

New media and society: A Study on the impact of social networking sites on indian youth

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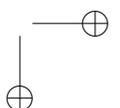
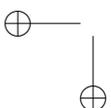
Background of the study

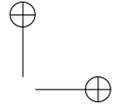
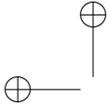
BASICALLY the Internet was an emergency military communication system operated by the Department of Defense's advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA). The whole operation was referred to as ARPANET.

The speed of Internet has changed the way people receive the information. It combines the immediacy of broadcast with the in-depth coverage of newspapers making it perfect sources for news and weather information. Even with the multimedia excitement of the web, Electronic mail (email) is the most frequently used application of the Internet. Many people, who have access to the Internet at school, home and at work place use the Internet for no other purpose than to send and to receive the mail. Its not just friends and co-workers that are receiving email. Wherever you look, the web is providing email addresses. This has made communication between the strangers easier than ever. Chatting is one of the more popular activities on the Internet- people can talk to anyone across the world.

Introduction of social online networking sites has facilitated communication. These are web-sites where users can create a profile and connect that profile to others to form an explicit personal network. They are web-based services that allow individuals to

- (1) Construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system
- (2) Articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and
- (3) View and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.





Through social networking, people can use networks of online friends and group memberships to keep in touch with current friends, reconnect with old friends or create real-life friendships through similar interests or groups. Besides establishing important social relationships, social networking members can share their interests with other like-minded members by joining groups and forums. Some networking can also help members find a job or establish business contacts. Most social networking websites also offer additional features. In addition to blogs and forums, members can express themselves by designing their profile page to reflect their personality. The most popular extra features include music and video sections. The video section can include everything from member-generated videos from hundreds of subjects to TV clips and movie trailers (Youtube).

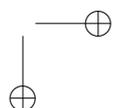
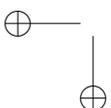
Social networking sites have facilitated communication. Members of such sites can easily form groups (called the communities) and share their opinions among themselves through discussion threads, forums and polls. Though these sites serve good in many ways, it has its negative effects too such as cyber crimes which has become a privacy threat to the people worldwide. Although advantageous in many ways by building new relationships and reconnecting with lost or old contacts, it also brought up some behavioral changes among the youth, not only the behavioral changes but also their social behavior and approaches. It has also ended up as a nightmare for a few people.

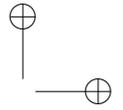
Objective of the study

Identifying and assessing issues regarding youth social networking usage and the resultant impact on their social interactions and social behavior on the whole.

History of social network sites

Early social networking websites included Classmates.com (1995), focusing on ties with former school mates, and SixDegrees.com (1997), focusing on indirect ties. User profiles could be created, messages sent to users held on a friends list and other members could be sought out who have similar interests to the users-which could be found out from their profiles. Despite these new





developments (that would later catch on and become immensely popular), the websites (Classmates.com, SixDegrees.com) simply were not profitable and eventually shut down. It was even described by the websites owner as simply ahead of its time. Two different models of social networking that came about in 1999 were trust-based, developed by Epinions.com, and friendship-based, such as those developed by Jonathan Bishop and used on some regional UK sites between 1999 and 2001.

By 2005, one social networking service My Space was reportedly getting more page views than Google, with Facebook, a competitor, rapidly growing in size. In 2007, Facebook began allowing externally-developed add-on applications, and some applications enabled the graphing of a user's own social network - thus linking social networks and social networking. Orkut was quietly launched on January 22, 2004 by Google, the search engine company which is now quite popular in Brazil, U.S.A and India.

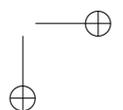
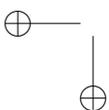
Various social networking sites have sprung up, catering to different languages and countries. It is estimated that, combined there are now over 200 social networking sites using these existing and emerging social networking models.

There are many features that attract the users towards the Social Networking Sites. The Chief among them are:

Scrapping is similar to instant messaging but the text is also available to public view. Though there are privacy options to show scraps only to friends, its not a personal means of communication like e-mail or instant messaging. Likeness for communities and friends network states that youth use these sites to satisfy their socialization needs to participate/ join in communities with like minded users. And also to extend and nurture their friends network which symbolize their socializing personality.

Profile setting is a means of exhibiting the profile users personality/identity as how they want themselves to be perceived by the profile viewers.

Photo sharing - User has options such as photo sharing only with friends and also specifically can choose individuals who can view the shared photos while its not visible to others accessing the profile. Social networking sites use such stringent privacy settings to avoid unsolicited breach of individuals personal space.



Review of literature

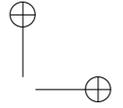
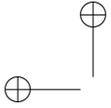
Williams et al (2008) in A review of online social networking profiles by adolescents states that Social networking profiles involve individuals creating and maintaining personal Internet sites allowing authors and other users to post content, thus creating a personal network.

Lenhart and Madden (2007) in Adolescent social networking, said that in the past five years social networking has “rocketed from a niche activity into a phenomenon that engages tens of millions of Internet users. The study proposes that online social networking profiles posted by adolescents contain intimate, candid, and observable self-disclosure and peer interaction that can be analyzed creating an overall picture of adolescent behavior, highlighting specific areas needing additional research, and addressing implications for parental monitoring and intervention. Lenhart and Madden state that fifty-five percent of teenagers use and create online social networking profiles. They opine that with more than half of teenage Internet users interacting online, the concept of blogging is a salient research topic investigating what adolescents are blogging about, how they are socially interacting, and what potential effects this phenomena may have on other dimensions of their lives.

Boyd (2007) says that gender appears to influence participation on social network sites. Younger boys are more likely to participate than younger girls (46% vs. 44%) but older girls are far more likely to participate than older boys (70% vs. 57%). Older boys are twice as likely to use the sites to flirt and slightly more likely to use the sites to meet new people than girls of their age. Older girls are far more likely to use these sites to communicate with friends they see in person than younger people or boys of their age.

Larsen (2009), based on the empirical data, says that both genders seek the acknowledgement they get from having their looks commented on, but the girls are more preoccupied with what kind of comments they get and whom they come from. In general, it is very important that the comments come from friends and people they know, rather than strangers. This indicates that photo comments are not just about having ones outer looks valued and acknowledged (identity construction), but also about practising and maintaining friendships

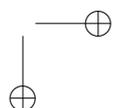
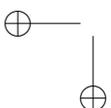
Lenhart (2009) reveals that the share of adult Internet users who have a profile on an online social network site has more than quadrupled in the past

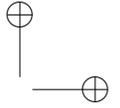
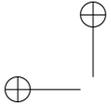


four years – from 8% in 2005 to 35% now, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Projects December 2008 tracking survey. While media coverage and policy attention focus heavily on how children and youth use social network sites, adults still make up the bulk of the users of these websites. Adults make up a larger portion of the US population than teens, which is why the 35% number represents a larger number of users than the 65% of online teens who also use online social networks. Still, younger online adults are much more likely than their older counterparts to use social networks, with 75% of adults (18-24) using these networks, compared to just 7% of adults 65 and older. At its core, use of online social networks is still a phenomenon of the young.

Knight (2006) in the article *Is Social Networking Losing Clout With Youth?* explains that according to ratings, in 2003, teens were most likely to visit icon sites for instant messaging. The most popular sites then were *OriginalIcons.com* (77%) and *BluntTruth.com* (76%). Today (in 2006) the most popular sites are *PLyrics.com* (68%) and *SnapVine.com* (67%). Both of these sites offer social networking tools. The older generation is also visiting these sites, according to *comScore*. More than half of the visitors to popular *MySpace* were 35 and over. For marketers, this is a good thing. A new report from *Compete* indicates that social networkers, no matter their age, are creating their own e-commerce system. According to the report, those on social networking sites have more discretionary income, shop online more and pay less attention to traditional media. That is a host of potential customers just waiting to be tapped into.

Subrahmanyam (2006) suggests that youth spending on data services represents almost 50 percent of all mobile spending in most mature markets. Not only are youth the early adopters of most new technologies, they are also among the more sophisticated users of it as well. In fact, *Livingstone and Bober* (2005) have coined the term *reverse socialization* to characterize the shifting nature of socialization that occurs in many families, as teenage children are often more knowledgeable than their parent about these technologies. Research has also suggested that adolescents interactions with these new technologies are often at the vanguard of trends. Among adolescents, communication is the most important use of the Internet and the popular communication applications include, e-mail, instant messaging (private, one-on-one, text-based conversations), chat rooms (communication systems that allow text-

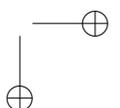
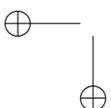


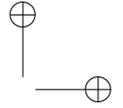
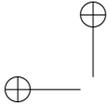


based conversation among multiple users), and the newest craze social networking sites (connects people together) including blogs (www.livejournal.com), MySpace and Facebook. Although we know that adolescents are spending considerable amounts of time on these applications, many questions remain. Firstly, what are teens doing in communication forums such as chat rooms and blogs? What do they talk about? Secondly, are these online communication activities fundamentally changing adolescent behavior or are they simply providing new venues for traditional adolescent behavior? Lastly, what is the relation between teen virtual worlds and real worlds? Are teen participants leaving behind real lives when interacting online or do virtual worlds reflect themes that are traditionally adolescent ones?

Wintour (2009) in the article titled Facebook and Bebo risk infantilizing the human mind says that Social networking sites, such as Facebook, are putting attention span in jeopardy. Wintour refers to Baroness Greenfield who believes ministers have not yet looked at the broad cultural and psychological effect of on-screen friendships via Facebook, Bebo and Twitter ; She has told the House of Lords that children's experiences on social networking sites "are devoid of cohesive narrative and long-term significance and as a consequence, the mid-21st century mind might almost be infantilized, characterized by short attention spans, sensationalism, inability to empathize and a shaky sense of identity". Arguing that social network sites are putting attention span in jeopardy, she said: "If the young brain is exposed from the outset to a world of fast action and reaction, of instant new screen images flashing up with the press of a key, such rapid interchange might accustom the brain to operate over such timescales. Perhaps when in the real world such responses are not immediately forthcoming, we will see such behaviours and call them attention-deficit disorder." "It might be helpful to investigate whether the near total submersion of our culture in screen technologies over the last decade might in some way be linked to the threefold increase over this period in prescriptions for methylphenidate, the drug prescribed for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder."

Tynes (2007) in an article Internet Safety Gone Wild? Sacrificing the Educational and Psychosocial Benefits of Online Social Environments indicates that online socialization through networks like Facebook are more beneficial to the development of adolescents than they are harmful or dangerous. "Many Internet safety and parenting experts suggest that parents prohibit their teens





from social networking sites and other online spaces where predators may lurk [But] banning adolescents from social networking sites - if this were even feasible - as well as monitoring too closely might close off avenues for beneficial cognitive and psychosocial development that are available to young people in the online social world," claims Tynes, Assistant Professor of African American Studies and Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

In Mumbai mirror daily (2006), it was reported that so many terrorists and under world people have got connected through orkut, for example Davood Ibrahim, Chotta Shakkil and so many underworld dawns are getting new man power through Orkut. Times of India (2006) in Hatred communities - with spreading violence among the people- India court accuses Googles Orkut of spreading hatred states that the Aurangabad bench of Bombay high court has directed the Maharastra government to issue notice to Google for the alleged spread of hatred about India by its social network services .The article says that the petition has sated that a picture of burning the national tricolor, bearing anti-India messages, has been put on www.orkut.com and a community We hate India has been created on the site.

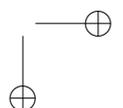
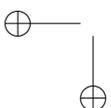
Methodology

Research approach

This research employs the method of Qualitative research through quantitative analysis to gather an in-depth understanding of the behavioral changes caused by the social networking sites like Orkut on youth and the reasons that govern such behavior.

Sampling method

The sample size is 100 and they are divided into two categories each of 50, the categories are teens (17-19) and youth in the age group of 20-22. Samples were randomly selected from different schools and colleges who are active members of social networking sites.



Research methods

The research has made use of survey method. Survey was conducted among randomly selected social networking sites users in India with a sample size of 100 between age group of 17 to 22 yrs who were school students and college students. The age group youth (17-22yrs) was chosen since they are the heavy users of social networking sites and also early adopters of advanced technological applications. Another reason for choosing this age group is that:

- Youth of the age group (17-22 yrs)
- View world idealistically
- Become involved with world outside school/home
- Relationships stabilize in that
- Sees adults as equals
- Seeks to firmly establish independence

The surveys were done using web where the questionnaire are circulated through e-mail and also some of the datas were collected through interview on telephone where the respondents are called over telephone to get a deeper insight and more information regarding the research. Also data were collected through direct conversation in which the questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents and had face-to-face conversations questioning them to know on the impact, behavioral changes caused on them by the networking sites

This research also involves observation-both direct and participatory method, where direct observation was done with family members, peers, friends, colleagues which helped knowing some of the facts related to the research. The other method participatory observation was done by being active members in one or more social networking sites and taking part in conversations, and by becoming community members. While discussing the topics in forums, observations were made that helped in knowing about the information and facts related to the research.

Data analysis and interpretations

Table: 1 - Purpose of Internet usage:

Uses	Percentage (N=100)
Mail	33.0
Surfing	26.8
Chatting	18.7
Social networking	17.0
Other	4.5
Total	100

The main purpose of Internet usage for the respondents was for mailing and surfing the net with 33% and 26% respectively. Mailing and surfing the net are two traditional reasons for using Internet from times of Web 1.0. (Web technologies in 90s) and to a larger extent been adopted in the Internet users everyday routine worldwide. In Indian context, social networking sites are growing to gain momentum in its popularity and usage but have not yet reached the expectations matching the global scenario. Only 17% respondents reported social networking sites as their main purpose of Internet usage. The other responses were downloading content, buying goods online, studying and reading e-books.

Table: 2 - Membership in social networking sites:

Member of SNS	Percentage (N=100)
Yes	95.7
No	4.3
Total	100

A remarkable 95% of sample was member of one or more social networking sites which clearly makes a strong statement being a member in one or more social networking sites is a status quo among Indian youth. Breaking the data down further, almost 50% of the respondents were members of Orkut and 30% were in facebook While other sites mentioned were MySpace, Big

Adda, LinkedIn, WAYN, Hi5, Stylefm, Twitter, Ning, Indyarocks, Tagged, Netlog, Friendster, ebuddy and Vampirefreaks.

Also there was an overlapping pattern in the membership of social networking sites while 44% respondents were exclusive members of Orkut, about 27% respondents were members in more than one social networking site but also an orkut member. This shows the popularity of orkut among other social networking sites, in special reference to Indian youth.

Table: 3 - Usage of social networking sites:

Hours	Percentage (N=100)
Less than 1 hr	71.1
1-2hrs	22.2
3-5hrs	6.7
7-8 hrs	0.0
Total	100

Among this sample, hours spent on social networking sites was less than 1 hr for 70% of the respondents while there were no respondents using the social networking sites for more than 7 hrs. Moderate responses of about 22% use for 1-2hrs but a very low percentile of 6% uses it for 3-5hrs. Majority of the sample were exposed to social networking sites for shorter duration due to various reasons such as no Internet connectivity at home, residing at hostel with no Internet provisions or low level of interest in social networking sites.

Table: 4 - Purpose of membership in social networking sites:

Reason to register in SNS	Percentage (N=100)
To maintain existing friends/contacts	48.8
To find new friends	19.5
For business networking	7.4
To find activity partners	4.9
Dating	3.7
Others	15.9
Total	100

Among youth (>23yrs), 48% stated that they use social networking sites to maintain existing friends/relationships and only 19% for finding new friends with 3% for dating purposes. It states that a vast majority of respondents are re-establishing existing friends through social networking sites while only a minimal number account to using for dating purposes. Connecting with new friends (strangers) in the virtual world brings with it a whole set of problems and some times it make them victims of cyber crimes- issues highlighted in Indian media of much public and social concern. And 12% use such sites for business networking and activity partners, which is also an impending danger since there is an uncertainty of the nature of purpose of the individual, reliability, accountability, and anonymity leading to grave consequences.

Few other text responses made in regard to this question were all accounting to finding old friends, lost contacts such as in school, workplace and among family members as reasons for registering in social networking sites.

Table: 5 - On what criteria do you make friends in social networking sites?

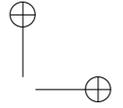
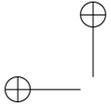
Criteria for making friends in SNS	Percentage (N=100)
Education or Business stream	26.7
Based on the personal likeness	42.2
Just to get some one for chat	8.9
Other	22.2
Total	100

To better understand on what basis the youth choose their friends online (strangers) in social networking sites, 42% trust on their personal likeness as a reason to make friends 26% are based on education and business stream and 22% of responses are to maintain existing contacts among family and friends- people already well-acquainted in real life. It states that youth at these sites give high priority to their personal preferences and likeness in comparison to other logical or rational reasons. It is a prominent social behaviour dominantly expressed among the age group 17 to 22 yrs.

Respondents perception on social networking sites:

Above 95% responses were of the positive opinion that social networking sites act as platform for reconnecting with lost friends, maintaining existing networks/relationships and sharing knowledge, ideas and opinions. At the same time, they also considered that such sites had to be handled with discretion respecting others privacy. The Chief among the responses regarding social networking sites were:

- It has got certain good aspects, but at the cost of dangerous outcomes(rarely)
- To maintain old contacts
- It is beneficial in maintaining friends
- An easy way to stay in touch with everyone
- Its awesome... I have got many of my school friends back through communities
- They are the best medium to be in touch from the rest of world.
- Best way to kill time with fun
- These are a good way to increase your contacts.
- We must use our discretion to keep ourselves safe in public forum like social networking sites. It all depends on our self-control
- To maintain friendship, and just for time pass.
- It aids in mending the existing relationship which we never think could happen. Every invention has its pros and cons in its own sense. Similarly social networking too.
- Useful in finding friends and exploring new business venues
- It's good as long as everything is under control...
- Nice tool to maintain our friends but the strange aspect is that anyone can see your profile



- Its good to stay connected with our old friends wherever they are...
- Time pass, connecting friends when they are far away.
- Good for sharing our views with our friends
- Total waste of time.
- An easy way to keep in touch with your friends who are no longer in the city or country for that manner.
- Its up to the user to make it positive
- Good if used efficiently
- Good as long as it doesnt affect others privacy

For every invention or innovation, there are some advantages and disadvantages. The same principle is also applicable for the social networking sites. Even if it helps us to find either new/old friends, it has some drawbacks, because it sometimes breaks our privacy and we really dont know about the real face behind the new friends and what is their character. A single line quote, I can say for social networking site is “ statutory warning: Be safe while you communicate with others.

These opinions reveal that youth the respondents- are cautious in their online social networking and understand the underlying threat to individuals privacy. Its a positive social behaviour reflected among the sample with maximum awareness of the medium along with its advantageous and dangerous features.

Scrapping: Scrap application in orkut is favored by 19% of sample with features such as communities and friends network leading in the second place with 18% for each. Profile setting comes as third in list of favored applications.

Profile setting: 16% of respondents like this feature and so expresses their intent to project/portray themselves through their profiles. Its a common social behaviour prevalent among social networking sites users as this application is widely available in all such sites.

Photo Sharing: 14% of sample like it, and its relatively safe with precautionous restricting measures where the profile user can share their photos.

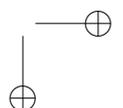
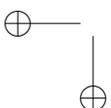


Table: 6 - Activities in social networking sites:

Features	Percentage (N=100)
Profile setting	16.0
Communities	18.0
Photo sharing	14.0
Scraps	19.3
Friends network	18.7
Easy access of others profile.	4.7
Testimonial	8.0
Other	1.3
Total	100

Testimonial and access to others profile: Viewing testimonials and easy access of others profile have a notable low preference %, 8 and 4 respectively. It indicates that for reasons such as security and privacy, many social networking sites users dont favour them most.

Table: 7 - Do you attempt to establish your identity/personality in social networking sites?

Establishing Identity	Percentage (N=100)
Yes	60.0
No	40.0
Total	100

A vast majority of the sample (60%) attempt to establish their identity/personality in social networking sites but a nearly close 40% have responded as not attempting to establish their identity/personality in such sites.

Table: 8 - Relationship with online friends (strangers in real life)

Relationship with online friends	Percentage (N=100)
Yes	55.6
No	44.4
Total	100

While 55% of the sample has responded that they have online friends apart from their real life acquaintances in the social networking sites, a nearly closer 44% of the sample has given a negative response. Though only 19% of the sample has stated they register in social networking sites for making new friends, 55% of the sample has responded positively to this question. It shows that their perceived intention and the real scenario in social networking sites are contrary in nature. About half of the sample continue making online friends even they do not intend to do so at the outset.

Table: 9- Apart from social networking sites do you interact with online friends (strangers) through personal chats in other messenger services?

Chatting with online (strange) friends	Percentage (N=100)
Yes	68.9
No	31.1
Total	100

Personal chats are conversational forum to exchange and share about each other in a dialogue. It is more similar to a real life conversation with an exception being its not face to face. Though making new friends happens via social networking sites among 55% of youth, 68% of them interact to their online friends through personal chats in other messenger services. Many social networking sites have chat applications; it leads to more intimate interpersonal relationship between online friends due to higher degree of privacy in personal chats. But friendship in social networking sites at times eventually leads to contact via other messenger services (personal chats). They share their mail ids/chat ids and therefore create a chance to share more personal or intimate details in due course of time.

The preferable topics of discussion among online friends of youth vary from just chatting (55%) with specific topics/issues, for example talking about their daily routine or their favourite movie in theatres, anything for the sake of talking, to pass time or share gossips to social discussions (25%) on issues such as politics, culture, sports and other common interests. 10% of sample have said they discuss personal problems. In earlier question - For what reasons do you register as members in social networking sites? About 48% have responded as to maintaining existing contacts/friends so this could also

Table: 10 - What are the preferable topics that you discuss with your online friends?

Topics for discussion	Percentage (N=100)
Personal problems	10.3
Just chatting	55.2
Social discussion (politics, culture etc)	25.9
Other	8.6
Total	100

possibly be a reason that 10% of sample have said that they discuss personal problems. Or it can also reflect the degree of intimacy among online relationships.

Table: 11 - How do you rate your relationship with online friends (strangers in real life)?

Relationship with online friends	Percentage
Very intimate	7.5
good friends	20.0
fairly	17.5
average	25.0
None of above	30.0
Total	100

Only 7% of respondents share an intimate relationship with their online friends while 20% say they are good friends. It indicates the level of priority/trust attached to an online relationship among youth. But a considerable sample rated their online relationships as average (25%) and fair (17%). A vast majority 30% rated as none of the above (very intimate, good friends, fairly, average), though they have online friends they do not have any greater affinity to their online relationships.

Youth have friends of opposite gender more in real life (71%) while 28% responded that they have more friends from opposite gender in social networking sites than in real life. Though a vast majority responded that they have friends in opposite gender more in real life, a considerable part of sam-

Table: 12 - Friends of opposite gender are more in?

More opposite gender friends	Percentage (N=100)
Real life	71.1
Social networking	28.9
Total	100

ple do admit they have more opposite gender friends in social networking sites. Its a notable behaviour change owing to the usage of such sites and is evident that they are more in more social contact with the opposite gender while online than in real life situations. Reasons such as shyness, introvert nature, not feasible environment and other societal causes (fear, prejudices, and caution of danger) can all amount to not having same or more opposite gender friends in real life. Factors such as distance, anonymity and technology advancements have created a platform for the social networking users to experiment/ experience friendly relationships with the opposite gender.

Table: 13 - Do you have friendship networks/contacts with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds through social networking sites?

Friendship with different background	Percentage (N=100)
Yes	66.7
No	33.3
Total	100

66% respondents youth have friendship networks/contacts with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds through social networking sites. It could be impossible in real life circumstances. Social networking sites give an opportunity to socialize among people from different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. People sharing similar thoughts and interests could use such sites as platform to participate in communities, discuss on social topics or simply share their everyday chores which in a way could lead to broader global perspective.

40% of respondents have spent about the same face to face time together at home as before, even after becoming members in social networking sites. It states that their family interactions are not jeopardized. A nearly closer

Table: 14 - Social interaction and social networking sites:

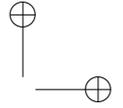
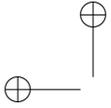
Effect of social networking sites	Percentage (N=100)
The members of the household have spent more face-to-face time together	15.6
Spent less face to face time together	28.9
Spent about the same amount of face to face time together	40.0
Others	15.5
Total	100

percentage of 28% had spent less face to face time together at home after becoming members in social networking sites, proving that more time is spent on the Internet comparatively. They could be termed as heavy users, and so could be easily influenced by the medium due to their prolonged exposure to the medium. But 15% have stated their face to face time together at home before and after becoming members remain the same and hence their face to face communication is not affected by social networking sites

Findings

A majority of the Indian youth are members in one or more social networking sites but also are low users of such sites and used Internet more for mailing and surfing the net (downloads). The findings of the study include:

- 98% of the members in social networking sites are members in Orkut.
- 54% were members in more than one social networking site
- 95% who are members in one or more social networking sites spend varying amount of time from less than 1 hr to about 5 hrs everyday in social networking sites.
- 48% social networking users register as members to maintain existing contacts
- 42% youth make friends in such sites based on their likeness.

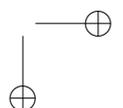
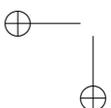


- About 60% of social networking sites users are attempting to establish their personality through these sites
- And 68% interact with strangers (online friends) through personal chats in other messenger services.
- But 10% share their personal problems with online friends while 7% have very intimate relationship with their online friends (strangers). And 20% are good friends with the virtual strangers.
- About 66% have friendship networks/contacts with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds through social networking sites.
- 28% had spent less face to face time together at home before & after using Internet at home
- 95% of youth state that social networking sites acts as platform for re-connecting with lost friends, maintaining existing networks/relationships and sharing knowledge, ideas and opinions

Conclusion

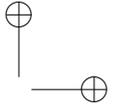
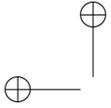
The primary objective of the research undertaken has been to shed light on the evolution of the dominance of social networking sites among the Internet users and its eventual outcome in the social behavior patterns of youth (17-22 yrs). Previous research in spheres of social networking sites and its impact on youth in different global and demographic context provided an extensive secondary source base for the study.

As with many technologies, adoption of the Internet especially for its social uses has seen its highest levels of usage among younger users. The majority of current college students have had access to the Internet and computers for a large percentage of their lives. These digital natives see these technologies as a logical extension of traditional communication methods, and perceive social networking sites as often a much quicker and more convenient way to interact. That they are aware of the danger and risk involved in these sites is a positive indicator that Indian youth are not only techno-savvy and socially active through social networking sites but they also possess social consciousness.



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