

Flinders University of South Australia  
School of Law  
Masters program in Criminal Justice

# **The risks of social networking sites to South Australian high school students**

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Larisa Karklins  
2054659  
BBSc (Hons)

This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the Criminal Justice Masters program in  
the degree of Masters of Arts by Research

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## **Abstract**

The internet and social networking sites play an integral role in many people's lives today all over the world. However, along with any form of new technology come risks, and with social networking sites the risks of cyberbullying and sexual predation are of concern, particularly to young people. This study uses a mixed methods approach to gain an understanding of the prevalence and perceptions of such risks amongst young people. This was accomplished by having a representative sample of South Australian high schools students enrolled in years 8, 10 and 12 from six different high schools across South Australia to complete a questionnaire. This questionnaire gained information about the prevalence of aforementioned risks, as well as the understanding of these risks. The implications of this study is that educating youth will hopefully minimize the likelihood that they will suffer harm if subjected to the twin intrusions of cyberbullying and sexual predation. For a young person equipped with a better knowledge of the risks of using social networking sites will be potentially less naïve and therefore take more care with their online behaviour and interactions.

## **Declaration**

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I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed:

## Acknowledgements

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First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Derek Dalton for his continuous support and assistance over the course of writing this thesis. Despite many setbacks and stressful moments you continued to support and encourage me and for that I am grateful.

I would also like to thank Dr. Barbara Spears for her advice at times and for encouraging me to dream bigger and strive to achieve my goals. Thank you for telling me to stop thinking so much and to just go for it!

Thank you to my family and friends for putting up with my stressful days and my continuous rants, and to my partner for constantly encouraging me to strive for more and to do my best. Without the support of all of you I would have given up a long time ago, so thank you.