographic content which ultimately affects the behavior of the teenager.
- Sometimes Family relations also get weakened due to the fact that the whole time get wasted in connecting with new people.
- Sometimes, the photos or videos shared by people on these Social Networking Sites gets misused by others and is presented in a false form resulting in damaging the reputation of the person in the photograph.

Impact of Social Networking the Youth

Positive Aspects –

- Enables the Youth to stay connected.
- Social Networks might act as a useful medium for exchange of information.

Negative Aspects –

- It is still not clear as to who are the “Strangers” on Social Networks.
- Heinous offences like Murder, Sexual Offences, and Kidnapping etc. can easily be done through sharing of information on Social Networks.
- As per the reports, there are numerous cases being registered in the Police Stations where the adults are found to be targeting children and incite them for meeting them.
- Youngsters waste their maximum time in chatting etc. which also invites health issues.
- The Youth is more inclined towards entertainment rather than deriving information for productive purposes.
- Participation of Youth is invisible in social gatherings due to maximum involvement in Social Networking Sites.

4. PERCENTAGE OF SOCIAL SITE USERS:

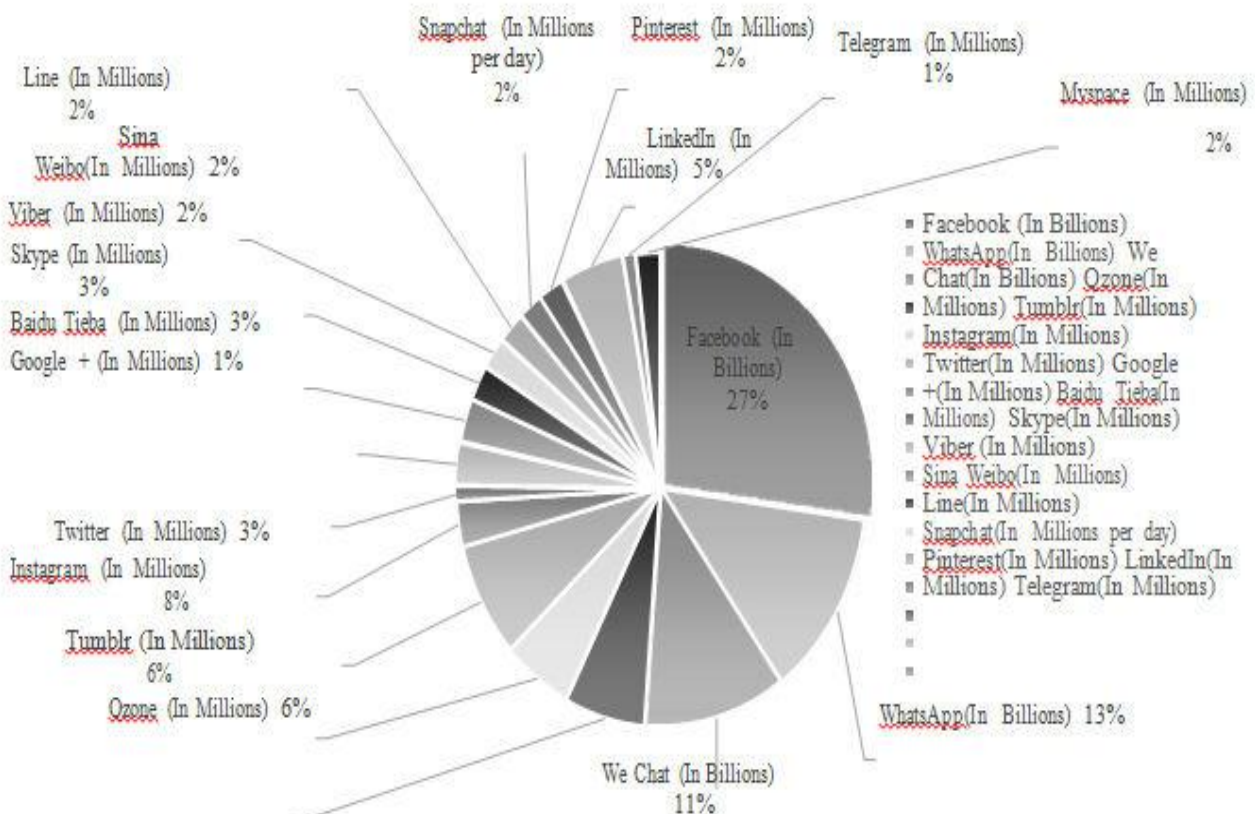
As per the data referred from various sources, it has been analyzed that Facebook amongst all other Social Networking websites hold the largest number of users with 2.72 Billion, WhatsApp 1.3 Billion, We Chat 1.12 Billion, Qzone 640 Million, Tumblr 555 Million, Instagram 800 Million, Twitter 330 Million, Google + 111 Million, Baidu Tieba 300 Million, Skype 300 Million, Viber 249 Million, Sina Weibo 222 Million, Line 215 Million, Snapchat 200

Million, Pinterest 200 Million, Linked 500 Million, Telegram 100 Million, myspace Million 20 million, Youtube (1.5 Billion monthly active users), Snapchat (178 Million users daily). [7] [8] **(Figure 2)**

As per the research, the time being spent on using Social Networking Sites per user per day is 135 Minutes. [9] Another important aspect of the analysis is in relation to the security measures connected with the Social Networking sites. It is pertinent to say that everything around us is connected with both good as well as bad aspects, and sometimes even worse aspects and same is the case with Social Networking Sites. The use of Social Networking sites is increasing day by day, but at the same time, people are unaware of the evil aspects of being active on social networking sites. The World Wide Web (WWW) seems to be a vast phenomenon, but shockingly its certain characteristics are attempting to bring the world closer with an intent to make it a smaller place for the users to live in. The reason behind the cyber-conspirators prey on the Social Networks is only due to the reason that the users, mostly the youth today, upload very sensitive personal information including their interests, social-relationships, photos, confidential information, and other related media contents on the web through Social Networking Sites which is very easily assessable. Moreover, even the employees unknowingly share the personal information relating to their organizations on the Social Networking Site, thus pushing their Organizations too at a risk. The ease of assessability of personal information available on these Sites have attracted malicious practices being committed by the people who seek the information exclusively for the purpose of exploitation. Due to the sensitivity of the information uploaded on these Social Networking Sites, a detailed research in the field of cyber security has become an important subject matter. Though the law enforcing agencies are making the efforts to tackle the problems arising in the cyber world day by day, but at the same time numerous people are becoming the victims of theft, hacking, malware and identity thefts etc.

As per the yearly Cyber Crime Victim Count (2017) [10]

- Victims in the year – 556 Million.
- Victims per day – 1.5 Million.
- Victims per second – 18.
- Identities exposed – 232.4 Million.
- Number of Facebook Accounts compromised per day – 600,000.



(Figure 2)

The study also reveals that 1 in 10 Social Networking Sites users have claimed to be the victim of scam or fake link faced on Social networking platform.

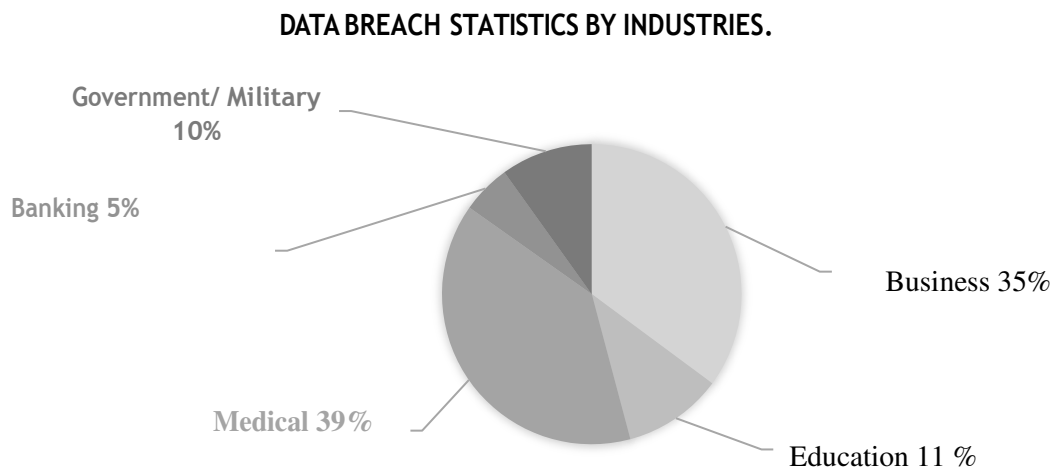
Types of Cyber Attacks –

- Viruses, Malware, Worms, Trojans. _____ 50 %
- Criminal insiders. _____ 33 %
- Theft of data-bearing devices. _____ 28 %
- SQL Injections. _____ 28 %
- Phishing. _____ 22 %
- Web-Based Attacks. _____ 17 %
- Social-Engineering. _____ 17 %
- Others. _____ 11 %

It has also been found as per the study that –

- 71% of the Male Gender becomes the Victim of the Cyber Attacks.
- 63% of the Female Gender becomes the Victim of the Cyber Attacks.
- 59% of the ex-employees of the company have admitted to steal the personal information of the company while leaving the job.

(Figure 3) highlights the breach of data by the industries. [11]



Major Motives Behind Cyber Attacks (Figure 4)

S.No.	Type of Crime	Percentage
1	Cyber Crime	40%
2	Hacking	50%
3	Cyber Warfare	3%
4	Cyber Espionage	7%

This, is the use of computers and computer networks for the purpose of promoting political ends, Free speech, Information Ethics and Human Rights.

(Figure 5) depicts top 15 Countries where the Cyber Attacks originates –

S.No.	Country	Percentage
1	China	27.24 %
2	U.S.	17.12 %
3	Turkey	10.24 %
4	Brazil	8.60 %
5	South Korea	7.47 %
6	India	6.67 %
7	Spain	6.32 %
8	Thailand	5.85 %
9	Japan	5.55 %
10	Russia	5.14 %

5. CONCLUSION:

All in all, social network is an instrument that can both help and harm, regardless of whether it is utilized for business, school, look into, or for relationship building, interpersonal organizations offer numerous new and energizing openings. In any case, the clueless client can rapidly be driven down a possibly hazardous way. It gives long range interpersonal communication neither the green light nor the red light but instead the yellow light: continue with alert. The primary objective of the study undertaken is to emphasis on the usage of Social Networking Sites by numerous people especially the youth, taking into consideration both positive as well as its negative aspects. The objectives targeted for the purpose of study are successfully achieved. In order to get the expected outcome, the study is comprised of both positive as well as the negative aspects. The youth today, have determined their own boundaries and have also set their limits as to how and when to get involved with the Social Networking Sites irrespective of the negative aspects and the security measures connected with them. Due to the rapid growth in the field of technology, the Social Networking Sites have become a crucial part of almost each and every person's daily schedule. As the exceptions are everywhere, it is pertinent to mention here that there are also the people who have confined them from using the Social Networking Sites and are today the safest one, immune from all sorts of cybercrimes which the users of Social Networking Sites might face at any time till they continue using these sites. The use of Social Networking Sites is also being done in the field of business is being done for the purpose of enhancing the performances of the organization. Perhaps, just like a coin with two sides, Social Networking Sites too have certain adverse effects especially on the youth. The targeted group prefers to spend maximum time on these Social Networking Sites with approximately 2 hours a day which distracts them from their priorities and even at times the social gatherings are also hampered due to such irresponsible behavior of the youth today. By Ending up with the study, it can be concluded that the only working solution in order to stay immune from the cybercrimes, is to just stop posting anything on these sites which you wish to hide from the strangers. Also be careful as to who all send you the friend requests, since there is no such technology yet introduced which can reveal the true identity of the person at that very moment.

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