

Flinders University of South Australia  
School of Law  
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# **The risks of social networking sites to South Australian high school students**

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Larisa Karklins  
2054659  
BBSc (Hons)

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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:

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

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*'If we were to search for a place where there were few enforced rules and limited accountability or consequences; where having power and a voice were not dependent on age, gender, or ethnicity; where every interest could find an outlet; and where each explorer would meet with wondrous discoveries and frightening realities, cyberspace would be our destination of choice.'*

- Berson (2000, p. 158).

Consider a young girl sitting at her computer. She has a smile on her face, is typing frantically and moving the mouse around at a high speed and yet seems at ease. Now consider this. Her smile turns to an expression of sadness and she shuts the computer down and leaves the room. The next morning, she deletes whatever made her upset, moves on, and is all well and good. Sadly, this is not how stories like this usually pan out in today's world. Young people sit at their computer for sometimes hours a day and when faced with something upsetting, either retaliate and worsen the situation or simply continue to go back for more. It is uncommon that someone will consider a logical response such as 'walking away'. That is the focus of this thesis, the risks that young people face online and what their beliefs are about these risks. The aims and objectives of this thesis will be discussed in detail shortly.

The Internet has become a huge part of the way we live in today's fast paced society. The Internet is not only used for research, business, buying and selling goods, but also for communicating, promoting oneself, for creativity and self expression. The Internet has many uses that stretch far and wide, from online shopping, paying bills, selling used items, buying and selling property or cars, to blogging, sharing photographs, keeping track of emails and staying in touch with friend and family. The Internet has many uses, but the purpose of this thesis revolves around an extremely topical issue: social networking.

#### *Internet Use*

Social networking sites can be defined as 'web-based services that allow individuals to, firstly: construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system; secondly, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and thirdly; view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the

system' (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). Alternatively, they can be defined as recently developed, mediated environments, where people communicate with existing relationships, form new ones, cement ties with others, and re-establish old friendships (Spears, Kofoed, Bartolo, Palermi, & Costabile, 2012).

The Internet that we know originated in the United States in 1970 as part of an initiative by the Defence Department, called ARPANET (Castells, 2000, as cited in Rosenfeld, & Thomas, 2012). The first proposal for a 'World Wide Web', however, was not made until 1989, and during this time the Internet was only available in Australia to universities (Spears, 2012). It was not until the commercialisation of the Internet in 1995 when it became available for public use and individuals were able to have general access through dial-up services, which then turned to broadband services (Spears, 2012). Gradually, the Internet was adapted for social uses. It can be said that the Internet has very much been adapted in the same way as the telephone initially was, for businesses and to keep in touch with people that one already knows. What makes the Internet different now, however, is social networking sites. These give people the opportunity to expand their social networks, and some scholars suggest that computer mediated communication will reinforce existing social patterns (Castells, 2000; Putnam, 2000, as cited in Rosenfeld & Thomas, 2012). Furthermore, Rosenfeld and Thomas (2012), state that the Internet has made communications within existing social networks much more efficient than the telephone, and that the Internet has dramatically improved the efficiency of searching for and finding new people outside of one's pre-existing social network.

It was not until 1995 that cybersafety initiatives and rules and regulations were beginning to come into consideration. The Internet has slowly become a part of everyday life and central to everything we do, through schools businesses and families. Schools obviously already had general behaviour policies and strategies in play in regards to safety, child abuse, violence, neglect and bullying, and so the shift to cyber-safe rules was simply a 'natural progression' (Spears, 2012, p. 190).

Then, it was in 2004 that Facebook was launched, overtaking MySpace as the leader of social networking sites, then came YouTube in 2005, Twitter in 2006, Tumblr in 2007, and Formspring in 2010 (Spears, 2012). There are hundreds of social networking sites available on the Internet, but the most popular, and the ones that will be the main focus in this thesis when referencing social networking sites will be Facebook, Tumblr and Twitter. Facebook is listed as the most popular social networking site, with over 750 million users and worth over 100 billion dollars (Sparks,



2011). This site allows you to post personal information about yourself, share status updates about your day and location, post photos and videos about yourself, comment and 'like' other people's updates, photos and comments and to send personal messages. Tumblr is a blogging website used primarily for sharing photos, quotes, and has more of an 'online diary' style to it. And finally Twitter is a status website used primarily by figures in the media to share with their fans, or 'followers' as Twitter calls them, about their day to day activities and opinions.

Karklins and Dalton (2012) explain that the use of social networking sites is growing in both Australia and abroad. Research shows that 28% of adolescents have their own online diaries or journals, 27% have their own websites, and 55% have their own profiles on social networking sites (Lenhart et al, 2007, cited in Anderson-Butcher et al 2010, p. 64). Facebook alone has over 400 million members worldwide (ABC 2010). Young people in today's world are sometimes considered to be an entirely different generation to that of their peers. Holmes (2011) explains that different researchers have created different labels for this technology savvy group of young people, such as 'cyberkids' (Holloway, & Valentine, 2003), 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001), the 'Internet generation', 'net generation' or 'n-geners' (European Commission, 2007; Tapscott, 1998) and a 'Google generation' (*Guardian*, 2006). It can be said that these different labels reflect a belief that something is 'fundamentally distinct about the ways the generation in question appropriates digital technology in comparison with older generations' (Holmes, 2011, p. 1105).

Lee (2005) explains that young people are often considered to be more future oriented and more technologically apt than adults. It could be suggested that young people are this way because they have been brought up with new technology around them. For instance, most young people these days use mobile phones, and so are advanced in their skills of text messaging. Furthermore, most schools have classes that involve the use of computers at some point, and so already young people are more technologically developed than children of twenty years ago simply because they are given more opportunities to develop these skills. Technology is simply a way of life. As Lee (2005, p. 316) so rightly states, the 'young are placed effectively in a somewhat privileged or advantageous situation, as their use of technology is in many senses facilitated through both the education system and the assumed inherent interest they have in technology.'

This is why young people have been given so many different terms as just listed above. Techno-enthusiasts and young people themselves have made claims about the

existence of a digital or Internet generation, however it could be suggested that this label makes young people seem as though they are surrounded by digital and interactive technologies and growing up with a sense of digital expertise, despite their backgrounds (Lee, 2008). These new forms of digital expertise are definitely visible in young people's use of technology, and in particular the fact that they are very much so taking over the Internet through social networking and the creation of their own sites. However, Lee (2008) suggests that one must consider the different backgrounds that young people come from in terms of socio-economic status.

Statistics show that access to the Internet is unevenly distributed between lower and higher socio-economic groups, and has become a concern in governmental policy making as the Internet and technology is now considered a fundamental part of the education system (National Statistics, 2003, as cited in Lee, 2008). The Internet is seen as a vital tool in terms of learning, social inclusion, and civic participation and democracy, and thus, in terms of young people has ensured emphasis has been placed on the provision of digital resources to schools through policy design (Lee, 2008). Therefore, several initiatives have ensured that in some school teachers are provided with laptops and that schools have an active Internet connection (Lee 2008). This may all seem well and good for young people while they are at school, but what about when they go home? What about those young people coming from poorer households who cannot even afford a computer let alone a good Internet connection? This is where class, status, and household income come into play on the effectiveness of schools having such a large dependence on computers and Internet access. A review of government funding, for instance, found that despite the funding towards computer technologies, the gap between the best and worst ICT provision is unacceptably wide and increasing ... [as] the quality, diversity and extent of pupils' experiences vary widely between schools' (Ofsted, 2004, as cited in Lee, 2008, p. 140). In other words, there still exists a digital divide between the more fortunate students than those from a lower socio-economic background.

Conversely, Hargittai and Hinnant (2008) suggest that the Internet divide between different levels of socio-economic status is fading, and that a gender difference in Internet use has almost disappeared entirely. Statistics show that the most connected age group of Internet users are those aged between eighteen and twenty four, and there has been a steady growth of young people that go online over the past few years (NTIA, 2004, as cited in Hargittai, & Hinnant, 2008). For instance, in 2004, 77 per cent of people between eighteen and twenty four went online, and this percentage increased to

88 per cent in 2006 (Fox, 2004; Madden, 2006, as cited in Hargittai, & Hinnant, 2008). This usage, however, obviously can vary according to what activities people are engaging in when online. For example, research suggests that young people are more inclined to use the Internet for, obviously, social networking, but also for entertainment purposes such as for games and hobbies, downloading music, chatting, or simply surfing the Internet for general fun and to discover leisure activities they may wish to engage in (Fox & Madden, 2005; Madden, 2003; Howard, Rainie, & Jones, 2001, as cited in Hargittai, & Hinnant, 2008). Conversely, older generations are more inclined to use the Internet for job research and professional development, as well as to look at governmental sites and for health information seeking (Fox & Madden, 2005; Cotten & Gupta, 2004, as cited in Hargittai, & Hinnant, 2008). Furthermore, another reason that may influence how much people use the Internet could simply be the issue of media literacy and technological skill.

Despite these many differences in usage, the Internet is very much becoming an integral part of young people's lives. A study by Mcmillan and Morrison (2008) explored how the Internet is becoming central to the everyday activities of young people, and that young people are now 'coming of age' through their use of the Internet. This study found that many young people now tend to define themselves through their Internet use or their social networking site, and some even considered their personal development through online media as a necessary part of evolution (Mcmillan, & Morrison, 2008). This study also addressed the issue of family, and found that in some cases older sibling introduced young siblings to the Internet, and yet in other cases the younger siblings were much more apt and technologically advanced than their older sibling (Mcmillan, & Morrison, 2008). Furthermore, it was common that parents and grandparents had little understanding of their child's online behaviour and activities. This research also found that there is a sense of community online, some communities exist solely online whilst others overlap with real life communities (Mcmillan, & Morrison, 2008). Finally, this research found that the Internet is becoming vital to people's everyday lives, so much so that they are becoming dependent on it. To explain this, it is relevant to quote one of the participant's responses about their Internet dependency and how it now affects almost every aspect of their life:

'I use it all the time, and I believe that my life would be very different without it. I would not be able to look up the things that I wanted to without calling to get a brochure, going to the library, or ordering a book or catalogue. My phone bills would be extremely high, and I would not talk to my mom as much. I

really do not see what people did before the Internet was invented.’  
(McMillan, & Morrison, 2008, p. 87)

This is a key example of how much the Internet is influencing the lives of not just young people, but people all over the world of all ages. People are becoming incredibly dependent on it and it would be interesting to see what would happen to the world if it was suddenly taken away.

It is now time to turn back to the topic that this thesis explores, that being social networking and the risks involved with it. Whilst the Internet may very well be a great tool for learning, socialising, and self exploration - all of which shall be discussed throughout this thesis - along with the positive aspects come the risks of sexual predators, online harassment and cyber-bullying (Internet Safety Technical Task Force, 2008; Karklins & Dalton, 2012). These risks associated with social networking sites have been ever present in the media, with different stories published almost every day about some situation that involves a social networking site in some way. This next section will now go on to discuss some recent media cases that have seen remarkable amounts of attention.

### *Media Cases*

A story that touched the hearts of many was that of Carly Ryan in 2009. Carly had fallen in love with an idyllic young man online who turned out to be no more than a ‘cyberspace alter-ego’ created by a fifty year old man and his son, who then murdered Carly when she went to meet her ‘lover’ (Fewster, 2009; Karklins & Dalton, 2012).

This story is, sadly, not a completely novel or an isolated incident. In September, 2009, a 17 year old girl was lured to her death after meeting a serial rapist on her site, who was posing as a teenage boy (Marcus, 2010), and in Sydney a teenager was murdered after befriending a man on Facebook (Baillie, 2010). These are not the only times where social networking sites have resulted in murder. In 2009 a young woman was brutally stabbed by her partner after she changed her relationship status from ‘married’ to ‘single’ (Ashley, 2009), and in the same year a 27 year old female was murdered when her ex-boyfriend saw pictures of her on Facebook with another man (Marcus, 2010). Whilst murder displays a horrific consequence of what can result from an improper use of social networking sites, this thesis will look at a less extreme form of social networking: cyberbullying.

Unfortunately, there have been numerous reported incidences of a causal link between cyberbullying and depression and suicide among young people to now be

discussed. One case that stands out and is only a recent is that of Olivia Penpraze. Olivia was suffering from depression and had been chronicling her suffering through videos and photos via the popular blogging site Tumblr, where ‘more than 900 pages of posts and photographs revealed her daily heart-wrenching emotional descent’ (White, 2012). What is also so devastating about this post was that so many people commented and knew what was happening and yet Olivia’s parents knew nothing about the page; it was not until after her death when her father found the page (White, 2012). What is also worthy of note is the presence of comments by users who remained anonymous urging her to kill herself.

This is not a single occurrence. Another case where viscous comments have resulted in harmful behaviour is the case of television presenter Charlotte Dawson. Charlotte was taken to hospital when she attempted suicide after vicious comments were left on her twitter account encouraging her to kill herself, with one person stating ‘please put your face in a toaster’ (Connelly & Keene, 2012). Furthermore, a story that has recently hit the news is that of Amanda Todd. Amanda, a fifteen year old Canadian teenager, had been stalked by an alleged paedophile as well as been a victim of cyberbullying and was found having hung herself one month after posting a detailed video on YouTube about her depression (Carman, 2012). The video depicts how she was first lured by a suspected online paedophile to show a picture of her breasts. This paedophile then threatened for a personal show or he would show the pictures to everyone (Carman, 2012). Amanda discovered he had followed through with his threat when police showed up on her doorstep, and was constantly stalked by this man as she moved from school to school and town to town (Carman, 2012). Her video also tells the story of how she was severely beaten at school and left in a ditch, and was constantly cyberbullied (Carman, 2012). What is even more harrowing is that even now, after her death, the bullying is continuing online through her tribute pages. One such tribute page has been set up on Facebook and has over 700, 000 ‘likes’ (Crawford, 2012). Whilst this page shows dozens of kind posts, videos, and photos in memory of Amanda and displaying anti-bullying messages, alongside this are posts that mock Amanda and joke about her death. One such posts includes a photo of a young woman hanging herself with a rope and another of a bottle of bleach and the caption “it’s to die for” (Crawford, 2012).

It is difficult in this situation to determine what schools can actually do to prevent this sort of bullying from occurring, given that schools cannot control what

students do out of school hours and off school grounds. Carman (2012) explains that schools may use mediation, restorative justice, counselling, or choose to involve parents or even police if physical violence is involved. Furthermore, Carman (2012) also states that schools are having to increasingly focus on teaching children as young as kindergarten the basic rules of socially acceptable behaviour, as parents are so busy these days that they simply do not have the time to tell them the difference between right and wrong. It is when harassment follows victims in to cyberspace that schools have trouble controlling what school children do. More will be discussed on this area in the literature review chapter of this thesis.

It would appear that social networking sites are having an impact on how people behave in today's world. Not only that, but it is being used as a means to bully and torment people to such an extent that some of them are turning to suicide as an escape, and is even continuing after their death. It is now that we ask why do so many young people use social networking sites so much? Why is the Internet and social networking so popular and such a big part of many people's lives?

Boyd (2008) suggests that social networking sites allow communication to cross all boundaries of space and time. Boyd (2008) explains that the online world contains four characteristics which separate it from the offline world and make it a preferred method of communication. The first is that it has a sense of persistence in that there is always a record left of what is said. Secondly, there is the matter of searchability in that it is easy to find old contacts as well as discover new ones. Thirdly, there is a state of replicability in that any form of communications can easily be copied or stored for later viewing and can remove the likelihood of misinterpretation or forgetfulness. And finally there is the matter of an invisible audience in that everything is anonymous and one is not aware of who or how many people may be viewing particular information. Put simply, there are no limits when it comes to the online world. This, of course, is where risk comes in to play when young people are involved, as there are no rules or boundaries in place to keep them in line. There are also many positive aspects associated with social networking sites which will be discussed later in this thesis.

### *Research Aims and Objectives*

This project aims to explore young people's perceptions of risks associated with social networking sites, specifically, the dangers of cyberbullying and sexual predation. To date, there is only now beginning to be research emerging in both Australia and abroad about the risks of social networking sites, particularly to youth. Furthermore,

youth's understanding of such risks and their actual beliefs about them is in need of more attention. Most research has revolved around general use of social networking sites or simply the prevalence of cyberbullying. This research, however, addresses young people's actual beliefs and thoughts about these risks as well as exploring personal stories and experiences. Through the use of questionnaires in six high schools across South Australia, this project will gain significant insight into the online thought-processes and behaviour of youth. Therefore, this thesis has the following main objectives

- 1) To develop an understanding of the prevalence of specific risks (e.g. cyber bullying and online harassment and the dangers of sexual predation) associated with social networking sites in relation to youth in South Australian high schools.
- 2) To explore how well youth understand the risks of using social networking sites, and how much, if at all, this understanding influences their conduct on these sites.
- 3) To reveal how much of an impact these risks are having on youth, as well as gain an understanding of whether social networking sites are altering the behaviour of youth in general.

#### *Situating Myself and Thesis Outline*

With research like this I believe it is important to explain how I situate myself, as both a researcher and a young person, in relation to this topic of social networking and researching with young people. Admittedly I am an avid social networking user. I use Facebook every day though mostly just to see what people are up to or to update people on what is happening with my life. My interest in this area of research, however, came about due to my younger sister. Being in the age group that this study addresses she has constantly had to deal with these issues with social networking sites, particularly cyberbullying and simply what I would call 'drama'. I find researching young people fascinating and I am truly intrigued by their voices and what they have to say about these issues. Furthermore, I am very passionate about the area of cyberbullying and young people and can get very amorous when discussing it, thus fuelling my desire to study in this area and contribute to this area of research.

### *Overview of thesis*

This thesis will begin with a literature review, situating the relevance of risk theory, trust theory, bullying theory, cyberbullying theory, and sexual predation theory to the thesis. Following on from this chapter will be the current study, beginning by explaining the methodology such as ethical issues, participant consideration and the design and implementation of the questionnaire, followed by a thorough results and discussion section covering general statistical findings, perspectives on social networking, sexual predation, cyberbullying, violence and comparisons between the different categories in this study. Finally, this thesis will conclude by discussing the implications of this study, suggestions for the future including educating parents, teachers and schools, as well as using young people and social media to promote anti-cyberbullying regimes. This section will also discuss the limitations of this study and considerations for future research.



## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

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#### Risk

*'Nothing is a risk in itself; there is no risk in reality. But on the other hand, anything can be a risk; it all depends on how one analyses the danger, considers the event.'*

- (Ewald, 1991, p. 199, as cited in Dean, 1999)

This study's main focus is that of risk and the perception of risk of young people today. There are many aspects of risk that must be discussed, particularly its relation to young people. Firstly, it is important to define what 'risk' actually is. Breakwell (2007) defines risk in terms of two proportions: probabilities and effects. In terms of probability, risk is the likelihood of an event occurring as a result of a hazard (anything animate or inanimate that could lead to harm), and in terms of effects is the extent of the harm associated with the event that occurred (Breakwell, 2007).

The problem with this definition, however, as Breakwell (2007) points out, is that it revolves around the notion of 'harm', and as such, who determines what is deemed as harmful and what is not? People have different perceptions about what is dangerous and what is not, and these different perceptions are a problem. Breakwell (2007) continues by explaining that the assessment of harm by individuals is based upon how acceptable the outcome is, as well as who the victims are and who, if anyone, benefits from it. Thus, Breakwell (2007, p. 3) concludes that the very existence of harm, and consequently the existence of a hazard and the estimated risk associated with it, are simply a 'product of social analysis and negotiation'. There are a range of consequences of risk, and Sandman (1989, as cited in Will, Lorek, Sabo & Kidd, 2009) defines risk as a combination of the mortality rate from the event and the outrage that result from it. Furthermore, Sandman (1989, as cited in Will, Lorek, Sabo & Kidd, 2009, p. 640) supports Breakwell (2007) by appropriately stating that 'the general public's concern about a particular risk is associated more with the amount of outrage it generates than with the amount of hazard it presents'. In other words, something can be perceived as more 'risky' just because the public are more outraged by it, and not so much because of how dangerous it actually is.

In support of this, Tulloch (1999) explain that risk is formed more from people's perceptions of risk rather than the actual risk itself. For example, a fear of crime can be

framed more as a 'mistaken impression' of crime due to the way it is portrayed in the media, and thus the way it is perceived by the public (Tulloch, 1999). As a result, the public's perception of the prevalence or dangerousness of some risks can often be exaggerated, and therefore they take precautions to avoid such risks. This type of behaviour of overvaluing a threat and taking excessive precautions to avoid it is known as the availability bias (Sunstein & Zeckhauser, 2011). This relates to the next point that Sunstein and Zeckhauser (2011, p. 439) explain of probability neglect, which addresses the notion of whether 'attention to probability could be overshadowed by attention to the affective goodness or badness of the outcome.' Overall, risk is mainly perceived by the public in a way that is often not proportional to how dangerous or prevalent the risk actually is.

Dean (1999) explains that the significance of risk lies more on what the risk is attached to rather than the risk itself, and explains in great detail a sociological analysis of risk derived from the writings of Ulrich Beck. From this perspective, risk is viewed as a part of the very nature of human beings and as a part of modernity, and thus characterises types of society and their processes (Dean, 1999). Dean (1999) explains that Beck's methodological approach to risk includes three presuppositions: a totalising assumption; an assumption of uniformity of risk and a realist assumption. The first assumption is that risk should be seen as a part of the modernisation process that constitutes our 'risk society', the second assumption is to make risk a general characterization in that it is the same in each different society (Dean, 1999). Finally the third assumption is that the reason why risk is such a part of each individuals experiences and identities today is because it has increased so much that it can no longer be considered calculable or controllable (Dean, 1999). This is certainly the case when considering social networking sites, as it is very difficult to control risk in this sense. No matter what the assumption, risk is a part of society and is even more predominant when children are involved. This section will now discuss risk in relation to children, as well as explain how parental behaviour can influence this.

### *'At risk' children*

Children are primarily seen as 'at risk' and commonly the victims of many situations. Jackson and Scott (1999) explain that risks are deemed more harmful when they threaten the wellbeing of children, and that childhood in general is now viewed as a precious state that is either robbed from them or challenged by those who refuse to remain 'childlike'. As such, children are seen as in need of protection and become a

main focus of risk anxiety. Jackson and Scott (1999, p. 86) explain that risk anxiety helps to 'construct childhood and maintain its boundaries', and that it focuses around keeping children safe and preserving childhood for as long as possible. In other words the 'specific risks from which children must be protected, serve to define the characteristics of childhood and the 'nature' of children themselves' (Jackson & Scott, 1999, p. 87). In terms of the internet and social networking, parents feel the need to protect their children from these sites as, in a sense, it means their children are 'growing up', and beginning the process of self-exploration. As such, they may construct boundaries around their children due to this perception of risk.

Risk anxiety can be related back to the works of Beck discussed earlier. Beck (1998, as cited in Jackson & Scott, 1999) states that:

'Risk Society begins where tradition ends, when, in all spheres of life, we can no longer take traditional certainties for granted. The less we can rely on traditional securities, the more risks we have to negotiate. The more risks, the more decisions and choices we have to make.'

As a result of this, risk is assessed in such a way as to make the world seem more manageable, it is a way through which people can decide what decisions, possibilities, and actions they should take in life or attempt to control (Jackson & Scott, 1999). In relation to this, Beck and Gernsheim (1995, as cited in Jackson & Scott, 1999) explain the notions of de-traditionalisation and individualisation. De-traditionalisation involves anxiety about the loss of stable families and the life of a child no longer being safe and predictable. Individualisation explains that each parent feels responsible for their child, and as such invests so much of their own life into that of their child's that it becomes part of their own existence to protect them (Beck & Gernsheim, 1995, as cited in Jackson & Scott, 1999). These two notions together create the ideal environment for parental control and investment over their children in this so called 'less safe' world. As a result of this, it is common for parents to want to control their child's transition to adolescence, and as such to control the developmental stages their child goes through as there are beliefs about when it is the 'right time' for a child to behave in a certain way and to experience certain aspects of life. This leads into the next section of this thesis about adolescence and sexuality and the risks associated with this.

### *Sexualised risk*

One of the primary concerns for children these days is that of sexual predators, and this is one of the main topics covered throughout this thesis. As such, risk in

relation to children is particularly of concern when talking about sexualised risk. Jackson and Scott (1999) explain that as children are seen as a special group of beings, as they are young and growing, and so their sexuality is also seen as in need of protection. Risks are seen as more harmful when they threaten the wellbeing of adolescents compared to adults, and adolescents are seen as either being robbed of this part of their lives or refusing to remain in a child state (Jackson and Scott, 1999). The topics of adolescence and sexuality often invoke a state of emotion and sensitivity among parents, and as such these two topics are often avoided in conjunction with each other. Jackson (1982, as cited in Jackson & Scott, 1999, p. 87) appropriately states that 'sexuality is seen as antithetical to the state of 'innocence' which has emerged as a defining characteristic of the 'normal' child.'

Alongside this notion of risk comes theory of the age of consent. At what age is it appropriate for adolescents to be expressing their own sexuality? Social networking sites provide the ideal grounds for adolescents to express their sexual selves, but along with this comes danger, as will be subsequently discussed. This is of concern to adults as young adolescents are able to make these sites and explore their sexual identity, and so the automatic response is to try and regulate this behaviour. The regulation of sexual behaviour, however, has been a focus of conflict around the world for many years. It causes confusion and anxiety amongst adults which underwrites a fierce sense of paternalism and protectionism (Waites, 2005).

Waites (2005) explains that the maturing process of young people can be viewed in different ways. The maturing process can be viewed from a developmental standpoint but addressing each of the developmental phases a child goes through as they grow, or through a social construction standpoint by addressing each of the factors that construct how the child shapes into an adult (Waites, 2005). Adolescence is often seen as the 'difficult' phase that children go through, though commonly hormones are blamed for the emotional states these children go through rather than social construction.

When addressing young people's age of consent what must be considered is the adolescent's rationale of thinking and maturity level, as this can differ according to how responsible and understanding they are of the sexual risks involved with social networking sites. This process is difficult due to the ever changing maturity levels in young people. In other words, 'maturity' is much different now compared to other times due to the 'modernisation' of the sexual child. Egan and Hawkes (2010) discuss that sexuality in children has been viewed in many different ways over time. For instance, in the 1800s, a 'masturbation phobia' existed and those that took pleasure in masturbation

or did it excessively required surgical treatment to remove this problem of ‘excessive vengery’ (Egan and Hawkes, 2010). This view is clearly not the same in most cultures in the world today. Masturbation is viewed as just a normal act when growing up, not some horrific act that requires control and restraint. And so whilst sexual exploration online may seem quite shocking and in need of constraints now, it will be interesting to see if, in the future, this will be perceived as ‘normal’ teenage behaviour.

It is now important to turn to social networking. Livingstone and Haddon (2008, as cited in Boonaert, & Vettenburg, 2011) have made an inventory of the different types of specific risks on the Internet. The risks include: content risks, which refers to the possible exposure to illegal or harmful content; contact risks, which involves contact with strangers and cyberbullying; commercial risks, which refers to issues such as illegal downloading, advertising and gambling; and finally privacy risks, which involves giving out personal information as well as the risk of hacking (Livingstone, & Haddon, 2008, as cited in Boonaert, & Vettenburg, 2011). These risks are all extremely relevant for this study, as these are the risks that young people face every day. Before going into detail about the specific risks involved with social networking that this thesis will cover, however, it is important to explain the concept of trust, specifically in online communities.

### Trust

Trust is one of the key factors that contribute to how people use social networking sites. Young people communicate with others so freely not only because of anonymity, but also because they trust each other. But why do they trust people that they cannot see or may never have met before?

It could be suggested that online communities create a sense of belonging and a feeling of being safe. For example, Rosen, Lafontaine and Hendrickson (2011) appropriately state that the Internet has ‘changed the concept of community, blurring the distinction between virtual communities and face-to-face communities.’ Rosen, Lafontaine and Hendrickson (2011) continue by explaining that online communities are beneficial for both people that see each other face-to-face on occasion (as they can use the online community to share information and details), and also for people who do not meet face-to-face (as they can use the online community to communicate). Trust, however, plays a crucial role in the survival of online communities. Feng et al. (2004, as cited in Rosen, Lafontaine, & Hendrickson, 2011) supports this by stating that in order

for online communities to function and survive there is a definite need for the presence of trust between members.

It is difficult to define trust. From a psychological perspective, trust has previously been defined as the ‘trait of interpersonal relations, the feature of the socio-individual field in which people operate, the cultural resource utilized by individuals in their actions’ (Sztompka, 1999, as cited in Henderson & Gilding, 2004, p. 488). As human beings, however, we have a desire to predict one’s future, and thus predict the potential for harm by trying to guess future outcomes. Thus, to better define the true meaning of trust Sztompka (1999, as cited in Henderson & Gilding, 2004, p. 491) appropriately states:

‘Acting in uncertain and uncontrollable conditions, we take risks, we gamble, we make bets about the future uncertain, free actions of others. Thus we have arrived at the simple, most general definition of trust: trust is a bet about the future contingent actions of others.’

But due to the changes in society and the creation of online social networks, trust has had to adapt with this model. As Henderson and Gilding (2004) explain, the world has changed from societies based on ‘fate’ to those based on human agency, social and technical enhancements have created new threats and hazards in the world, and as a result one’s pool of trust must enlarge. Henderson and Gilding (2004) conducted a study to explore the development of trust online, and found that participants were more likely to disclose personal information online compared to offline. Furthermore, the participants in this study also identified three different problems associated with trust and online relationships:

- 1) limited cues giving rise to unrealistic self-presentation and expectations
- 2) a lack of accountability in online friendships
- 3) the scope for deceit and betrayal on the Internet (Henderson & Gilding, 2004).

The first problem identified is the problem of people having relationships online and painting a picture of themselves that may or may not be true. For example a young girl may be talking to a young boy online and presenting themselves in a way that is not an accurate portrayal of themselves, and this therefore can lead to unrealistic expectations. The second problem relates to the issue of accountability, in that one can behave in a manner online that may threaten a relationship, but because of the anonymity of the Internet the consequences of such actions may be hard to estimate. In Henderson and Gilding’s (2004, p. 496) study, one participant stated that even if the

friendship did break down due to their actions it did not matter, as ‘how do [they] know they are genuine friends anyway.’ Finally, the third problem relates to the ever present issue of people purporting to be someone they are not. Deceit and betrayal is all too easy on the Internet. These three problems each relate to the issue of trust and how this plays an important part in online relationships. The issues of cyberbullying and sexual predation also involve the issue of trust, as this is a key determinant in how the behaviour can begin in the first place. In cyberbullying, trust may be the reason a person ‘adds’ another as a ‘friend’ on Facebook to begin with, before becoming a victim of cyberbullying. Of course, people may also add others for wanting to look popular. However, trust also plays a role in the risk of sexual predation, as trust is at the very foundation of how these relationships begin, for if trust was not involved one would not contact another in the first place or give information.

It is now important to turn to the focus of this thesis and that is to integrate these risks into social networking. This thesis is focusing mainly on cyberbullying and online harassment and the danger of sexual predators. This section will begin by explaining social networking in general and explain young people’s use of social networking sites. It will follow by explaining bullying and cyberbullying, and continue by explaining the dangers of sexual predation online. Finally, it will conclude by placing these risks into a very real context by discussing recent cases in which these issues have been present.

### Social Networking

Facebook. MySpace. YouTube. Twitter. Tumblr. Say these words in a crowded room of teenagers and they will all know exactly what you are talking about. Social networking sites are websites where you can create a ‘profile’ of yourself, where you can write information about your life, post photos and videos of yourself, post updates about your day to day activities and what you are doing, ‘tag’ other people and places in posts so people know who you are with and where you are, and comment on other peoples pictures, videos, profile in general. Put simply, there are many different uses for social networking sites and many different opportunities one can partake in. These websites do indeed provide unique opportunities to stay connected with one another, particularly for people with family in other countries and even from a business standpoint, however this level of ‘connectedness’ is of concern when it comes to young people. Associated with these sites often comes the risks of cyberbullying, stalking, hacking, identity theft, sexual solicitation and predation, and on the more extreme side can lead to suicide.

Research by Lenhart, Madden, Macgill, and Smith (2007, as cited in Pujazon-Zazik, & Park, 2010, p. 79) has found that 91 percent of social networking teens say they use social networking sites to stay in touch with friends, and 72 percent of these claimed they use the sites to make plans with friends, 49 percent to make new friends, and 17 percent to flirt. There have been few studies conducted about the risks associated with social networking sites, and even fewer questioning youth about their behaviour, beliefs, and understand of what these sites involve. However, the research that has been done shows that these concerns are very real. Some recent studies on the prevalence of cyberabuse found that this is a problem that is indeed growing, and that sexual and emotional abuse are being pursued through social networking sites (Berson, Berson, & Ferron, 2002; Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2001; Mitchell et al., 2003; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004a, 2004b, as cited in Mishna, Cook, Saini, Wu & MacFadden, 2011). Thus, this research exploring the prevalence and understanding of the risks of cyberbullying and sexual predation is crucial to address the risks that are associated with social networking sites. It is imperative to understand how much of a concern this matter actually is.

### Bullying

Before turning to the discussion of cyberbullying, it is first important to address the issue of bullying, as traditional bullying is where cyberbullying extends from. Bullying as defined by Batsche and Knoff (1994, p. 165) is a 'form of aggression in which one or more students physically and/or psychologically (and more recently, sexually) harass another student repeatedly over a period of time.'

Bullying is becoming an ever increasing problem in schools all over the world. Olweus (1991, as cited in Batsche & Knoff, 1994) suggests that bullying is more frequent and serious than it was fifteen years ago. Furthermore, Batsche and Knoff (1994) state that fifteen to twenty percent of students will experience bullying in one form or another at some point during their time at school. Patchin and Hinduja (2010) suggest that General Strain Theory (GST) can be used to explain bullying. GST explains that when a person experiences some sort of strain in their life that results in making them angry or frustrated, they then let out these negative emotions through antisocial and sometimes criminal behaviour, in this case, bullying (Patchin & Hinduja, 2010). Agnew (1992, as cited in Patchin & Hinduja, 2010) revisited strain theory and identified three possible sources that may provide strain: a failure to achieve goals; a loss of positive stimuli; and the presence of negative stimuli. These could be present



amongst youth that engage in bullying behaviour. A failure to achieve goals could be present through a student with poor academic performance (which is, in fact, a characteristic of bullies and will be discussed later). A loss of positive stimuli could be the termination of a relationship or some sort of punishment from their parents for behaving badly. And the presence of negative stimuli could be physical abuse from their parents (also a possible characteristic for bullies which will be discussed in the next section).

Conversely, it has also been suggested that bullying can be considered the source of the strain for victims of bullying, who may in turn become involved in deviant behaviour. Agnew (2001, as cited in Hay, Meldrum & Mann, 2010, p. 132) explains that bullying should most definitely be included as a strain because it satisfies four different conditions that characterise strains:

‘(1) It should be perceived as unjust (because bullying often will violate basic norms of justice), (2) it should be perceived as high in magnitude (because peer relations often are central in the lives of adolescents), (3) it should not be associated with conventional social control (because bullying often will occur away from adult authority), and (4) it should expose the strained individual to others—the bullies themselves—who model aggressive behavior.’

Hay, Meldrum and Mann (2010) found in their study that bullying and cyberbullying resulted in deviant behaviours, and that bullying should be considered a consequential strain when GST is considered. Haynie, et. al. (2001), suggest that a characteristic of bullying is that the victim is weaker than the bully. This leads into the next areas of discussion which is the characteristics of the bully and the victim.

### *The Bully*

It has been suggested that bullying is ‘intergenerational’ and that bullies come from homes where parents:

‘(a) prefer physical means of discipline (authoritarian); (b) are sometimes hostile and rejecting; (c) are described as both hostile and permissive (inconsistent parenting/little supervision); (d) have poor problem-solving skills; and (e) teach their children to strike back at the least provocation.’ (Floyd, 1985; Greenbaum, 1988; Loeber & Dishion, 1984, as cited in Batsche & Knoff, 1994, p. 166).

In such cases, the child develops hostile and aggressive behaviours from their parents and as a result replicates them at school on weaker victims. This is supported by Olweus (1980, as cited in Haynie, et. al., 2001) who found that bullying is related to three parenting characteristics: a negative emotional attitude; a tolerance of aggressive behaviour; and the use of physical punishment on their child. In other words, it is suggested that if a parent shows negative emotions towards their child, is tolerant of them when they use aggressive behaviour but uses physical punishment for other reasons, then the child is more likely to be involved in bullying behaviour.

Olweus (1991, as cited in Batsche & Knoff, 1994) suggests that bullies are impulsive, they often have a desire to dominate others, and they generally enjoy being a bully as they think the victim 'deserves it'. Thus, their behaviour is reinforced through positive reinforcement in that they continue to enjoy doing it. This is supported by Haynie, et. al. (2001) who explain that bullies often have a positive attitude towards aggressive behavior, a negative attitude towards their peers, and are also generally physically stronger than their victims. Bullies also tend to have dominant behaviour, little empathy for others and feel secure and sure about themselves (Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008). In other words, bullying often occurs due to a power imbalance between the bully and the victim. Furthermore, it has been suggested that those involved in aggressive behaviour tend to view others behaviour in a more hostile manner than those who are non-aggressive (Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008). Therefore, one child may view another's behaviour as aggressive whereas another may not.

Whilst studies have mixed findings on whether age plays a role in bullying, research suggests that the social structuring between students in primary and secondary school differs, and this influences bullying behaviour and the reasons as to why students may engage in bullying. Krapmann (1999, as cited in Schäfer, Kom, Brodbeck, Wolke, & Schulz, 2005, p. 324) explains that in primary school the social context is 'mainly formed by dyadic relationships and social interactions characterised by a desperate search to retain symmetry'. Therefore, if another child acts in a manner that is unfavourable to their beliefs, or an event occurs that threatens to influence the symmetry of their world, that child may resort to bullying others to even things out. As children develop and grow in to late primary school students, Pellegrini and Bartini (2000, as cited in Schäfer, et al., 2005) explains that social relationships in boys tend to be extremely driven by dominance, and thus peer hierarchies come into play which may in turn fuel the desire to bully others, such as those considered to be in a lower hierarchy. In later development and towards adolescence, young people develop the ability to

reciprocate the behaviours of those beyond their own peer group, and the hierarchies established earlier in life become more complex and more hierarchically structured (Schäfer, et al., 2005). This build up of hierarchies suggests that there are shared opinions of different levels of social status among peers, and Schäfer, et al. (2005) suggests that this is typical in secondary school environments. Thus, this existence of a hierarchical structure in high school could be one of the many reasons as to why young people may turn to bullying.

It is now important to turn to the victims of bullying and how they are affected by it.

### *The Victim*

Olweus (1973, as cited in Batsche & Knoff, 1994) has identified that there are passive victims and provocative victims. Passive victims can be described as having anxious and nervous behaviour and generally unable to defend themselves, whereas provocative victims can be described as being restless and short tempered and are more likely to retaliate (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). It is not surprising that there are fewer than one in five provocative victims and thus the main type is passive, and these victims are generally lonely and have fewer friends, thus having few people to turn to for support (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). This is supported by Haynie, et. al. (2001) who explain that victims generally display depressed, nervous and anxious behaviour, and often have low self esteem and are withdrawn from social situations. Furthermore, victims also tend to be introverted, insecure, vulnerable, submissive and quiet (Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008). Olweus (1978, as cited in Ma, 2001) supports this by explaining that victims of bullying often have no friends at school and are overly protected by their parents at home, and, rather than the stereotypical view of a victim of bullying, they are not often overweight and wearing glasses but instead lack social skills or the ability to defend themselves and retaliate. Furthermore, victims have high social anxiety, a fear of negative peer evaluation, as well as social distress and social avoidance (Slee, 1994, as cited in Ma, 2001).

Graham and Juvonen (2001, as cited in Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008) explain that there are two types of attributions that refer to why victims try to explain their victimisation, that being behavioural self blame and characterological self blame. Behavioural self blame is controllable but unstable and has more negative consequences as it is related to depression and loneliness, whereas characterological self blame is stable but uncontrollable (Georgiou & Stavrinides, 2008). An example of behavioural

self blame could be that a young person believes that something they did is what is causing them to be a victim of bullying, whereas characterological self blame would be more the victim believing that is simply because of who they are that makes them a victim. Thus, either their behaviour or their character is the cause of their victimization.

It is relevant for this study to note that Boulton and Underwood (1992, as cited in Batsche & Knoff, 1994) found that victims report that about 65% of bullying is perpetrated by boys, 15% by girls, and 19% by a mixture of boys and girls. It is expected that the type of bullying would vary according to gender, and that boys would display more physical forms of bullying whereas girls would display more teasing and ridicule behaviour. Olweus (1973, as cited in Batsche & Knoff, 1994) has labeled these two different forms of bullying as either direct bullying (the physical fights that boys may participate in) or indirect bullying (the social exclusion techniques used by girls). These types of behaviour are relevant to cyberbullying also, and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Whilst research shows that bullying is perpetrated more by boys than girls, some researchers argue that if one considers the many different forms of bullying (such as spreading rumours and social ostracism) then girls are just as likely to bully others as males are (Ma, 2001). Lane (1989, as cited in Ma, 2001, p. 353) explains that boys and girls bully for different reasons which is why they use different methods, and appropriately states that ‘bullying for boys is more likely to be part of power-based social relationships and for girls affiliation activities are more frequently the source of bullying activities’.

### *Effects of Bullying*

Batsche and Knoff (1994) explain that victims of bullying are fearful and anxious when in the environment that the bullying occurs, and that as a response to this may engage in avoidance behaviours, such as truancy, or conversely aggressive behaviours, such as engaging in a fight or bringing a weapon to school. These behaviours can consequently lead to a drop in academic performance, and as bullying contributes to making school a place to be feared and hated by students, Batsche and Knoff (1994, p. 168) state that ‘effective schooling cannot occur under conditions of intimidation and fear’. Greenbaum (1998, as cited in Batsche & Knoff, 1994) states that bullying can even lead to suicide in some cases. This is supported by Patchin and Hinduja (2006) who explain that bullying can not only lead to low self esteem and eating disorders, but can contribute to depression and suicidal ideation, even homicide

(such as that seen in the infamous Columbine Shootings in the United States of America). This is also supported by Haynie, et. al (2001) who state that victims of bullying have lower self esteem later in life than people who were not bullied in school. In terms of the bully, Haynie, et. al. (2001) suggest that bullies have a higher risk of developing criminal tendencies later in life, as well as be at risk of alcohol and drug abuse. This next section will discuss how the schools in which the bullying occurs respond to bullying.

### *Schools*

Research suggests, sadly, that '60% of victims report that school personnel respond poorly, respond only "sometimes or never," or try to put a stop to the bullying "only once in a while or almost never"' (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Hoover, Oliver, & Hazler, 1992; Olweus, 1991, as cited in Batsche & Knoff, 1994, p. 168). This suggests that schools often do relatively little in an attempt to stop bullying occurring within a school, and this is even more of a challenge to cyberbullying which will be discussed later. A reason for this could be that the teachers feel that it would be helpful to simply ignore the problem, as in if the form of bullying is that of isolation or exclusion the teachers may not view it as damaging compared to physical bullying (Stephenson & Smith, 1988, as cited in Batsche & Knoff, 1994).

Another reason could be that the victims do not report that they are being bullied, either out of fear of the bullying getting worse, or that the teachers will not be able to do anything to stop it anyway, and in this scenario the bully will generally get more attention from adults than the victim (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). This is because so much attention will be focused on how to stop the bully and change their behaviour through punishment that often the victim is forgotten. This notion that young people may not want to report cyberbullying for fear that nothing may be done is supported by Marées and Petermann (2012), who explain that most victims of cyberbullying believe that nothing can be done to prevent it or that adults cannot help. Therefore, Marées and Petermann (2012) suggest that the 'provision of supportive student-teacher-relationships and maintenance of an empathic, nonthreatening, positive school environment, with adults showing resources to successfully tackle cyberbullying, and having open discussions about cyberbullying may improve students' confidence that seeking help from an adult could be helpful'. Young people need to be made aware that there is help out there and that something can be done.

Overall, relatively little research has been conducted around what intervention strategies are actually successful in reducing cyberbullying. Olweus (1992, 1994, as cited in Haynie, et. al., 2001) explain that in order to reduce bullying schools must have warm, positive interaction from adults with the students, they must have tough restrictions as to what is classified as unacceptable behaviour, they must have clear surveillance of students, and they must have non-hostile consequences for bad behaviour. Researchers suggest that programs for the prevention of cyberbullying should be incorporated into school curricula, and that these programs should address Internet safety as well as the appropriate conduct on social networking sites (Marées & Petermann, 2012). This topic of what measures schools can take to reduce cyberbullying will be discussed in further detail in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

### Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, as defined by Erdur-Baker (2010, p.110) involves ‘hurtful and intended communication activity using any form of technological device such as the Internet or mobile phones.’ Therefore, bullying can occur through text messaging, emails, or through comments on social networking sites. Cyberbullying is an ever-present problem in the world of today. A study by Patchin and Hinduja (2006, as cited in Erdur-Baker, 2010) surveyed children under the age of eighteen, and found that 11 percent of participants reported being bullies online, 29 percent of participants reported being victims online and 47 percent have witnessed online bullying. An Australian study by Campell and Gardner (2005) found that 11 percent of children claimed to be cyberbullies and 14 percent of children claimed to be cybervictims. Furthermore, a British study found that 22 percent of students between the ages of 11 and 16 years old had been victims of cyberbullying (Mahdavi, Carvalho, & Tippett, 2006, as cited in Popovic-Citic, Djuric, & Cvetkovic, 2011). Finally, Kraft (2006, as cited in Popovic-Citic, Djuric, & Cvetkovic, 2011) summarised studies that had been conducted in Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada and found that, overall, general levels of victimisation of cyberbullying varied from 10 percent to 42 percent, and levels of bullying varied from 6 percent to 33 percent.

Some studies have been conducted that have explored whether there are gender differences in cyberbullying. Li (2006, as cited in Wade, & Beran, 2011) found that almost double the amount of male students were involved in cyberbullying, than female students. However, this could simply be because males and females consider different types of behaviour to be classified as ‘bullying’. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004, as cited in

Wade, & Beran, 2011) explain that there are two forms of cyberbullying: making rude and cruel comments about someone on the Internet, and using the Internet to harass or embarrass someone with whom you have a disagreement. It was suggested earlier that males are more likely to use aggressive behaviour when bullying (direct) and females are more likely to make comments or spread rumours (indirect), and thus it could be possible that males are more likely to self report that they have been cyberbullies than females, as aggressive or physically violent behaviour is a more obvious form of bullying than making nasty comments.

In contrast to this, Ang and Goh (2010) explain gender differences have been found to have mixed results between studies, but that whilst boys are more likely to be involved in traditional bullying, girls may be more likely to be involved in cyberbullying as they may feel less inhibited online as they are more empowered to manipulate others. Furthermore, Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, and Coulter (2012) also explain that the extent to which gender difference plays a role in cyberbullying remains to be unclear due to the extent to which results have been different between past studies. Whilst some studies have found boys are more likely to be victims, others have found girls are more likely to be involved in cyberbullying, and then others have found no difference at all (Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012).

It is also worthy of note, that Ybarra and Mitchell (2004, as cited in Wade, & Beran, 2011) found that the rates of perpetrating cyberbullying increase with age. This is supported by Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, and Coulter (2012), who explain that whilst studies have shown that with traditional bullying it tends to decrease between middle school and high school, cyberbullying has been found to increase. However, once again these findings are limited and some studies have shown no increase. Further research should be conducted specifically in this area to determine whether gender and age actually do make a difference in cyberbullying prevalence and severity.

Pujazon-Zazik and Park (2010) explain that cyberbullying through social networking sites is the more preferred method of bullying amongst youth today as the anonymity it provides allows youth to behave in a way they would not be able to at school in the presence of teachers. Furthermore, another reason why cyberbullying is preferred over traditional bullying for bullies is that one does not have to see the victim. Corbett (2008) supports this by stating that a reason why online harassment is increasing could be that the bully can inflict pain without having to see the person face to face. However, Ang, Tan, and Mansor (2011) suggest that the characteristics of those who engage in traditional bullying are consistent with the behavioural characteristics of

those who engage in cyberbullying. Ang and Goh (2010) explain that cyberspace facilitates low affective and low cognitive empathy in young people, and that the ease of cyberspace encourages bullies to continue their behaviour. Ang and Goh (2010, p. 389) appropriately state that computer-mediated communication ‘allows individuals to be anonymous, and when perceived to be unidentifiable, individuals are not motivated to manage their impression and are inclined to display disinhibited behaviors characteristic of reduced public awareness and self-regulation’. As a result of this ability to remain so unidentifiable, the Reduced Social Cues model explained by Kiesler, Siegel, and McGuire (1984, as cited in Ang, & Goh, 2010, p. 389) states that this lack of feedback in terms of social cues could ‘result in a deficiency in affective empathy and hence, deregulated behavior for both boys and girls’. This is one way of explaining why young people are so inclined to bully others online, as the anonymity and lack of face-to-face contact reduces empathy in the bully, and the ease to communicate in such a way is what keeps the bullying going.

In the past, and as with traditional bullying, the bullying was limited to face to face contact and would end when school ended, but this is simply not the case anymore. Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2009) explain that for each form of traditional bullying there is a new form of cyberbullying that has replaced it. Instead of stealing or damaging a person’s belongings, their profile can be hacked or their computer damaged through a virus. Instead of excluding people from games at school, they can be excluded from online groups. Finally, instead of spreading rumours about a person, a false account can be created or embarrassing photos and personal details can be published online (Vandebosch, & Van Cleemput, 2009). With all these behaviours, the cyberbullying action that has replaced the traditional one has long lasting and harmful consequences.

As with traditional bullying discussed earlier, cyberbullying can lead to low self esteem, suicidal ideation, eating disorders and chronic illness in victims (Borg, 1998; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpelä, Marttunen, Rimpelä, & Rantanen, 1999; Striegel-Moore, Dohm, Pike, Wilfley, & Fairburn, 2002, as cited in Patchin, & Hinduja, 2006, p. 152). Also similar to that of traditional bullying, cyberbullying has been suggested to lead to more maladaptive behaviours in bullies and increased social anxiety (Guana, & Subrahmanyamb, 2009). In support of this Schneider, O’Donnell, Stueve, and Coulter (2012) explain that cyberbullying leads to more extreme psychological harm than with traditional bullying, such as major depression, self harm and suicide, as well as increased anxiety. Furthermore, cyberbullying has been found to be associated with



many other negative indicators, such as lower academic achievement, lower level of school satisfaction and lower levels of commitment to school (Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012). There have only been a few studies in this area in regards to academic performance and the influence cyberbullying has on it, so further research should be conducted to determine if the link is clear.

A problem, however, with cyberbullying behaviour is that it can be difficult to measure, especially when self-reporting techniques are used. The reason being, that people have different views and opinions on what are considered to be bullying behaviours and what are not. Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2009) explain that children commonly do not perceive their behaviour to constitute bullying, or view what they are doing as 'funny' and are unaware of the actually harmful consequences it may be having. Furthermore, this is also related to risky behaviour, in that young people may not view their behaviour online as risky whereas adults may see it as highly dangerous (Livingstone and Helsper, 2007, as cited in Livingstone, 2008).

Another reason as to why cyberbullying is difficult to measure is because of the lack of a universal definition. As Spears, Slee, Owens, and Johnson (2009) explain, as technology is continually advancing and new forms of it are coming out, the ways in which cyberbullying can occur and the very nature of it is also continuously changing. As a result, the definition as to what cyberbullying actually is needs to constantly be revised in order to account for the new forms and characteristics of what constitutes cyberbullying.

Furthermore, another problem with cyberbullying is the difficulty of how to deal with it. Given that this form of bullying occurs away from school grounds and out of school hours, it is clear that teachers and schools face a great challenge in terms of identifying culprits and punishing students. Furthermore, Li (2006) states that under the free-speech rights, it is near impossible to take down a website. Li (2006) continues by discussing the case of Calabasas High School in California, where the principal did get involved after comments on a particular site caused many of his students to suffer from depression, or simply became angry or became unable to focus in school. Here, the principal stated that:

'It might have been happening off campus ... but the effects carry on into the school day ... [However], the site has more than 30,000 members and any student can post a message ... [further], getting the site stopped wasn't easy. Talking to law-enforcement officials led nowhere; there are

few rules governing what can get posted on the Internet.’ (Paulson, 2003, as cited in Li, 2006, p. 159).

In relation to this, Berson (2000) explains that there is confusion between the legality of online behaviour and the ethics of this behaviour. For instance, it is not considered ‘illegal’ to lie about ones age or personality on a website, nor is it illegal to upload sexually provocative photographs, to send sexual messages or explore sexual fantasies (Lanning, 1998, as cited in Berson, 2000). This very problem is what makes young people believe there is a lack of consequences for their actions online. As a result, Berson (2000) explain that this behaviour can escalate to violent online fantasies (including death threats), hacking, stalking and other computer crimes, all of which have legal consequences offline but do not when online. Thus, as Berson (2000, p. 160) appropriately states, ‘Because computer activities seem to be victimless, faceless crimes, the true repercussions may not be discernible to a young person looking for some afternoon fun’.

The problem here is that there is very much a blur between private and public spaces. Young people can access social networking sites from multiple sources, either their computer at home, their phone, iPad, a laptop, basically there is access to social networking sites in many places, and these increased opportunities leads to increased online risk. A study that examined young people aged nine to sixteen found that Australian children experience a high degree of internet access and use, but they also consequently experience a high degree of risk (Green, et al., 2012). This research supports the notion that young people can go online in multiple locations, as the survey found that 96 percent of children go online at school, 95 percent go online at home, 32 percent go online when ‘out and about’, 46 percent go online in their bedroom, 70 percent go online at a friend’s house, and 46 percent go online through a mobile device (Green, et al., 2012). Furthermore, 76 percent of the children involved go online daily, suggesting that these increased opportunities for access results in increased use (Green, et al., 2012). As a result, however, alongside increased access and use also come increased opportunities for risk. Green, at al. (2012) found the risks of seeing sexual images, bullying, sexting, and meeting online contacts offline to be prevalent risks among young people. There has been substantial literature around the area of risks online, but it is important now to turn back to the topic at hand, that being cyberbullying and social networking.

It has also been suggested that social networking sites promote narcissistic behaviour, and that this results in young people having many shallow relations online or having many contacts whom they have never met before (Buffardi and Campbell, 2008). This shall be discussed in the next section about the dangers of sexual predation online as this is relevant here. However, narcissism is also relevant in relation to cyberbullying. Narcissism, as defined by Miller, Campbell and Pilkonis (2007, as cited in Ang, Tan, & Mansor, 2011, p. 2620), is a 'multidimensional construct which includes aspects such as exploitativeness, a grandiose sense of self and superiority, among other aspects'. Research suggests that there is a positive relationship between narcissistic exploitativeness and traditional bullying, as well as general acts of aggression (Ang, Tan, & Mansor, 2011). Whilst there has been little research as to whether this applies to cyberbullying, it is no great leap to suggest that those with narcissistic qualities would engage in cyberbullying, especially as it has already been explained that the characteristics for traditional bullying are consistent with those of cyberbullying. There has, however, been a study that found that individuals with narcissistic traits scored higher on aggression, and reported to be addicted to massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs), especially those of an aggressive nature (Kim, Namkoong, Ku, & Kim, 2008, as cited in Ang, Tan, & Mansor, 2011). Thus, it can be suggested that those who display narcissistic traits on social networking sites may then turn their aggressive behaviour onto fellow students, rather than through MMORPGs.

Moving on from cyberbullying, this next section of this thesis will now discuss the next risk of concern in relation to social networking sites, that being the dangers of sexual predation online.

### The Dangers of Sexual Predation

The dangers of sexual predation involves the use of sexual solicitation, which can be defined as behaviour that involves 'requests to engage in sexual activities or sexual talk or to give personal sexual information that were unwanted or, whether wanted or not, made by an adult' (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2006, as cited in Guana, & Subrahmanyamb, 2009, p. 353).

Social networking sites give young people the opportunity to post information about themselves online. However, young people are more inclined to make rather personal information public by posting it online (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008, as cited in Erdur-Baker, 2010). The problem with this, however is that young people have little

understanding about the dangers associated with sharing personal information online. Doctor Julian Dooley stated in a segment from 'The 7:30 Report' that 'the more information that you put out there the greater the potential is for people to find that information and possibly people that you don't want to' (Baillie, 2010). Of greater concern is the fact that research suggests young people are more inclined to meet up with someone they have met online but never seen in person before, and without the knowledge of their parents (Erdur-Baker, 2010). A survey by Cox Communications and the Center for Missing and Exploited Children indicated that 14 per cent of teenagers have face-to-face meetings with people that they have met online (Goodstein, 2007, as cited in Gable, Ludlow, McCoach, & Kite, 2011). Furthermore, Goodstein (2007, as cited in Gable, Ludlow, McCoach, & Kite, 2011) also found that 16 percent of teenagers younger than the age of eighteen years reported that they had had virtual sex or cybersex (via chat or webcam) with someone they had only met online.

### *The Young People*

According to Wells and Mitchell (2008), there are several factors that could explain why young people seek solace online, and are thus at greater risk of becoming a victim of sexual solicitation. Research suggests that those who have high levels of conflict within the family home, such as miscommunication with parents, supervision issues and other parent-child conflict, results in a greater vulnerability to Internet related problems (Wells & Mitchell, 2008). These family problems could thus result in the child turning to the Internet to find comfort in talking to friends, or others in similar situations. Wells and Mitchell (2008) also suggest that those who have been a victim of sexual assault are more likely to be a victim of sexual solicitation online, and that those who have been victimised offline previously may be suffering from a mental illness, and may turn to the Internet for comfort but are actually at greater risk of being victimised again. Furthermore, a study by Mitchel, Finkelhorn and Wolak (2001) found that young people who were considered to be 'troubled' were at a greater risk of sexual solicitation online. In other words, those who may have recently suffered a loss or are feeling isolated are more likely to be sexually solicited online. This may be due to the same reasons as just discussed, in that they may wish to seek solace and comfort online.

It was discussed earlier that social networking sites promote narcissistic behaviour. This related to the risk of sexual predation as well as that of cyberbullying. Social networking sites are the ideal environment for young people to portray themselves to 'look good' in front of their friends, and thus are more inclined to add

people online that they do not know to look like they have more ‘friends’. This, clearly, is a danger as the people they add may be dangerous. Buffardi and Campbell (2008) explain that this type of behaviour can result in multiple shallow relationships, as well as the publishing of personal information that can easily be used by sexual predators. Furthermore, narcissistic love to talk about themselves and what they are doing, as well as sometimes posting revealing photographs online, and for young people this makes sexual predation much easier and a greater danger.

There is a risk of sexual predation online to young people of today. Educating both young people and parents about risky online behaviours may assist in reducing these risks. Fleming, Greentree, Cocotti-Muller, Elias and Morrison (2006) explain that young people are often more ‘computer savvy’ than their parents, and thus, their parents are often proud of their child’s accomplishment in using technology and impose few restrictions about what they do. For example, a study of 1,001 parents and 304 children aged 8 to 17 years found that more than 70% of parents were concerned that their children would give out personal information online and would view sexually explicit material; but nearly 60% of these parents thought that people ‘worried too much’ about the possibility that their children would be taken advantage of by adults online (Turow & Nir, 2000, as cited in Fleming, Greentree, Cocotti-Muller, Elias, & Morrison, 2006, p. 137). This attitude may make the notion of parents discussing Internet safety with their children difficult, as some parents either do not believe social networking to be all that risky, or do not believe that their child is at risk of becoming a victim of sexual predation.

### *The Sexual Predator*

There has been debate over what differentiates an online sex offender with an offline sex offender. Literature suggests that online offenders are those who ‘(a) access child pornography out of curiosity or impulse, without specific sexual interest in children; (b) access child pornography to satisfy sexual fantasies, but do not commit contact sex offenses; (c) create and distribute child pornography solely for financial gain; and, lastly, (d) use the Internet to facilitate contact sex offenses (Krone, 2004; Lanning, 2001, as cited in Babchishin, Hanson, & Hermann, 2011, p. 93). This categorisation suggests that online sex offenders are a unique type of sexual offender. Cohen and Felson (1979, as cited in Babchishin, Hanson, & Hermann, 2011) explain that Routine Activity Theory explores the notion that predatory criminal behaviour requires motivated offenders, suitable targets, and a lack of supervision. The Internet,

therefore, is a prime area for this behaviour, as it is anonymous and unsupervised, and has millions of suitable targets at the offenders call. Therefore, it is easy to lure a child to potentially commit sexual offenses. The Internet may indeed be the ideal grounds for criminals to succumb to temptation, whereas in an offline environment they may not have.

The predation process, unfortunately, is not all that complex, and involves a process known as sexual grooming. This grooming process has been defined as a way of blurring the lines between what is considered appropriate behaviour and what is not (Fleming, Greentree, Cocotti-Muller, Elias, & Morrison, 2006). The predator initially gains the affection of the child and is sometimes viewed as a mentor, and as a result the child finds the attention appealing and forms a strong desire to form a relationship and gain acceptance (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Dombrowski et al., 2004, as cited in Fleming, Greentree, Cocotti-Muller, Elias, & Morrison, 2006). The child, however, often does not view any of the predator's behaviour as sexual or dangerous, and thus sees no need to discuss the contact with anyone (Young 1997, as cited in Fleming, Greentree, Cocotti-Muller, Elias, & Morrison, 2006). Fleming, Greentree, Cocotti-Muller, Elias, and Morrison (2006) conclude by explaining that to achieve this view that their behaviour is normal, the predator will begin by forming an affectionate bond with the victim, then gradually progress to making sexual comments, then eventually move to send gifts and maybe even investigate a face to face meeting. It is a worry to think that over 50, 000 sexual predators are on the Internet every minute of every day (Thomas, 2006, as cited in Patchin & Hinduja, 2010).

One of the most significant moral panics of the last two decades revolves around the idea of paedophiles in the community. Jewkes (2011) explains the explosion of hysteria associated with the idea of sexual predators and the risks they pose to children over the past two decades. Since several noteworthy disappearances, such as that of Sarah Payne, and the news of the 'naming and shaming' campaign, the relationship between 'dangerousness' and 'risk' of sexual predation has been rather cemented into the minds of parents and children (Jewkes, 2011, p. 110). The growth in popularity of online social networks only increases this danger of meeting strangers, therefore, increasing the hysteria around this notion of a risk of paedophiles in the community (both online and offline). Jewkes (2011) explains that parent's lack of trust in technology also increases their fears of the people that may be using online, involving a fear of what 'strangers' may be lurking in the shadows to groom their children. This moral panic of concern and certain involves both online and offline communities.

These dangers of social networking can easily be seen through the many tragic cases that flood the media. From young girls being lured to their deaths by men they have met online (such as the case of Carly Ryan in 2009 discussed by Karklins & Dalton, 2012) to teenagers committing suicide (such as the case of Olivia Penpraze mentioned in the introduction chapter of this thesis) due to constantly suffering from online abuse. These are real problems, with very real consequences, and must be treated as such.

It is now important to turn to the study at hand. This study aims to identify the prevalence of all the risks mentioned above to young people in South Australia. Primarily, this study aims to develop a thorough understanding of young people's thought, beliefs, and opinions about social networking sites as a whole, as well as what they feel are 'risks'. This next chapter will begin by first discussing the methodology behind this study and then going into detail about the results of this research and discussing the findings.

## Chapter Three

### The Current Study

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#### Research Methodology

##### *Ethics*

In order for this research to be carried out ethics approval had to first be sought from both the Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee at Flinders University and the Department of Education and Children's Development (DECD, formerly known as the Department of Education and Children's Services or DECS) . Several meetings took place at each school in order to fully explain the research and to ensure involvement, and a Letter of Permission from the principal of each school also had to be obtained.

A Letter of Introduction was given to each participant as well as their parents one week before completing the questionnaire, in order to provide time for free and informed consent. This is a fundamental aspect of social research in that participation must always be entirely voluntary (Neuman, 2006). Furthermore participants need to have an understanding of what they will be expected to do in order to make an informed decision, rather than simply be willing to participate (Neuman, 2006). This is why all information was provided one week prior to actually participating to ensure participants, and parents, knew what was expected of them. Along with the Letter of Introduction, parents and participants were also provided with a consent form and an Information Sheet. Parents were also given a copy of the questionnaire to look at but were told not to show their child. One week later participants involved were asked to return to a particular location at an allocated time slot with their consent forms to complete the questionnaire.

An ethical consideration was also around that of risk to participants. It had to be assured that participants were quite safe to take part in this research, and that if at any time a participant did become distressed or upset that they would be provided with appropriate services to help them. As this study asked some sensitive questions around cyberbullying experiences, this may have occurred at some stage if a student had experienced some traumatic experience in the past. Therefore, participants were also given a list of counselling services to refer to if they required such services.

A copy of the Letter of Introduction, consent form, Information sheet, list of counselling services, the questionnaire, and a copy of the verbal script said to participants can be seen in the appendices of this thesis. Please note that I have only supplied a copy of the



Letter of Introduction and Information Sheet as addressed to participants, but parents also received an identical copy of these but addressed to them.

Participants were assured that their responses would be entirely anonymous and confidential. Schools were also told that they would be unidentifiable in the resulting thesis.

The process to gain ethics approval lasted several months, due to getting the permission letters from each school, but this project was eventually granted ethical approval by both committees, with Project No. 528 for Flinders University.

### *Problems Encountered – Researching with Young People*

Through this research process I have encountered many problems or ‘hurdles’ to overcome. Research involving young people will always be challenging, initially to get ethics approval, but also to get parental consent, and to get the young people enthusiastic about the research. The most trouble I had was getting the permission letters from the principal of each school. I acknowledge that they are very busy people but for some of the schools it took months to get this letter, delaying my research somewhat. Nevertheless, eventually I got it and the schools were very cooperative after that. Parental consent was not too much of an issue; however, students were slow in returning them to school. I had to wait longer than anticipated to at least have some students involved in the study due to this slow process of returning consent forms. Next was the problem of ensuring students completed the questionnaire, as young people are easily distracted. I explained the value of the research to them but nevertheless, this is an issue that cannot be helped and is addressed in the limitations. Furthermore, some young people did not take the questionnaire seriously and responded with silly/inappropriate responses, which is disappointing. I was still able to get many relevant responses and most young people were very cooperative.

### *Participants*

This study involved administering a questionnaire to youth (13-17 year olds) in South Australian high schools. Students in year levels 8, 10 and 12, from six different high schools were administered a questionnaire comprised of both qualitative and quantitative questions. The schools involved will remain unnamed for privacy and ethical reasons, and so will be given the following names:

- Rural Public School
- Rural Private School

- Urban Public School
- Urban Private School
- All Girls Private School
- All Boys Private School.

The names of participants shall not be identified to protect those involved.

The participants were approached at a convenient time as decided by the staff of each participating school and told that completion would take approximately 30 minutes. As discussed, parents and participants were given a Letter of Introduction, an Information Sheet, a Consent Form, and parents were given a copy of the questionnaire to look at. I returned one week later to complete the research process.

Whilst initially this project intended to involve 50 participants from each of the year levels involved, there were several limitations that prevented this from occurring. Also, one school had to be dropped from this study and another could only provide year 10 students. These matters will be discussed and further explained in the limitation section of this thesis. Overall, 422 participants filled in the questionnaire.

This research was administered in this manner as it provides genuine insight into the beliefs and experiences of a contemporary sample of young people, but also because it provides significant data for comparison across a number of key participant demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, location and type of school.

### *The Questionnaire*

This study used a mixed methods approach, and therefore, the questionnaire was comprised of both qualitative and quantitative questions. Mixed methods research can be suggested to paint a much more powerful picture than each method separately on their own, as the two methods combined create a greater understanding of social phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). This study chose this particular method of research to ensure that relevant and practical data about the use of social networking sites was collected, but also genuine insights into the experiences of youth, as well as their beliefs and opinions regarding cyberbullying and sexual predation.

The information obtained from this project is valuable in that there has been little research conducted on the risks associated with social networking sites and their influence on the behaviour of youth. As this is becoming a more widespread issue in today's world, obtaining this type of data on the prevalence of such risks to youth is crucial. Furthermore, some qualitative questions followed a quantitative question in order to give participants an opportunity to explain their previous answer, thus

following an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. This particular design involves collecting quantitative data and then also collecting qualitative data to aid, explain, or elaborate the quantitative results (Creswell, 2012), which is what this questionnaire set out to do. This way, the questions were able to provide us with not only data and statistics about general usage but also personal experiences and opinions about each individual's life with social networking. These types of results are crucial if we are to gain any insight into the minds of young people and why they behave the way that they do. This is supported by Spears, Slee, Owens, and Johnson (2009, p. 189) who so appropriately state that:

‘In order to understand what is occurring in school contexts, there is a place for qualitative research, which seeks stakeholders’ perspectives, experiences, and knowledge of this relatively recent phenomenon. These voices will contribute to what is already known from the prevalence studies, by adding a human dimension to the data: Authentic narratives and stories from the schooling sector which will reveal the lived experiences of impact and understanding of the nature of covert and cyberbullying.’

This project provides a unique insight into the beliefs of youth themselves as well as first-hand accounts of experiences, rather than just observing their behaviour as prior studies have done. This research methodology allows greater understanding of the impact of social networking sites on the lives of youth. The questionnaire responses offer first-hand experiences and descriptions of the relationship between young people's use of social networking sites and the risks associated with cyber-bullying and sexual predation highlighted above. The questionnaire responses provide practical and situated data necessary for greater understanding of the prevalence of the risks associated with social networking sites, and the level of their subsequent impact on youth. Furthermore, the data obtained from the questionnaire responses may well assist in determining young people's level of understanding of the risks associated with social networking, and the extent to which this understanding influences their online behaviour.

The qualitative data was analysed through a thematic analysis. Themes from participant's responses were drawn from the narrative responses and organised into categories. These were then arranged so as to present in the sections in the next chapter. The quantitative data was manually analysed so as to present simple, easy to understanding statistics to support the qualitative data.

#### *Limitations of this study*

As with any research this study has its limitations. It was discussed earlier that people's views on what constitute bullying behaviour may vary. Thus, with this questionnaire some people may have actually experienced bullying but did not consider it serious enough to mention, or did not consider it to be bullying at all, when in fact it was. For instance, in situations of social exclusion young people may not realise that this is actually a form of bullying. Not only do young people often feel their behaviour not to be deemed 'risky' when it actually is, but what they may consider as harmless comments may constitute bullying. Therefore, this is clearly a limit of this study as with any bullying research, simply the people have different perceptions of what is bullying and what is not. The same would apply for what may be seen as serious and what is not. This also related to those participants who indicated witnessing bullying. It was not specified how they witnessed bullying or how they decided that the behaviour actually constituted bullying, which is another limitation of this study. Further research is needed to determine how young people decide what constitutes bullying and what does not.

Furthermore, despite that participants were assured their responses would be anonymous and that they would not be identifiable in the resulting thesis publication, some participants may have been reluctant to admit to either being a bully, being a victim, or simply to express their opinion for fear of how it would make them look. Participants may not have wanted to make themselves appear in a negative light and may have not stated that they had experienced any form of bullying behaviour or admitted to being a perpetrator themselves. Furthermore, in regards to sexual predation, participants may indeed have had an encounter with a predator but not wanted to admit it, either for fear of being perceived as one of the 'stupid, naive' people that participants were so eager to label others with or for sheer embarrassment. In other words, there may have been a social desirability bias present, in that participants may have responded in a way to make themselves look favourable. Whilst assuring anonymity of responses is present, this bias generally cannot be controlled, and consequently is a potential limitation to this study.

As with any research simply confounds such as fatigue, laziness, hunger, personal circumstances or even the weather could have impacted ones' mood and therefore influenced how willing that person was to fill out the questionnaire, and in turn how detailed and in depths their responses were. It is important to bear in mind that these were young people that were filling out these questionnaires, and therefore the

level of enthusiasm from participants would have varied depending on how passionate they are about this topic and, to put it simply, their 'attitude'.

On the more technical side, this questionnaire was only short and would take someone who was willing to give detail approximately twenty minutes to complete at the most. Boredom, therefore, could have played a factor in that participants grew tired after the first few questions and could not bring themselves to give too much detail in the rest. Thus, a suggestion for the future could be a shorter questionnaire.

Furthermore, in relation to the questionnaire, participants were asked to respond to some questions in terms of witnessing bullying. However, there was not a clear explanation of how specifically they were to have witnessed bullying. In other words, participants were not offered a chance to explain how they witnessed bullying and how they decided that the behaviour was bullying. Therefore, this is another limitation. Also, some of the questions, in retrospect, may be considered as leading. For example, participants were asked specifically what forms of bullying they had witnessed or experienced but were not offered the chance to say that they have never witnessed or experienced bullying. Of course, they could answer no to each type of response. Regardless, this could still be considered as leading the participant.

It was mentioned in the methodology section that one school (the Urban Private) was eliminated from this study due to not being able to provide the number of students required. This is obviously a limitation as it limited the scope that this research intended on having. Another school (the All Girls) also was limited to only one year level out of the desired three. This would have influenced results as the range of students was smaller from this school compared to the rest and therefore may not have been such a general account. Despite this, this school was still able to provide results and were included in this study anyway, as a snapshot of the school's students is better than nothing at all.

In light of these limitations, it is now important to address some future considerations for research and how research in this area can be expanded and improved upon.

## Chapter Four

### Results and Discussion

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*“It is a way of life...everything you do is on Facebook”.*

*“I believe I am safe on the Internet.”*

The data to be discussed in the following section of this thesis are, in some cases, what was expected and others not so much. What may be due to some of the limitations discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis, the data obtained from the questionnaires was not as rich in narratives as hoped. Whilst the area of cyberbullying was very much discussed and found to be prevalent, participants seemed reluctant to share personal details and information about their experiences. Whilst this could simply be due to laziness or fatigue, it could also be due to not wanting to relive the experience or from embarrassment. This limitation will be discussed further throughout the remainder of this thesis. This results section will now begin by first discussing some general statistics about social networking use as derived from the quantitative questions. It will then go on to discuss young people’s thoughts about what they believe the good and the bad of social networking sites are, and then turn to discuss their thoughts on risk and fear. Next, this section will discuss the issues of sexual predation and cyberbullying in regards to prevalence and beliefs, and will also discuss the actual cases of violence that people shared in regards to cyberbullying. Finally, this section will discuss some comparisons between schools and year levels and will conclude with some final remarks before turning to the concluding chapter of this thesis.

#### Brief overview of main findings

The main finding of this study revolves around the issue that more young people witness cyberbullying than actually personally experience it. The highest reported form of bullying was that of rumours being spread. Here, 58.5 per cent of participants stated that they had witnessed rumours being spread about others, whilst only 26.1 per cent stated that they had experienced it personally. The difference between witnessing and experience forms of bullying was similar for the other types of bullying questioned. This brings into question the issue of bystanders to be discussed later. In terms of sexual

predation, this was found to not be so much of an issue as initially realised, and that young people are actually quite aware of the risks and are taking precautions to be safe online.

This section will now begin by discussing some general statistics derived from the study. For full tables of statistical results, please see appendix 1.7.

### General Statistics

Almost three quarters of participants (72.3 per cent) started using social networking sites at less than fourteen years of age, with 26.1 per cent starting at the age of twelve. 21.1 per cent of participants stated that they began using social networking sites when they were younger than twelve years old. And thus, it seems there are insufficient barriers as to when one is considered mature and responsible enough to use such a new and public form of networking. Whilst Facebook, for example, requires users to be over thirteen years of age, there is nothing truly stopping young people from lying about their age. There are indeed procedures to report those that are under age, but it does not remove the fact that young people can create these sites quite easily.

It is no surprise that most participants (83.5 per cent) stated that the main reason they started using social networking sites was to contact family and friends. What is surprising is that a tiny 9.7 per cent indicated peer pressure being a reason. This may have been a reason when Facebook and other sites initially became popular as to why young people joined them, but nowadays, it seems that peer pressure does not play a role. Most likely because these sites are so popular and such a part of everyday life it is considered commonplace to have an account.

It is important to note that the main social networking site used by young people these days is Facebook. 96.5 per cent claimed that they use this site, with only 28.2 per cent mentioning MySpace. Therefore, for the remainder of this thesis Facebook will be the main site discussed when referring to social networking sites.

59.7 per cent of participants use social networking sites every day, with the remainder clustering around using them 4-5 times a week or 2-3 times a week. This is supported by previous research by Nielson (2010, as cited in Collin, Rahilly, Richardson, & Third, 2011) who found that 83 per cent of those aged between sixteen and twenty nine use social networking sites on a regular basis (daily). One of the many reasons that participants use social networking sites so much is most likely because of how easily they may be due to how easily accessible they are. Facebook is accessible on not only computers and laptops but also on mobile phones, iPods and iPads. Furthermore,

many mobile phone plans these days include unlimited access to Facebook as part of the contract, making it very easy to be able to use these sites every day. Statistics from The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010, as cited in Collin, Rahilly, Richardson, & Third, 2011, p. 10) show that 67 per cent of homes have Internet access, with 78 per cent on broadband connections. Furthermore, Nielson (2010, Collin, Rahilly, Richardson, & Third, 2011) found that 97 per cent of young people own a mobile phone, with 64 per cent having Internet access and being used for that purpose.

The fact that the Internet is so readily accessible to young people is of concern, as the more time young people spend online the more likely they are to fall victim to the dangers of cyberbullying and sexual predation. A study by Mitchel, Finkelhorn and Wolak (2001) found that participants who spend more time online were more likely to be sexually solicited and therefore at greater risk than those who used social networking sites less frequently.

It is worthy of note that while 49.8 per cent of participants claimed to have over three hundred 'friends' on their site, only 30.6 per cent claimed that they had met over three hundred of their 'friends'. This could suggest that many participants add people that they do not know; however, it could also be because participants claimed to commonly add 'friends of friends' or family from overseas. Also, the reason people have so many contacts on their sites could be because when participants were asked to indicate how many of their friends they believe use social networking sites, 79.1 per cent of participants indicated that they believe over 75 per cent of their friends have a social networking site. This seems warranted given that only one participant stated that they don't use social networking sites, and so it seems that most young people these days have a social networking account.

It is now important to turn from these general points and focus on what peoples' opinions are on social networking sites. For in order to understand why young people are so taken with this new form of communication can we understand why it is used in negative ways, such as to cyberbully others. It is important to grasp the concept of what young people believe the good and bad aspects of social networking sites are, as the voice of youth themselves is the key to this issue to begin with. This next section will discuss this and then go on to the main focus of this thesis, that being the risks that are associated with social networking sites.



## Perspectives on Social Networking

### *Positive aspects of social networking*

Whilst this thesis is going to discuss the many negative aspects of social networking, it is also important to first examine the positive aspects. Social networking is a unique way to connect with others without physically being in their presence, yet has the ability to share a great deal of personal information. Furthermore, these sites allow users to share personal information about their 'true selves' without feeling pressured about what is 'normal'. For instance, Wilkins (1991, as cited in Henderson & Gilding, 2004) found in a study that people are more likely to self-disclose information online, and also have less feelings of anxiousness and higher self esteem compared to relations offline. Furthermore, in this day and age, social networking is a convenient way to not only stay in touch with people that you may not see very often, but to also quickly organise social events or even meetings. With the technological advances of our time these technologies allow people to connect in a way that once did not exist, it provides a means of communicating with anonymity, and the grounds to discover new identities and communities.

However, alongside this notion of displaying one's 'true self' online comes the idea of creating a false persona. Davis (2008) explains that the internet provides the ideal grounds for young people to explore their identities through experimentation. When online, the usual restrictions of age, height, race, and sex can be controlled and manipulated as frequently as one wishes, as online profiles can constantly be updated and altered, or deleted if needed, allowing young people to undertake multiple forms of identity experimentation simultaneously (Davis, 2008). Furthermore, a reason why young people may be so geared toward identity experimentation online compared to offline could be because the stakes are lower. Davis (2008) explains that due to the distance from one's audience and the absence of cues, experimenting online may be seen as safer by a young person. In other words, if the identity that they experiment with is not perceived well or they realise they do not like it, it is easy to manipulate it or remove it so as to receive positive feedback instead, which cannot easily be done in the offline world. One can create many different types of identities and evaluate which is best received by others, something which also cannot be done except when online. Thus, other than the fact that some people believe they can be more their 'true self' online, other can feel that the online environment provides the landscape to be whoever they want to be.

To turn back to the results of this study, when participants were asked what they ‘like most’ about social networking sites, a majority said that it is a very easy and convenient way to socialise. Not only that, but many participants stated that social networking sites make it easier to keep in contact with friends and/or relatives overseas, and it’s a great way to keep up to date with what is going on. The main aspects, however, that people indicated they liked most about social networking is that it is free to contact someone, compared to the price of texting or calling someone. Of course, what must be taken into consideration here is that these participants are youth, and so they may not think about the fact that their parents have an Internet and electricity bill to pay for their social networking time, they instead simply see it as a way of talking to their friends without using their own phone credit.

These findings are supported by other research in this area. A study by Spears et. al. (2012) found that young people from South Australia felt that social networking sites are good because they are cheap and convenient, they improve self confidence when communicating with peers, and they enable communication and social skill development. Therefore, some of the main aspects of social networking sites that young people like the most are their ease of use, and that they are cheap compared to mobile phones. These feeling were also shared amongst participants in other countries. This research by Spears et. al. (2012, p. 14) also found several main behaviours that people found social networking sites enabled them to do. Participants stated that social networking sites enable them to:

- Exercise control – Young people felt that social networking sites gives them the power to decide what they want to say or do.
- Practice social skills – Young people felt that they could say things to others that they may not want to communicate verbally.
- To think before speaking – Young people felt that they could think about the outcome of their actions better on social networking sites as they have more time to think before sending an email, whereas as you often do not get that option in a general conversation.
- To seek help – Social networking sites make it easier to ask for help without feeling ashamed or embarrassed.
- To learn and share new things – Social networking sites make it easier to communicate about school work and projects.

These findings are consistent with the findings of this study, as will become evident through the remainder of this results section.

Also, another positive aspect of social networking is that it can be used in a positive way for business, and to make money. One participant in this current study stated that they ‘use Facebook to [their] advantage to sell art because most people these days use it on a regular basis, so it is in a good way to put forward a product etc and have more people see it’. Therefore, given that most people have a social networking site of some form, they can be used in a positive way for business and career opportunities. Many businesses these days have their own Facebook account or page. It is a common occurrence to visit a shop or business and see a sign with the words “Like us on Facebook”, or “Follow us on Twitter”, or both.

Finally, research by Collin, Rahilly, Richardson and Third (2011) explain many other positive factors of social networking sites, starting with media literacy. This is the notion that young people develop an understanding of the complex nature of the Internet, by developing a digital or web literacy that is not taught in schools. Another positive aspect is the education, knowledge, and skills the social networking sites provide. Collin, Rahilly, Richardson and Third (2011) explain that social networking sites are an ideal opportunity to develop ones skills, and are also easily used to communicate with others for educational purposes. Social networking sites also provide a means for creativity, individual identity and self expression, in that young people feel more relaxed online and more comfortable to express who they really are (Collin, Rahilly, Richardson & Third, 2011). Therefore, social networking sites provide the ideal landscape for self discovery and expression through sometimes creative means. Collin, Rahilly, Richardson and Third (2011) explain that social networking sites can also be used to strengthen interpersonal relationships through developing new relationships and strengthening existing ones, as well providing a sense of belonging and collective identity due to the popularity of these sites. Similarly, these sites can strengthen and build communities, given the vast number of people that use these sites they are very much their own community and can also be used as a means to engage in civil and political participation (Collin, Rahilly, Richardson & Third, 2011). Finally, another positive aspect of social networking sites is that they can assist in ones wellbeing overall, due to the many positive aspects listed above.

Clearly there are many positive aspects that are associated with social networking sites. However, there are also some negative aspects that now need to be discussed.

### *Negative aspects of social networking*

Before going in to detail about the two main negative aspects of social networking that this thesis covers - cyberbullying and the dangers of sexual predation - it is first important to discuss the many other negative opinions and beliefs participants had about social networking sites. The main themes that emerged from the results were that young people found social networking sites to be addictive, to be replacing real life communication, to cause fights and arguments due to misinterpretations of statements, and to be creating false personas of individuals in that people act 'fake' online'. Each of these points will now be discussed in more detail.

#### *-Addictive*

A main concern that participants indicated they had about social networking is that it is very addictive as well as distracting, particularly from school work and homework. The following remark explains this concern:

'[Social networking] is a lot of useless stuff and is pretty boring. There are a lot of pointless things posted and it's just another way of people seeking attention. It is an easy place to bully people. It wasted people's time and distracts you from important things.'

This notion that people can become addicted to the Internet is not unfounded. Research suggests that some users can become addicted to the Internet and display similar characteristics as those that are addicted to gambling, drugs and alcohol, and this addiction can lead to a decline in communication with the outside world, such as with friends, family, and society in general (Leung & Lee, 2011). As such, Leung and Lee (2011) explain that with so many health risks being associated with Internet addiction, as with any other forms of addiction, it is indeed beginning to be recognised as an actual modern syndrome. In fact, Young (1998, as cited in Leung & Lee, 2011, pp. 119-120) defined Internet related addiction as Problematic Internet Use (PIU), which requires individuals to meet five of the eight criteria which are: '1) preoccupation with the Internet, (2) need for longer amounts of time online, (3) repeated attempts to reduce Internet use, (4) withdrawal when reducing Internet use, (5) time management issues, (6) environmental distress (family, school, work, friends), (7) deception around time spent online, and (8) mood modification through Internet use.' Internet addiction is a

real problem, particularly as online communication begins to take over young peoples' lives.

*-Replacing real life communication*

In relation to this, another main concern is that social networking is becoming a replacement for actually calling people and seeing people, everything is done online. Because a majority of people have a social networking account of some form, it is 'expected' of you to have one as one participant stated. In support of this, another participant stated that they believed a negative aspect of social networking is:

'The fact that they are something people expect you to have or know about and when you say you don't have an account they all look at you funny.'

Another participant stated that:

'People are rude to people who do not have a social networking site.'

As suggested earlier it seems commonplace to have a social networking site these days. The statements support the notion that it is becoming more of a social norm and a necessity that one has a social networking site, and that young people probably feel pressured to have one. If you do not have one it seems likely that you may become disconnected from society as this is the main way things 'get done'.

Because of this, social networking sites have very much started to become the main form of communication between people. The following statements show the different feelings participants have about social networking replacing real life interaction because 'everyone has a Facebook':

'People spend more time online than real life.'

'The constant connection that people have, and how social networking takes up some peoples' lives as they waste so much times in maintaining a good profile, it is important to spend more time in the real world.'

'The amount of time spent on [social networking sites] is way too much and whatever is said spreads really fast. Way too many people say things or do things they wouldn't do in real life.'

‘[Social networking] takes over and replaces real communication such as face-to-face and telephone. I would much rather do that, but it seems it’s not socially acceptable anymore.’

These statements show that young people are feeling that social networking sites are beginning to replace real life communication, and those relationships and friendships just are not of the same quality online than offline. Whilst the notion that people spend ‘more’ time online than in real life may be somewhat of an exaggeration, it is by no means entirely false. Statistics discussed earlier by Nielson (2010, as cited in Collin, Rahilly, Richardson, & Third, 2011) depicted that a high percentage of young people use these sites on a daily basis, and that when young people are not at a computer they are accessing the Internet through mobile phones. Therefore, it is definitely a possibility that young people may soon spend more time checking their social networking accounts for notifications, or contacting their friends through these sites, rather than through real life, face-to-face communication.

Conversely, Grohol (1999, as cited in Morahan-Martin, 2005, p. 43) explains a different side to these online relationships, and states that:

‘Researchers seem to have not considered that perhaps people who spend a lot of time online are simply engaging in normal, healthy social relationships with other human beings around the world . . . There is very little to suggest that individuals who prefer virtual friends over real world friends are less well-adapted or have a lower overall quality of life. It is a different way of interacting, but is not necessarily a lesser-quality interaction. In fact, because of the unique psychological components of online social interactions, online friendships and relationships may be of higher quality or value to some.’

Therefore, this suggests that some people would benefit more from online relationships than offline relationships, due to an inability to ‘connect’ with people in real life. However, this may very much depend on the person. Where one person may connect well with others online and develop a strong sense of community, another may simply only develop weak and superficial relationships.

#### *-Cause fights and arguments*

In relation to the issue that some people behave in a manner online that they would not in real life, is the issue that fights and arguments can result. However, only 12.6 per cent of participants agreed when asked if they say things online that they would

not say to a person face to face. This may, of course, have been a result of an unwillingness to want to look bad or perceived as a bully, so participants may not have been entirely truthful. Nevertheless, this is still an issue. 23.1 per cent of participants agreed with the statement that they had been in situations that would not have happened if social networking sites did not exist. The term 'keyboard warrior' was used many times along with the term 'trolling'. These terms are becoming commonplace when discussed in relation to social networking sites. A 'keyboard warrior' simply refers to someone who insults or acts 'tough' by arguing online. The term is used to describe someone that will act in an aggressive manner online but probably would not in real life; basically, they are a warrior of the keyboard, not life. The term 'trolling' is used to describe someone who purposefully will cause an argument just for the sake of it or for 'fun'. These can sometimes be a remark about someone to cause a negative reaction from friends, or it can be a racist or unemotional statement on a community or group page to start mass debates about the thousands of members of that particular page.

This issue of trolling is a very real problem, and has received some recent attention in the media. An article in *The Australian* in March of 2011 reported of a man being jailed for a year after 'trolling' a couple of memorial pages created after their murders (Owens, 2011). This article by Owens (2011) explained that on one page the man falsely claimed being the killer and described the pleasure he took in the murder as well as graphic details, and on the other he posted altered photographs. Furthermore, in June of 2012, an article in *The Argus* reported that Facebook had been ordered to unmask online 'trolls' who had been harassing a middle aged woman and had even set up a false profile in her name (Gardner, 2012). These instances are just a few of many that indicate that the issue of 'trolling' can have very serious consequences. It is important to distinguish the difference between trolling and cyberbullying. As already explained, trolling is when a person will make a remark solely for the purpose of causing an argument. They then may not say any more after the initial comment, and simply take pleasure in watching the argument unfold between other people. Or they may continue by commenting extreme remarks that they may or may not personally agree with or believe, but simply say to cause arguments. Bullying, on the other hand, is directed specifically at a person and is about that person.

Trolling depends on people interpreting the original comment and then arguing about it. Thus, often these comments can be misinterpreted and then the arguments follow. The following statements show that social networking can easily lead to misinterpretation of comments and can cause arguments and fights:

‘People say things to other people that they won’t actually say to your face’

‘Other people join in the argument to stick up for a friend when they have no idea what it is about.’

‘Gutless people prowl and interrupt others lives.’

‘People hide behind their accounts because they’re not tough enough to say in person what they say on social networking sites.’

‘People get very defensive’

‘People run their mouths on Facebook because obviously they’re happy to believe it’s separate to real life.’

‘Some people do not use enough care when putting photos and things on etc. You can’t see their body language or hear their tone of voice so meanings can get mixed up.’

This notion of a misinterpretation of behaviour is an important point as to how arguments can occur from communicating in a non-verbal way, and why it is so easy to do so. When communicating in a face-to-face context one can interpret one’s body language and tone of voice to identify if they are speaking in a positive or negative manner, if they are threatening or relaxed, if they are deeming or friendly, and simply, if they are bullying or being a friend. People can easily misinterpret comments made as an insult when it may have been a joke, as these particular key components to communication cannot be seen. Smiljana (2008) explain that there are two main lines of thought that have developed with regard to nonverbal communication in text based computer-mediated communication (CMC). The first line is that of a ‘cues-filtered-out’ approach, which suggests that the lack of cues in CMC can result on reduced social presence and therefore narrowing communicative abilities of online interactions (Smiljana, 2008). In other words, without social cues ones ability communicate is somewhat reduced, and can result in misinterpretation at times. The second line is that of social information processing theory, which argues that people online use whatever communication system they can, and thus adapt their own style and other nonverbal



cues to communicate online (Walther et al. 2005, as cited in Smiljana, 2008). Thus, in other words, when online, people communicate in a different manner to how they would offline, and can in turn interpret communication differently. Without the use of body language, tone of voice, and other cues, communication is certainly influenced and can impact how people communicate and perceive one another.

This issue is crucial in relation to cyberbullying. For if one cannot see the impact of their comments, and one does not feel like online communication is the same as in 'real life', then it is no surprise that bullies find it so easy to turn to the cyber realm. Research discussed earlier by Pujazon-Zazik and Park (2010) and Corbett (2008) has already suggested that bullies prefer to bully online compared to the traditional sense as it provides anonymity and prevents them from seeing the full extent of their damage, and this research supports these findings.

*-False personas*

This very same issue of people behaving online, in a way that they would not normally behave in real life, also links to the concern that many people are 'fake' online. Many participants stated that they believed social networking sites to be 'all fake', and that people often try to make themselves look like someone they are not. This concern was mostly predominant in female response, whereas males were more inclined to say that people try to 'act tough' online or cause fights. The following three statements display the opinions of some participants about this issue:

'I don't like how people become popular from using them and become fake - change for others.'

'I don't like how just because they are using a social networking site it makes people change who they truly are behind closed doors (be somebody they aren't). I also don't like how people upload sexual photos of themselves (in bikinis, undies etc).'

'I believe that the real problem behind Facebook is that people are fake. Some people gain much more confidence talking to people when they're not face to face. Also, people make wrong assumptions on people specifically when they don't or haven't even met the person!' (Emphasis in participant's answer.)

‘I don’t like how some people ‘over share’ on Facebook with either statuses or photos. I don’t like how people act differently online instead of as they would offline and I don’t like it when people deliberately add or accept people they don’t know, it’s like playing with fire.’

These instances can then in turn lead to the issue of sexual predation, which will be discussed shortly. Conversely to this notion that people act fake online is the idea that people can be ‘more themselves’ online. A study by Berson (2000) found that young women felt that the perceived anonymity of social networking sites removed the pressures to fit in and act a certain way with their peers, and thus felt that their online personalities became a way of life. However, it is this very issue of feeling ‘safe’ behind a computer screen that makes the dangers of sexual predation a threat to young people.

Before discussing the two main risk factors that this thesis will explore (that being cyberbullying and sexual predation) it is first important to address the issue of risk. This first section will address the notion of risk and what constitutes it in order to understand what participants believe to be considered a ‘risk’ online and what is deemed ‘risky’ behaviour.

## Risk

### *Thoughts on risk and fear*

The main themes that emerged in regards to risk is that young people are relatively safe provided that they are smart and responsible enough not to display too much information. The thoughts were relatively the same for the risk of sexual predation. These will now be discussed in further detail before moving on to cyberbullying.

### *-Not stupid*

The general consensus among participants was that social networking sites are only risky if you are ‘stupid’ enough to share too much personal information about yourself or talk to strangers. From a statistical standpoint, however, 29.2 per cent of participants agreed with the statement that using social networking sites is risky, though 46.6 per cent has a ‘neutral’ opinion. So whilst participants were eager to say that social networking sites are only risky if you are ‘stupid’, only a small percentage actually disagreed with the statements that these sites are risky. This finding is supported by research conducted by Karklins and Dalton (2012) who, through surveying first year university students and asking them to recollect on their early social networking years,

found that these participants too believed social networking sites were only risky if you were ‘stupid enough’ to use them inappropriately or naively. The following three statements further explain young peoples’ beliefs about the risky side of social networking sites:

‘I think it’s the idiots who give social networking a bad name, the people who upload inappropriate things and have open events etc’.

‘I think the risk factor varies with the knowledge and ‘self-preservation’ of the user’.

‘It’s really a 70 per cent of it is not risky and 30 per cent is risky if you are stupid’.

Thus, the common belief is that as long as you take all the right measures and precautions then social networking is safe. However, it is because of all the measures that social networking is deemed risky. It is not a simple process making ones profile extremely private and protected, and so for young people without the proper safety precautions anyone can view their profiles. For instance one male participant appropriately states that ‘just because there are privacy settings on a website doesn’t mean that people actually use them properly, and often security is easily hacked.’

Furthermore, on Facebook, anyone can send another person a message through their inbox even if they are not a ‘friend.’ It is because of this ease to communicate that a risk that was mentioned by many participants was the risk of stalking, and hacking. The main reason being, that false accounts can easily be created, and it is not difficult for someone to pretend to be somebody else online.

#### *-Responsible and aware*

Another reason why people believed they are safe online is that they believe they are ‘responsible’, and ‘aware of the risks’. It seemed that participants had the notion of ‘it will never happen to me’ in mind, and so they believed that social networking is safe, and seemed rather fearless. Also, participants seemed to believe that given that most, if not all, of their friends use social networking sites, they are perfectly fine. In other words, as one participant stated: ‘everyone else does it’.

Another participant even said:

‘I guess I just can’t imagine me being stalked or harmed by social networking. I believe I am safe on the Internet.’

This relates to the literature discussed earlier by Livingstone and Helsper (2007, as cited in Livingstone, 2008), who explained that young people often have a different interpretation of what is risky and dangerous and what is not. For instance, there are many risks involved with using social networking sites, but as it is considered to be a normal thing in the everyday lives of young people today they view it as harmless. This being said, young people seem to be aware of the risks and aware of the precautions they need to take in order to remain safe, and so perhaps social networking sites are not as risky as they may seem.

This now leads into the two main areas of risk that this thesis addresses: the dangers of sexual predation and cyberbullying. The next section will not go into detail about young people’s beliefs about these risks, as well as how prevalent they are.

### *Sexual predation*

#### *- Beliefs*

When participants were asked if they believed there to be a danger of sexual predation on social networking sites, the beliefs were very much the same to that of risk in general: that it is only a risk if you are ‘stupid’ enough to add people you do not know or publish too much personal information. However, participants claimed that they are aware of the risks that are out there, stating that it can be easy to be a victim and that sexual risk is everywhere, with one participant appropriately stating ‘there are weird people in the world’. The following statements show the general belief that people think using social networking sites is no more dangerous in terms of sexual predation than everyday life:

‘Sexual interest is everywhere, it’s no different being on a computer to walking down the street.’

‘[Social networking] is not really as bad as you think it is.’

‘I like Facebook and Tumblr, I use it like a normal person, not a dumb idiot who is going to get raped.’

These statements suggest that young people believe social networking sites to be relatively safe in terms of the dangers of sexual predation. There are, however, certain types of behaviour displayed by young people that make the dangers of sexual predation more of a concern. For instance, it was discussed earlier that young people tend to display narcissistic qualities online, thus, it can be suggested that young people may feel inclined to add more ‘friends’ online to make themselves look good or ‘popular’. To support this is a statement from one participant who said: ‘say you are using Facebook and your friend has more friends than you, you want to reach the amount of friends he/she has so you add randoms.’ This is an example of how young people may add other people that they do not know, that may or may not be a threat to them. This being said, young people seemed relatively aware of the dangers of sexual predation, which is a promising sign.

Furthermore, another concern is that young people display too much information online, and/or ‘over share’ about their personal lives. For instance, one participant stated that ‘people post things to get sympathy’. This is a key example that young people often post information about themselves that others can take advantage of. Whilst young people say they think they are being safe by not displaying such things as their address or phone number, they can forget that constantly updating their status about where they are, what they are doing, and who they are with makes the danger of predation that much greater as they can easily be traced. This is especially a danger on Facebook, as now you can ‘check in’ with your exact location and ‘tag’ other people to say they are with you at this place. Today, almost all mobile phones come with GPS, creating a new relationship between the offline and online experience of ‘place’, and reminding us that ‘place’ is now more than just a physical geographic location but made up of ongoing stories, memories, and social practices (Hjorth, 2011). Mobile phone users can use this GPS when updating their Facebook status or uploading photos to alert the world exactly where they are at that point in time. Facebook is very easy to use, with new features added almost every week, simply allowing more opportunities for risky situations. Therefore, the notion that young people can display ‘too much’ information online is referring to the notion of constantly updating about where they are, who they are with and what they are doing, as well as posting photos. However, the young people in this study seemed aware of these risks by constantly stating that people are only at risk if

you are 'stupid'. Thus, it seems that perhaps the risk of sexual predation online is not as high as it might seem, and that young people are more aware and cautious than we realise.

- *Prevalence*

Similar to the response when asked about risk, in terms of the statistics 45.5 per cent of participants agreed with the statement that there is a risk of sexual predation when using social networking sites. So once again, whilst participants claimed that there is only a risk if you are not cautious, few people disagreed with this statement that sexual predation is indeed a problem. Furthermore, participants were asked if certain things had happened to them by someone that they do not know, such as unwanted contact or hurtful remarks. 24.2 per cent of participants stated that they had had someone they do not know seek personal details about them. Also, 31.8 per cent of participants stated that they had experienced someone make an unwanted personal comment about them. Furthermore, 34.4 per cent of participants claimed to have engaged in an argument with an unknown person and 19.1 per cent had been bullied or harassed. These statistics show that contact by unknown persons, whether for sexual purposes or other reasons, is not unheard of and had been experienced by participants in this study. That being stated, however, the prevalence of bullying was certainly much more discussed and more prevalent, and will be discussed in the next section. Therefore, it seems that the perception of sexual predation being a big problem online may, in fact, not be the case. Admittedly, I myself believed it to be more of a risk than it actually seems to be, and young people are also more aware than I had initially realised. Therefore, the dangers of sexual predation online can be said to be not as high as once thought.

*Cyberbullying*

- *Beliefs*

Bullying is a significant issue concerning young people today, making cyberbullying an extreme concern when young people use social networking sites. Cyberbullying is definitely a significant risk involved with social networking sites. Once upon a time students would leave school and the bullying would end, but now it can occur via computer, even a mobile phone through text messaging, and, to put it simply as one participant appropriately states, 'you can't get a break from the computer and bullying'. Furthermore, cyberbullying is often seen as the preferred method of bullying as it provides anonymity. Also, young people seem to think it is easy to 'get

away with' cyberbullying as you are simply sitting behind a screen. Many participants stated that they believe other people feel they can say bad things to others online and get away with it. The following statements are a clear indication that cyberbullying is an issue:

'People who think that they are anonymous feel like they can do whatever they want on the Internet and don't care who they harm.'

'Some people think its okay to be mean to others because you can't see their reaction. But it's NOT OKAY!' (Original emphasis in participant's answer.)

'[Social networking sites] are dangerous and you can get in big trouble if you get involved with something bad. People could ruin your life by bullying you and all you do is sit in front of a screen. They just encourage kids to become unfit or not go to bed at a reasonable hour. If you want to talk to a friend, you could just ring them.'

'I've heard that people have harmed themselves, even taken their own lives because of cyberbullying and that is a huge problem.'

Whilst these statements show that people are aware of the various risks of cyberbullying, on a positive note they show that people are not prepared to tolerate it and view it in a negative light. Participants were also very aware of the many negative aspects associated with cyberbullying, such as low self esteem, depression, and even suicide (as mentioned in the last statement above). These risks are very real problems, as studies have shown that cyberbullying can lead to suicidal ideation and low self-esteem, as mentioned earlier (Borg, 1998; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpelä, Marttunen, Rimpelä, & Rantanen, 1999; Striegel-Moore, Dohm, Pike, Wilfley, & Fairburn, 2002, as cited in Patchin, & Hinduja, 2006). Thus, it is a promising sign that young people are becoming aware of the dangers of social networking sites, but does not remove the problem.

- *Prevalence*

The issue of cyberbullying is one that is definitely of concern, and this study has found that it is indeed a prevalent issue. Participants were asked about bullying from two different standpoints, what they had witnessed and what they had experienced themselves. It seems from the statistics that more participants reported witnessing bullying than being a victim themselves, however this could be due to a reluctance to want to report it, or a fear of being embarrassed or simply being too traumatised. Witnessing bullying simply refers to if the participant had seen the bullying occurring online, or whether they had known someone who had experienced bullying themselves. It is important to note that cyberbullying cases may have been underreported due to participants not believing the behaviour actually constituted bullying. As Vandebosch and Van Cleemput (2009) explain, young people often do not believe their behaviour to be bullying, or consider it to be funny or just a way of life. However, the statistics are still relevant and will now be discussed in relation to what participants had witnessed.

57.1 per cent of participants indicated that they had witnessed people be bullied through unwanted emails, while 26.8 per cent indicated experiencing this themselves. On a similar note, 30.8 per cent of participants claimed that they had witnessed bullying emails sent to a person's friends, whilst 11.9 per cent indicated they had experienced this personally. Furthermore, 33.4 per cent stated that they had witnessed someone's personal details be published, and 37.9 per cent had witnessed personal details changed, whereas 11.6 per cent had experienced their details being published and 12.1 per cent had experienced them being changed. Finally, 58.5 per cent of participants stated that they had witnessed rumours being spread about others, whilst 26.1 per cent stated that they had experienced rumours being spread about them. It is clear from these statistics that bullying is definitely of concern, as not only is it being witnessed by many people but it is also being experienced on a personal level. What is also of concern is the reports of violent acts occurring due to social networking sites, and this will be discussed in the next section. These statistics are also consistent with previous research as discussed in the literature review of this thesis (Erdur-Baker, 2010, Campell & Gardner, 2005, Popovic-Citic, Djuric, & Cvetkovic, 2011) as these studies in the past have found statistics around the same mark as those found in this study about cyberbullying victimisation.

It is interesting to note that higher percentages were reported for witnessing bullying compared to experiencing it. This may well have been due to participants not wanting to admit to being bullied due to fear of shame and embarrassment and having that stigma of a 'victim' placed upon them, despite the anonymity of this questionnaire.



Therefore this may well have been a barrier to disclosure in relation to admitting to being cyberbullied. There may well have been many participants with stories to tell that did not reveal them, this is a limit with any study in this area. However, it is important to draw attention to the high percentages of bullying that has been witnessed. It seems that a lot of participants are witnessing bullying, more so than experiencing it personally, and so bullying is indeed a prevalent issue, as these participants may or may not be doing anything about it. This relates to the issue of bystanders which is a crucial aspect of this study, now to be discussed in further detail.

### *Bystanders*

The role of the bystanders is increasingly being recognised as crucial in the persistence of bullying. There is substantial literature around the issue of bystanders. To define the bystander, Oh and Hazler (2009, p. 293) explain that a bystander is an ‘active and involved participant in the social architecture of school violence rather than a passive witness’, and this includes support, opposition or indifference to the perpetrators. Alternatively, a bystander can also be defined as an ‘individual or a group of individuals indirectly involved in a bullying, as well as one who plays various roles during bullying as a member within the social context’ as stated by Choi and Cho (2012). This literature explains that there are four main different roles for bystanders: those being the assistants who join in the bullying; the reinforcers who give positive feedback to the bully; the outsiders who do not get involved and stay away (the most common group); and the defenders who aim to support the victim and defend them (Salmivalli, 1999, as cited in Oh, & Hazler, 2009).

Oh and Hazler (2009) explain that a reason for not wanting to intervene is commonly a fear of revenge from the bully, or an uncertainty about what they can actually do and whether it will only make it worse or cause them to become the victim instead. This is supported by Salmivalli (2010, as cited in Cappadocia, Pepler, Cummings, & Craig, 2012) who explains that a lack of intervention from bystanders could not only be due to a fear of what may happen, but may also be a result from the ‘classical bystander effect’, meaning that people are less likely to intervene if other people are not intervening and are witnessing the same situation. Furthermore, bystanders may also feel that, given that others are present and not intervening, it is not their responsibility to put a stop to it, and therefore feel absolved from the situation and its consequences. This is known as the ‘diffusion of responsibility’ effect, as initially explained by Darley and Latane (1968, as cited in Cappadocia, Pepler, Cummings, &

Craig, 2012). Also, if there is a lack of action from other people one may feel that intervention is not necessary. Simply, if there are a great number of people witnessing a bullying incident, intervention is less likely to occur. This is clearly in issue with cyberbullying as the people that witness it stretches far and wide. Therefore, a young person may be even less likely to intervene as they would be fully aware that hundreds of people would have seen the same thing, which is clearly a problem.

The fact that young people are unlikely to intervene in cyberbullying is an unfortunate situation, given that past research has found that peer intervention are highly effecting during bullying episodes (Cappadocia, Pepler, Cummings, & Craig, 2012). Observational research has found that when peers intervene with bullying and stand up for the victim. The bullying stops immediately over 50 per cent of the time (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001, as cited in Cappadocia, Pepler, Cummings, & Craig, 2012). There are several different approaches that young people take in order to intervene with bullying. A study by Henderson (2002, as cited in Trach, Hymel, Waterhouse, & Neale, 2010) found that the most common strategies for intervening with bullying included talking to the bully and supporting the victim, direct intervention by getting actively involved, and seeking adult help from parents and teachers. There has been little research about what factors influence these choices that bystanders make, although studies have found that secondary students are less likely to intervene than elementary students and that girls are more likely to help a victim than boys, and boys are more likely to reinforce the bully (Stevens, Van Oost, & de Bourdeaudhuij, 2000; Rocke Henderson, 2002; Salmivalli et al., 1996, as cited in Trach, Hymel, Waterhouse, & Neale, 2010).

There are two models that can explain bystanders behaviour, the first is by Latané and Darley (1969, as cited in Stueve, et al., 2006) who describes a five-step decision-making process that bystanders go through before intervening in emergency situations. This model explains that bystanders must first notice that something is happening, then interpret that the situation needs an intervention, then assume personal responsibility to intervene, then decide what to do and finally use the necessary skills to act on the situation (Latané, & Darley, 1969, as cited in Stueve, et al., 2006). A any one of these stages the bystander can decide not to act or misinterpret their own responsibility in regards to the situation. Stueve, et al., (2006) explain that this model is not only useful for emergency situation but also less serious instances as well as criminal acts. The next model that can assist in explaining bystander behaviour is that described by Ajzen (1991, 2002, as cited in Stueve, et al., 2006), who explains the

social and cognitive factors that may influence bystander choices. This model of planned behaviour focuses on how bystanders weigh the costs and benefits of a situation and each course of action, as well as what the expectations of others alongside how they may assess their own competency to act (Stueve, et al., 2006). According to this model, Stueve, et al., (2006) explain that both young people as well as adults are less likely to intervene if they believe the cost of intervening is too high, believe that the people around them do not expect them to intervene, or if there are sufficient barriers preventing them from intervening.

Unfortunately, despite that many young people do sympathise with the victim and have the intention to intervene, as previously mentioned research has found that the more peers who watch a bullying episode and fail to intervene the longer the bullying will last, and the reason for this is that the bully is reinforced by the attention of the bystanders (O'Connell, et al., 1999, as cited in Cappadocia, Pepler, Cummings & Craig, 2012). It is worthy of note that most young people tend to want to help the victims of cyberbullying, and that students often hold strong anti bullying beliefs and indicate that they would defend the victim if they witness bullying occurring; however only 17 to 46 per cent of these students actually intervened during a bullying episode (Nickerson, Mele, & Princiotta, 2008; Poyhonen & Salmivalli, 2008; Rigby & Johnson, 2006; Salmivalli et al., 1996, as cited in Cappadocia, Pepler, Cummings & Craig, 2012). So again, people tend to want to help the victim and stop bullying but are either too fearful of becoming a victim or do not feel it is their responsibility to intervene.

Butler, Kift, Campbell, Slee and Spears (2011) conducted a study of Australian schools anti-bullying policies and practices. As part of the study the schools were asked to provide copies of all the policies that they considered covered cyberbullying and were asked to answer questions about their practices. One of these areas covered the issue of bystanders, and seven of the nine schools involved stated that they were aware that bystanders are of concern and that in order to address this issue the community needs to create an environment where bystanders are not to be tolerated. These schools stated that people had an obligation to report cyberbullying, with a South Australian school stating that 'bystanders can choose to be part of the solution or part of the problem', and a Queensland school stating 'the whole school community is responsible for the elimination of bullying and harassment' (Butler, Kift, Campbell, Slee & Spears, 2011, p. 17). Furthermore, a Queensland school made a point of stating that reporting incidents of bullying is not 'dobbing', and rather it is reporting behaviour that is inappropriate and unnecessary, and this is one step closer in creating a school

environment that is safe and comfortable for everyone (Butler, Kift, Campbell, Slee & Spears, 2011). This is a stance that schools need to take to ensure young people feel safe in reporting bullying behaviour. Young people need to be made to feel that if they witness cyberbullying or bullying in general that they can report it and not become the victim themselves. Furthermore, they need to feel that they are doing some good in reporting cyberbullying and that there will actually be a positive outcome from reporting it. Schools need to emphasise to students that cyberbullying is not ok, but also that witnessing it and not intervening is just as bad and not to be tolerated.

Stueve, et al., (2006) propose several procedures that may assist in creating programs and policies that are informed, acceptable, and relevant, with the first being to assess bystander behaviour. It is important for schools to know exactly the types of bystander behaviour their students are involved in. The second procedure Stueve, et al., (2006) suggest is to assess local norms regarding bystander behaviour. This is fairly self explanatory in that it is important for schools to discover what norms are in place in the school about how people should act when witnessing bullying, and what young people have deemed to be acceptable or 'cool' behaviour. The next procedure is to identify any barriers that are preventing bystanders from getting involved (Stueve, et al., 2006). It is important that any reasons as to why bystanders are not intervening are addressed so as to encourage more people to come forward. Next, the school needs to be clear about expectations and protocols, in that students need to know when it is appropriate to come forward about something they have witnessed and when it is not (Stueve, et al., 2006). Finally, the last procedure is to ensure bystander protection and safety, in that young people need to know that their anonymity will be assured and that they will remain safe if they report bullying behaviour they have witnessed (Stueve, et al., 2006). These procedures should be considered for schools to use in addressing the issue of bystanders and bullying.

It is evident in this current study that there are many those considered to be 'outsiders' present amongst the participants in this study. Many participants indicated witnessing bullying, with some personal accounts stating not wanting to get involved for fear of becoming the victim themselves. Future research could focus more on this issue, asking questions like 'why or why not would you intervene if witnessing bullying?' and other similar questions. This will be discussed further near the end of this chapter. This issue of bystanders is an important issue that needs to be addressed if there is any hope in reducing cyberbullying. Studies so far have neglected to examine this vital role the bystanders take in the persistence of cyberbullying, although Schneider,

O'Donnell, Stueve, and Coulter (2012) explain that further research examining the role bystanders play in escalating, condoning, tolerating and preventing cyberbullying is a crucial one. Young people perhaps do not fully understand the affects their bullying can have on other people, and therefore need to be stopped. But more importantly, young people need to understand that there is help available to them, and that being a victim of bullying is not something they are forced to tolerate.

### *Managing bullying*

To turn back to the findings of the current study, it is now important to discuss the measures that people have taken to try to manage bullying or harassment. Most participants (52.8 per cent) stated that in order to manage bullying they simply increased their privacy settings on their site. In support of this, 34.3 per cent of participants indicated that they had to change their password, and 31.3 per cent stated that they had to modify their site in some way. Also, 46.2 per cent of participants said that they resorted to deleting contacts from their site to stop the bullying, and 8.3 per cent claimed they had to delete their site altogether. On another note, 17.1 per cent of participants indicated that they discussed the matter with their parents.

This seems like a rather small percentage and it could be suggested that perhaps young people are reluctant to seek help when they are being cyberbullied. This could be due to a number of reasons such as embarrassment, or a fear of repercussions. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980, as cited in Wahlin, & Deane, 2012) explain the theory of reasoned action, which incorporates a person's 'evaluation of the opinion of others towards help seeking into the decision-making process but it is not considered to be the primary determinant of the person's help seeking behaviour'. Furthermore, sociobehavioural and sociocognitive models emphasise that help seeking occurs in a socioecological context, and dynamic models consider that help seeking is a process that involves the whole family and community (Wahlin, & Deane, 2012). As such, social influences may influence why or why not an individual decided to seek help.

Murray (2005) explains that young people need to go through a thought process when considering seeking help. First, they must decide that they need help, then they need to decide to seek help out, then they must decide whom they will seek this help from, and finally how they will seek this help out (Murray, 2005). A problem with a model such as this, however, as Murray (2005) suggest is that it does not consider problem legitimisation nor does it address prior help seeking pathways young people may have taken. Thus, Murray (2005) has identified six different pathways around the

dynamic nature of help seeking. The first is that of a 'dead-end', in which young people may seek help but are then offered no solution or the solution is ineffective (Murray, 2005). This is most likely a very common occurrence and relates to why young people may not even attempt to seek help in the first place. Because they believe that nothing will happen and so there is no point.

The second pathway that Murray (2005) discovered is that of backfiring, which is where the young person may complain about an issue and somehow the issue turns back onto them and they get the blame for it. This could be an issue with both school teachers and parents. For example a young person may say that someone is being nasty to them at school and be told to simply 'grow up' or that the bully 'doesn't have any friends'.

The third pathway is that of the issue being circuitous, meaning that often several ways of help seeking are not affective and it takes many different methods before a conclusion is found (Murray, 2005). For example, a young person being bullied may first seek help from friends, then parents, then teachers, and it may not be until police are involved before something is done.

The fourth pathway Murray (2005) discusses is via an intermediary, meaning that often young people will get a friend or someone else to seek help on their behalf, often so that they do not have to feel embarrassed. Parents are often used as young people believe they will be taken more seriously. One participant in the study stated that the school would be 'more likely to be worried about it, take it more seriously, when parents come to the school', and another participated stated that the teacher 'listened when her mum came in, but they wouldn't listen to what she was saying' (Murray, 2005, p. 487).

The final two pathways Murray (2005) discusses are that of a shaped pathway and a direct pathway. A shaped pathway is where a young person will seek help and also give a solution to the problem, such as suggesting moving into a different class or asking their friends to tell their versions of the story, and a direct pathway is where a young person seeks help and it is solved immediately by the person they sought help from (Murray, 2005).

It is evident from these many different pathways discussed that each individual will have different experiences and opinions about what help seeking methods they prefer and what they will use in the future. For example if one method did not work the first time a young person may choose an alternative way to seek help if they need to again. For instance, if a young person finds that teachers do not listen to their problems

they may turn to their parents instead. Interestingly, a study by Wahlin and Deane (2012) addressing troubled young people's help seeking behaviour, found that parents were the strongest source of influence to access help. However, the rating of internal difficulties by the child as rated by the parents did not match the parent's ratings of influencing the child accessing help, and this could suggest that parents may be unaware of the magnitude of the emotional problems experienced by their child (Wahlin, & Deane, 2012). Recognising the distress of a young person is problematic as young people often hide their actual level of distress for fear of being viewed as weak or as a burden, and thus a parents rating of their child's emotional distress may often be much lower than it actually is (Wahlin, & Deane, 2012). This is a topic that is extremely relevant for the issue of cyberbullying. Given that young people often hide their feelings and do not wish to seek help, it is very difficult for parent's to understand fully what their children are going through. It is crucial that young people and parents understand that it is important and ok that cyberbullying cases are discussed openly, and that there is help.

#### *Parental involvement*

To turn back to the current study, in relation to this issue of bullying or harassment being discussed with parents, participants were asked what sort of rules and regulations their parents had in regards to their use of social networking sites. Surprisingly, 48.1 per cent of participants stated that their parents had no rules at all. However, 33.4 per cent indicated that they could only use these sites after they had finished their homework, 32.1 per cent claimed that they could only use them for a certain amount of time, and 20.4 per cent stated that there is password protection on the computers in the house. A handful of participants explained other rules that were in place, such as having their parents as friends on Facebook, or their parents know their password. So, whilst a great deal of parents do not think that they should have rules in place, it is promising that some are aware that they should be at least slightly monitoring what their child does when online. However, this finding that young people's parents do not have many rules about their child's online activities is supported by previous research. Leung and Lee (2011) discuss that the Internet is an area that parents have very little control or rules over, and this is mostly due to their own lack of knowledge about the Internet.

Furthermore, a different study by Mitchel, Finkelhorn and Wolak (2001) found that those parents that did have rules and regulations set in place, whether it be certain

time on the computer of having parents check their child's profile, were not related to the risk of sexual solicitation. In other words, children were still at risk of sexual solicitation despite the rules their parents had in place. Therefore it seems that even when rules are in place young people are still at risk. Also, the key here is that parents need to develop more of an understanding about how the Internet and social networking works in order to have a greater knowledge about what rules would actually have an impact on their children. This will be discussed further in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Finally, this section will go into discussion about the more severe consequences of cyberbullying and how actual violence can result from the use of social networking sites in a negative way.

#### Actual cases of Violence

A negative outcome of cyberbullying is the issue that physical violence can occur. While most participants who reported witnessing or being involved in cases of violence resulting from social networking sites explained that they were only minor fights, usually as a result of negative comments or jealousy, there were several cases that were much more violent in nature. Whilst there were only 30 cases (7.1%) out of the participants who personally experienced physical violence as a result of bullying, there were 133 cases (32.5%) who witnessed physical violence as a result of bullying. This is still a relatively small sample, but it is still worthy to be discussed. The purpose of this study was to hear the voices of young people, thus, these stories need to be heard.

These cases are important to discuss as they show the clearly damaging impact social networking sites can have on young people as a result of bullying. A Year Eight girl from the rural public high school reported a fight occurring due to a fake account being made of a friend, and a status and comments were made about a person and so a fight broke out, resulting in several students being suspended. This incident must have caused quite a scene at this school as several other participants reported about the same incident. Several girls from this school in the same year level told of a fight that broke out due to a fake account and rude unnecessary comments being made about people. This shows another side to cyberbullying in that it can affect a large amount of people all at once. With traditional bullying, it is very difficult to hurt a lot of people all at the same time, whereas with cyberbullying one can simply post a status tagging several different people in it and that is what can cause these fights that, ultimately, can result in suspension or even expulsion.



Another student from this school, but a Year Twelve male, told of a fight that broke out (due to an argument online) that was so bad police had to be called in. They appropriately state that the fight was ‘dramatic and uncalled for. The situation may have been avoided through a yelling conflict instead of the use of physical violence.’

From the rural private school, there were also several incidents of violence reported. A Year Twelve girl reported of numerous girls finding her profile and threatening to ‘bash’ her due to jealousy, though none followed through due to the girl threatening to involve police. This is an example of how easy it is for cyberbullying to occur online. Anybody can send a private message to another person’s profile even if they are not their ‘friend’, and so cyberbullying is all too easy to perpetrate. A Year Ten girl from this school reported a similar incident of a person hacking into her email account and sending malicious emails to all her contacts.

From a different aspect, a Year Ten girl from the urban public school stated the following:

“I have witnessed in particular a girl being bullied online from [my school] because she is overweight and underprivileged. I’m not sure what action to take because I will be made fun of and rumours will be spread if I try to help. I’m not the type of person who thinks bullying or cyberbullying is acceptable.”

Whilst this does not specifically mention physical violence, this is how this respondent answered this question, suggesting that physical forms of bullying may have been occurring. This is a sad reality that even those that do not agree with bullying are too afraid to do anything because of how other people will react and thus do not intervene. Cyberbullying and bullying is most likely a lot greater a problem than we realise due to this issue of under reporting. Along with this comes the issue of bystanders as discussed earlier. It seems all too common an occurrence that young people see bullying occurring and yet do nothing about it.

Research suggests that up to eighty per cent of bullying incidents are not reported to teachers at school (Rigby & Slee, 1999, as cited in Li, 2006). Li (2006) suggests that an explanation for this may be that students do not think that the teachers will do anything about the bullying once they are told, or either feel scared or helpless to the situation. It is imperative that this belief and attitude must change. It must become

a key priority in schools that efforts are made to reduce cyberbullying where possible, or at least make it clear to students that the staff are there to listen and to help.

To turn back to the current study, it seems that the violent incidents reported by females mainly revolved around arguments and fights forming due to jealousy or as a result of nasty or hurtful comments. Males, however, reported more physical fights and violence, usually from someone ‘acting tough’ online and making threats. This relates back to notion of indirect and direct bullying as discussed early by Olweus (1973, as cited in Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Thus, it seems females are more inclined to be involved in indirect bullying whereas males are more likely to be involved in direct bullying. This is supportive of previous research that suggests that males are significantly more physically victimised than females, while females are more relationally victimised (Li, 2006). In other words, males use more physical threats to bully whereas females use words and manipulation as their method. Furthermore, this study by Li (2006) found that males were significantly more likely to be bullies than females.

It is clear that cyberbullying does not stop at just hurtful comments left on ones profile or rumours being spread. Cyberbullying can lead to actual physical violence just like traditional bullying can. These cases indicate that this is certainly a problem and require action.

#### *Comparisons Between Categories*

Finally, this study used both private and public schools from both a rural and urban areas, and used three different year levels from each. The purpose of this was to discover if there are any differences between opinions, prevalence, understanding of the risks of social networking between these differing demographic locations, and this section will now discuss these differences in relation to the main findings of this study.

It was thought that perhaps students in the rural schools would use social networking sites more due to the fact that their friends may have been further away and harder to contact compared to those in an urban setting. However, this study found that the school that indicated using social networking sites the most was the Urban Private All Girls School, at 75 per cent claiming they used these sites every day. The remainder of the schools lingered around the 60 per cent mark, with the exception of the Urban Private All Boys School which sat at 52.3 per cent. This could, however, be due to gender. Past research suggests that females use social networking sites more than males, and are more active with their online usage (Clipson, Wilson, DuFrene, 2012). They

also tend to have more ‘friends’ online and spend more time text messaging than males (Clipson, Wilson, DuFrene, 2012). Therefore, this supports these findings that more students at the All Girls School reported being online every day than other schools, and why the All Boys School reported the least amount.

The next main finding to be examined is differences in the amount of contacts. Given that a majority of participants had over 300 contacts, this is the statistic that will be examined. Once again, the All Girls School reported the highest percentage of students with over 300 contacts, with 58 per cent claiming so, closely followed by the Urban Public School at 56.5 per cent. The least was the Rural Public School with only 38.1 per cent claiming to have over 300 contacts, a surprise considering the Rural Private School participants came at 51 per cent. As just mentioned, the previous research suggesting that females use social networking sites more than males explains why the All Girls School would have the most contacts, and the urban setting of the Urban Public School could explain why these students had more contacts. Those in the rural schools could simply have less opportunities to meet new people and add new contacts compared to those in the urban schools, and may use social networking to simply stay in touch with current friends compared to making new ones. This could be a possibility for future research.

When it came to whether participants viewed social networking sites as ‘risky’, most participants chose the neutral response. Here there was actually little variation between the schools with each clustering around the 48 per cent mark. However, the Rural Public School varied the most with only 41.8 per cent choosing the neutral response. This could be due to location and that those in an urban setting are more fearful of the risks involved with social networking, or that they know more about them.

When asked if participants thought there was a danger of sexual predation on social networking sites, most participants chose the ‘agree’ option, but with some variance between schools. The highest percentage to choose this option was the All Girls School with 56.7 percent choosing this option, and the second highest went down to 46.9 per cent at the Rural Private School. The lowest was the All Boys School at 40.7 per cent. This could be due to perhaps females having more experiences with sexual predation compared to males and so they believe it to be more of a risk.

There was quite a range between schools when students were asked if their parents had rules about their Internet time. As discussed, the most common response was that their parents had no rules in place. This varied quite substantially with the highest percentage at 54 per cent at the All Girls school, closely followed by the All

Boys School at 53.5 per cent. The lowest, however, is quite a drop at 39.8 per cent at the Rural Public School. Therefore, it is interesting to note that more parents of those in the All Girls and All Boys schools have no rules in place about their child's usage than at the other schools, and the Rural Public schools has the most students with rules in place. This could relate back to the fact that most cases of violence were reported from this school, and so perhaps the parents are aware of this and are therefore implementing rules.

When asked which forms of bullying or harassment participants had both witnessed and experienced personally, the two most reported forms were unwanted emails and rumours being spread. The percentages, however, once again varied between schools. When it came to those who had witnessed unwanted emails, the All Girls School reported the highest at 73.1 per cent, with the lowest at 50.6 per cent at the Rural Public School. However, when it came to actually personally experiencing unwanted emails, the All Girls School reported the lowest at 18.9 per cent, with the highest reported from the Urban Public School at 31.1 per cent. This could be due to not wanting to report being a victim of bullying themselves, but it is unclear as to why it is so highly reported as being seen but not so highly reported of being personally experienced. In terms of rumours being spread being witnessed, the highest percentage reported was from the Rural Private School at 75.5 per cent and the lowest was 43 per cent at the Rural Public School. The remainder were in the high 50 per cent mark. However, once again, in terms of experiencing it, the Rural Public School reported the highest at 32.9 per cent, but the lowest was the All Girls School at 12.5 per cent. Once again, this could be due to a lack of willingness to report being a victim themselves, compared to witnessing it.

Finally, there was a difference between schools when asked if participants had experienced violent, physical fights resulting from social networking and if they had experienced it themselves. As is evident from the many accounts described earlier, most reports came from students at the Rural Public School. This is evident in the statistics also as 16.5 per cent of participants from the Rural Public School reported experiencing serious fights personally (as a result of social networking sites), and this was the highest ranked with the lowest being the All Girls School at 0 per cent. This is no surprise given the literature discussed earlier by Li (2006) that explained that females are more likely to be involved in indirect bullying compared to direct bullying, and are also less likely to be bullies compared to males. What is worthy of note, however, is that the Urban Public School actually reported witnessing serious fights resulting from social

networking the most at 19.7 per cent, closely followed by the All Boys School at 18.6 per cent, and then finally, the Rural Public School. It is uncertain as to why this is the case, and therefore this could be a topic of consideration for future research to further develop an understanding of why there are these differences between schools, and why there is such a difference between witnessing and experiencing events.

Whilst the statistics differed somewhat for each question, it seems that the Public Schools (particularly the rural one) were in the higher percentage for most responses, particularly those involving bullying and violence. This could be due to a lack of rules in place by schools or just a difference in demographic location. Though, it is worthy of note, from personal experience, that whilst administering these surveys to schools and working with staff in general there were very noticeable differences between each school, in terms of cooperation and respect. This, however, is a whole other area to be examined.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, social networking sites have many risks associated with them, but fortunately, young people seem to be becoming more aware of these risks. However, this does not stop cyberbullying or sexual predation from occurring. Despite these risks there are still some positive sides to social networking. They are an ideal opportunity for people to stay connected, to plan events, and to keep in touch with people they do not get to see in person so much. Social networking also provides a unique way to form new friendships, as well as become closer on a personal level with people as they provide the opportunity to discover personal details about one another.

Whilst social networking sites may be a great way to connect, they are also the ideal grounds for bullying, and for unwanted contact from unknown people, which may or may not lead to sexual predation. As indicated through these results, the issue of cyberbullying is prevalent, however, the issue of sexual predation seems to not be so much of a risk to this group of participants. In other words, young people more aware of the risks as well as what measures to take to be protected and safe. It seems that these risks are somewhat understood by young people. The participants in this study seemed to have an understanding about the risks that are involved with social networking sites, but still indicated that the risks are there and that they are a problem. As one participant appropriately stated: 'social networking can be dangerous and can be fun, it is up to the user's discretion of when to draw the line between fun and danger.'

What is of concern, however, is the issue of bystanders, and the percentage of bullying being witnessed by participants. More participants reported witnessing bullying than experiencing it themselves, and this is a troubling thought as it seems bullying is a problem and is simply being accepted by people as an everyday occurrence.

It is crucial that young people are given more education about what the risks for social networking sites are so that they can further develop their understanding of them, and potentially one day stop these risks from being a problem. The risks are beginning to be understood but it is still the problem for the people that use them irresponsibly. As one participant states:

‘There is no point in educating people about how to avoid risks like bullying but by educating people not to do it themselves. Because the problems are a result of people....Social networking is great, it’s just a few people that ruin it.’

This next chapter of this thesis will now go on to discuss the many implications of this study, as well as its limitations and suggestions for future research.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

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This study has personally questioned young people about their online experiences and opinions about social networking. What makes this study so imperative and unique is that it asks high school students across a range of year levels and areas about their experiences, what they have personally been exposed to and what they have witnessed, as well as their opinions on social networking and what their thoughts are. This study has found that many young people believe sexual predation is only a risk to those who do not know how to keep their settings private and share too much information. In terms of bullying, however, it was interesting to note that more cases of witnessing bullying behaviours were reported than actually personally experiencing it. This study has certainly found that the issue of bystanders is a bigger problem than is perhaps realised, and therefore more should be done in regards to educating people about how to intervene in such cases.

This final chapter of this thesis will first explore in detail about the many implications of this study due to its unique design through qualitative and quantitative research. Then this section will discuss some suggestions for the future including educating parents, education schools, and using young people and social media. Finally, this thesis will discuss some future suggestions for research, and will finish with some concluding remarks.

#### Implications of this study

Firstly, it is important to discuss the many implications of this study. A strong positive aspect of this study is its unique design. This study uses a mixed methods approach, as the survey is comprised of a mix of both quantitative and qualitative styled questions rather than just one or the other as previous research has utilised. Through the quantitative responses, it was possible to gain a statistical understanding of the amount of people that did certain things and how many people use these sites overall. Through this data, I was able to extrapolate a general idea about social networking behaviour across the variety of schools. The qualitative responses aided the quantitative data in that it gave participants the opportunity to explain their responses, as well as allowing participants to give their personal opinions and offer their thoughts and beliefs. The Likert Scale questions gave participants the opportunity to indicate how strongly they felt about current issues, but then were able to indicate why they felt this way. This gave

a clear indication of the beliefs and feelings of participants, as well as gaining insight into some personal stories. The use of these qualitative questions is the most crucial feature of this research. These questions gave participants the opportunity to tell their stories and to speak their mind. They gave the opportunity for voices to be heard. Through these qualitative responses it was possible for the true impact of social networking sites to be gleaned and the presence of risks to be revealed. In other words, as stated by Spears, Slee, Owens, and Johnson (2009, p. 194) 'qualitative research is employed to interpret reality', which these results have very much achieved.

The results of this study, as discussed, found that a majority of participants had experienced or witnessed cyberbullying in some way, though a greater percentage reported witnessing bullying compared to personally experiencing it. There were several instances where the bullying, however, led to physical violence, some cases more extreme than others. This research shows that cyberbullying is indeed a prevalent issue among young people and needs to be addressed, particularly the issue of bystanders. It would be of great benefit if schools, teachers and parents were given more information on the prevalence and extent of cyberbullying, so that in turn youth can be informed about the negative consequences it can have on a person's life. Whilst this is beginning to occur through government initiatives such as Cybersmart (2009), there can always be more that can be done. How schools and parents, and youth themselves, can be used to help reduce cyberbullying shall be discussed in more detail in the next section.

Finally, the risk of sexual predation was believed to only be a problem if users were naive enough to put too much personal information online or talk to people that they have never actually met before. This being stated, many participants indicated that they had had people comment them or email them in a sexual way, and sometimes ask inappropriate things. However, the data of this study suggest that sexual predation is not so much of a concern as once believed. Nevertheless, young people should still be given more education about the dangers of sexual predators online and what sorts of things they should not display publicly.

What is of concern is the vast number of participants in this study that indicated witnessing forms of bullying occurring. These people are known as bystanders and play a crucial role in the continuation of bullying and its prevention. This final chapter of this thesis will discuss suggestions for the future in educating parents and using young people and social media to prevent bullying, as well as discussing future considerations for research, and finally followed by some concluding remarks about this study as a whole.



This next section will now discuss some suggestions for the future on what can be done to decrease cyberbullying and social networking risks.

### Suggestions for the future

#### *Educating Parents*

A crucial part to the fight against the risks of cyberbullying and sexual predation lays in further educating both the parents of the many young people using social networking sites and schools communities in general. Hinduja and Patchin (2010) suggest that simply educating youth about the dangers of social networking sites, rather than creating legislation or making technological changes, could be the best preventative way to tackle this problem, as laws and legislation may simply not do much to resolve the problem.

A significant issue when addressing the risks of social networking sites is the fact that young people are often more technologically savvy in this area than their parents. Whilst many adults do indeed use social networking sites themselves, these are more commonly ore professional sites such as LinkedIn, rather than Facebook. The problem is that how can parents begin to regulate young people's behaviour and help them become safer online when adults do not fully understand social networking themselves?

Spears, Slee, Campbell, and Cross (2011) explain that parents are raising their children in a world completely different to their own in terms of technological advances. Therefore the rules they had in place as children may not be as effective or relevant on their own children. In 1995 the Internet was first commercialised, and thus children born in that year are now 17 years old and have grown up with this technology and can move 'seamlessly between online and offline environments, often referring to them as "the same life"' (Spears, Slee, Campbell, & Cross, 2011, p.4). Therefore, as a result, unlike traditional bullying parents are not familiar are equipped to deal with cyberbullying as they have never experienced it themselves. A survey conducted in 2009 found that 84 per cent of parents do not know how to respond to cyberbullying (Hannah, 2010). This is because they did not grow up with the Internet and social networking so readily available and such a part of their life, and therefore are unfamiliar with most technologies young people use today as well as the language young people use. Even those parents who are Internet savvy may not fully understand what

behaviours are appropriate and inappropriate online when young people are involved (Hannah, 2010).

Furthermore, as the Internet offers both productive content and opportunities it also offers harmful interactions and information, and the challenge for parents is to draw the line between opportunity and danger (Livingstone, & Bober, 2006, as cited in Sorbring, & Lundin, 2012). Previous studies suggest that interest from parents into what teenagers are engaging themselves in and where they are occurring can actually be positive for teenage development and adjustment, however, with this generation of young people parents often have limited insight into the lives of their children and the types of online experiences they are having (Sorbring, & Lundin, 2012). Given that the Internet and social networking sites can be accessed from the privacy of one's own computer, and it is so easy to lock others from entering it and to block people from visiting your social networking site, parents are unfortunately very limited in what they can see and access. Wang et al., (2005, as cited in Sorbring, & Lundin, 2012) conducted some research and found that parents' believe it is difficult to discuss the Internet and to be involved in their children's lives in regards to social networking as they know so much more and this form of communication than they do themselves, and thus it is difficult to set up rules and limits when they are unsure if they will even be affective.

It is worthy of note that research has found that parents grossly underestimate the degree of contact their children have with inappropriate content online, as well as their experiences with negative behaviours, such as cyberbullying (Sorbring, & Lundin, 2012). For example, research suggests that about 70 per cent of parents do not believe that their child has ever been in contact with anything upsetting or disturbing online, when in general half of teenagers who have indeed come in contact with some inappropriate material or situation have parents that do not believe this is the case (Livingstone, et al., 2011, as cited in Sorbring, & Lundin, 2012). Also, in regards to cyberbullying, one particular study found that one third of young people reported they had been bullied online and only 4 per cent of the parents involved believed their children had been a victim or witnessed cyberbullying (Cho and Cheon, 2005; Liau and Khoo, 2008; SAFTstudy, 2003, as cited in Sorbring, & Lundin, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative that parents consider the possibility that their child may be doing things and being exposed to things that they themselves may not believe to actually be happening, and they must take the steps to help them in either situation.

To aid parents with how to help their children with how to deal with cyberbullying, Hannah (2010) suggests parents to rely upon the basic strategies they

successfully employ on a day-to-day basis, that being to nurture children, to provide structure for their children and to join their children in their world in an appropriate manner. In order to nurture their children, Hannah (2010) suggests that parents need to ask themselves a series of questions, the first being to consider how they would respond if their child is behaving in an aggressive manner in the offline world, compared to the online world, or how they would respond if their child is experiencing offline threats. This way, parents can decide how to alter their response to their child's aggressive behaviour if they consider how they would respond to similar offline behaviour, and also how they would respond if their child is being threatened online compared to offline. Next, parents need to ask themselves the simple question of whether their child's behaviour is appropriate for their age (Hannah, 2010). Sometimes, despite whether the parent agrees or not, a child's behaviour may be crucial to their development and they may need the learning experience to fully develop emotionally. Next, and one of the most important questions, the parent must discover if their child is engaging in aggressive behaviour and not showing any remorse, or in contrast, if their child is constantly being threatened (Hannah, 2010). If either of these apply, the parent needs to take appropriate measures, and Hannah (2010, p. 533) suggests that these can include 'redirection, modelling expected behaviour, discussion, positive discipline and/or consequences and possibly talking with school or community officials'. Finally, a parent needs to be open for communication with their child (Hannah, 2010). If the child is to run into trouble, or wants to seek assistance for their aggressive behaviour, they need to understand that their parent is there to help them and to not judge them for what they may be going through.

The next aspect to discuss is that of structure. Parents need to ensure that their child has appropriate structure in their lives, particularly involving the online world. Hannah (2010) suggests that parents need to consider how much time their child spends online, as what sites they use, what information they have on their profile, what contacts they have online, as well as whether the computer is located in a central room of the house compared to privacy of the child's room, as bullying in general is less likely to occur with adult presence around. As such, parents should ask their children questions about what they do online, what they like about it and who they speak to. Hannah (2010) emphasises that parents need to be strict with their children and put appropriate rules and regulations in place if they deem any of their child's behaviour inappropriate or aggressive, or if they feel they are at risk. Consequently, it is important that the parent involves the child in this rule setting process, as any young adult may simply do

the opposite if their parent simply tells them they are not allowed to do something. This relates back to the nurturing aspect, in that open communication between parent and child is crucial.

The next aspect to be addressed is that of joining the online world. Naturally, parents need to be careful as children may be quick to shut them out if they feel their personal or private online space is being invaded. Hannah (2010) suggests that parents create their own social networking site and 'friend' their children. This may not always work but sometimes it can be a good way of keeping up to date with the child's statuses and updates. It is important, however, to choose the battles wisely. Hannah (2010) emphasises that children like their privacy online, and furthermore there are many instances that may be crucial to a child's development, and as a result the parents need to know when to simply stay out of it. However, if a child starts suddenly acting more aggressively, starts becoming depressed or overly emotional, loses touch with old friends, is regularly sick, eats less, experiences a drop in school grades or spends hours locked away in their bedroom, these may be signs of something troubling them, such as cyberbullying, and the parent may need to intervene (Hannah, 2010).

These three aspects of nurturing the child, providing structure for the child, and joining the child in the online world are crucial for parents to understand if they want to help their child and reduce cyberbullying. Whilst this may all reduce cyberbullying, it is important to know when to draw the line. Sometimes, these actions may be considered invasions of privacy, and may cause trust issues between the parent and the child. Research suggests that parents and adolescents views on privacy boundaries can often clash, and that as adolescents gain more independence, possessions and information that only they have access, they create privacy rules that may not coincide with the views of their parents (Hawk, Keijsers, Hale, & Meeus, 2009). Thus, privacy invasion can be experienced, especially when parents claim ownership in an area that adolescents feel is their won to control (Hawk, Keijsers, Hale, & Meeus, 2009). For example, this could apply to social networking sites. Young people may feel that their computer and Facebook are their own private areas, and if a parent tries to get involved in this or create their own account, the young person may consider this as an invasion. As a result they may become more distant or try to block certain parts of their profile from their parents, each of which would be the opposite aim of what the parent would be trying to achieve.

Therefore, it would be best if parents found another way of getting involved or monitoring their child's online lives, rather than setting rules in place or constantly

monitoring their internet use. Sitting down and having a conversation with young people is often the best way to get a message across to them, rather than what may be considered 'attacking' them, or, as just suggested, invading their privacy. Shin, Huh, and Faber (2012) explain that active mediation has been found to be associated with positive social outcomes in new media. This refers to mediation through conversation, by explaining and discussing the undesirable aspects of new media and appropriate behaviours (Shin, Huh, & Faber, 2012). This type of mediation can reduce negative effects from new media, alongside improving positive outcomes. Thus, parents need to consider what methods they should use if they wish to be involved in their children's lives, so as to still give them privacy and independence but also protect them from risk. As such, it is imperative that parents communicate with their children about the issue of cyberbullying, how they can stay out of it and how they can be helped. Of course, whilst the parents can help at home, children spend most of their day at school, and therefore schools also play a crucial role in reducing cyberbullying and intervening,

#### *Educating Schools*

Whilst schools may have appropriate anti bullying initiatives and policies in place, this rarely has any impact on cyberbullying. This, however, is a rather difficult problem to address, as cyberbullying can occur out of school hours. This is where the question comes into play as what can actually be done to control cyberbullying. How does one control the actions of children from the safety and freedom of their own homes? Where does one begin to regulate what is said and done on the freedom of speech on the Internet? What can legally be done? Clearly, this is an issue with many questions and problems attached to it.

Farrington and Ttofi (2009, as cited in Spears, Slee, Campbell, & Cross, 2011) conducted a study of school based programs designed to reduce bullying and victimisation through a whole-of-school approach, and found that schools who met the criteria had a decrease in bullying perpetration and victimisation. The components of the programs that were associated with the decrease included parent and teacher training and meetings, improved playground supervision, disciplinary methods, classroom management and rules, whole-school anti-bullying policies, school conferences, information for parents and cooperative group work. Therefore, when addressing which is the best approach to take in regards to schools and educating young people, these different approaches that have found to be successful should be implemented.

It was discussed earlier that schools need to consider implementing specific rules that address cyberbullying so that young people are aware that it is not acceptable behaviour. Taylor (2008) explains that a policy that specifically defines cyberbullying as unacceptable and indicates disciplinary action that will result may assist schools in dealing with cyberbullying and taking action. This policy, however, needs to include information such as how students can report cyberbullying if they feel they are experiencing or witnessing it, as well as what steps the school will take to intervene (Taylor, 2008). This is crucial so that the students (and the parents) understand that action will be taken if they report cyberbullying. Furthermore, it is important that this policy specifically defines that cyberbullying occurring between students off campus will also not be tolerated, and that students will still be punished, as this is the time when a majority of cyberbullying takes place. It is important that schools start to begin to implement cyberbullying rules rather than just traditional bullying rules as this is a steadily growing issue.

Bullying often begins in schools, and it is the lack of involvement from teachers that can allow the bullying to continue. The school environment is the pivotal site at which one can tackle bullying, and thus it is imperative that proper education and information is given to schools and teachers about what they can do and how they can help.

However, if the school is the beginning, where does it end? The problem is that cyberbullying can continue after school and all through that night provided that the bully and victim have either a mobile phone or any form of social networking technology. Therefore, it is with young people themselves that the educating is most important. It is also, however, where the solution may lie. This next section will now discuss why it is imperative that young people themselves be used as a part of the cyberbullying solution, as well as online social marketing techniques.

#### *Using young people and social media*

It is now important to discuss the importance of using young people and social media to address these issues associated with social networking sites. The experts in this area of how to deal with cyberbullying and how to use social networking sites in a positive manner are clearly not the adults, but young people themselves. In support of this, Spears, Slee, Campbell, and Cross (2011, p.6) appropriately state that ‘without the significant input of young people, through their ‘voice’ and participation, cyberbullying interventions, devised by adults solely for use in traditional school setting, may seem

fated to less than optimal outcomes.’ Therefore, to address this issue of how to deal with cyberbullying young people themselves should be considered to aid in this process, as they will have a better understanding of what may be affective and what young people will pay attention too.

Given that these sites and the risks associated with them are such a new phenomenon, and that the experts in this area are young people themselves, the very same people who are at risk, it seems only logical that the most likely to come up with a successful solution is in fact young people. They are equipped with the knowledge and expertise of how to navigate these sites where their older counterparts are not. It was mentioned earlier that young people often view their online and offline lives as the ‘same’ life, and contrary to this Spears (2012) states that some young people may only ever know relationships that involve some type of online component. Therefore, it is imperative that we learn from young people about their experiences, and that we continue to educate them about the impact of technology on relationships as this technology continues to advance and as young people themselves mature (Spears, 2012).

Furthermore, in relation to this issue of who should be used to create a possible solution is how it should be done and by what means. In this technologically advanced era, schools may no longer be the ideal means to educate young people about cybersafety. This is where social media itself can be used in a positive manner to promote safety online. Already, there are many websites in existence about safety online, such as an Australian government cybersmart site (2009) which includes tips for teenagers about being smart online, a ‘Thinkuknow’ website (2007) which includes information about what to think about when using social networking sites and also has a section dedicated to cyberbullying, and finally an Australian Government Initiative Stay Smart Online website (2010) which includes tips for children, teenagers, parents, schools and even businesses about their online safety.

These sites each portray a main message: to respect other people and treat them the way you would like to be treated. Respect (or disrespect in this case) plays an important role in cyberbullying and has not yet been discussed. Hendrick and Hendrick (2006) explain that respect plays an important role in both interpersonal relationships and personal self identity. Respect can be defined as an emotion concept based on the notion of a person having worth or value, or alternatively, as a ‘type of attitude characterized by feelings of esteem for another that manifest in both highly valuing the person’s feelings, thoughts, and behaviours and a willingness to be influenced by that

person' (Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2006, p. 882). It can be said that people require a feeling of worth, as well as individual and collective identity, and each individual deserves a basic level of respect simply because they are human beings (Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2006). In other words, Miller (2001, as cited in Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2006, p. 882) states that 'one of the entitlements that individuals are due by virtue of their humanity is the right to be treated in a way that fosters positive self-regard.' Respect can be viewed from a number of standpoints: as an emotion, a behavioural tendency, an attitude, or a cognitive component. Hendrick and Hendrick (2006) suggests that it be viewed in terms of both its structure and content. It can be seen as an attitude as it is made up of affect, cognition and behavioural tendencies, but also as having two primary components: equality/mutuality and caring/supportiveness (Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2006). As Hendrick and Hendrick (2006, p. 885) explain, caring and supportiveness can be 'viewed as asymmetrical, yet when balanced by equality/mutuality, the combination embodies relational respect'. This in order for young people to respect each other, they must consider care, support, equality and mutuality.

Moving on from the topic of respect and back to the websites that exist that are beginning to discuss this area, whilst these websites offer a variety of self help options as well as some information for students, parents and teachers, the question here is how much of this information is actually being seen and made use of by young people? And is it actually helping? Spears and Zeederberg (2012) state that these types of sites are designed by adults for young people to visit in order to gain information, but are not actually where young people are coming together or socialising. Thus, it seems that it is time to 'move beyond the traditional whole-school environment as the sole system for (cyber)bullying interventions, and move into the publically networked spaces taking youth-led, user-designed, anti-cyberbullying messaging direct to young people, in the networked spaces in which they choose to congregate, such as Facebook and YouTube' (Spears & Zeederberg, 2012, p. 6).

Given that young people spend most of their time online, it seems logical that information about cyberbullying and other online risks should be delivered to them online as well, as this is the most likely way that it will be seen and, hopefully payed attention to. Thus, online social marketing is the next stage in the fight against cyberbullying. Spears and Zeederberg (2012) explain that online social marketing is a new and emerging research that can be implemented to intervene with cyberbullying through the use of the Internet, through delivering relevant and targeted messages directly to young people through the sites they so religiously visit. Thus, if social



networking sites themselves were willing to be involved, using these sites as platforms for online social marketing messaging would be ideal. To have the ability to recruit, promote and mobilise support, ‘from youth – to youth’ would be the idyllic means of beginning to decrease the amount of cyberbullying experienced (Spears & Zeederberg, 2012, p.7).

An ideal way that cyberbullying could be reduced would be to create a website that displays anti-cyberbullying messages that are relevant for young people of all ages. An ideal method of research would be to have students view this website and then to complete a survey afterwards and see if their views had changed. One such website, and one such project, does indeed exist. There exists an organisation called the *Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre* (YAWCRC). The website (visit: <http://www.youngandwellcrc.org.au/>) explains that the centre ‘unites young people with researchers, practitioners, innovators and policy-makers from over 70 partner organisations across the not-for-profit, academic, government and corporate sectors’ (Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre (YAWCRC) 2012). The main focus of the YAWCRC is to explore the role that technology plays on young people’s lives, and furthermore, how this technology can actually be used to improve young people’s lives and their health and wellbeing, specifically those between the ages of twelve and twenty five.

The centre has three main research projects: *Safe and Supportive*, *Connected and Creative*, and *User-Driven and Empowered*. The *Safe and Supportive* program ‘aims to investigate and build safe and supportive online environments and provide strategies and tools that promote cybersafety, mental health and wellbeing’ (YAWCRC, 2012). This project is targeted at young people and aims to prevent mental health issues such as depression. The research will focus on four main challenges: digital citizenship and safety, respectful relationships, participation, and help-seeking (YAWCRC, 2012). Through this research, the centre aims to develop some solutions using technology to promote cybersafety and strong and supportive relationships (YAWCRC, 2012). Part of this research involves the *Safe and Well Online* project which will be discussed in further detail shortly.

The *Connected and Creative* program has a slightly different focus and that is on young people who are less engaged with technology, due to either a lack of access to it or because of their socio-economic status, beliefs, or even mental illness. This research will therefore include young people that are considered to be vulnerable to developing mental health problems, such as those who are: living with a chronic illness or

disability, indigenous, homeless, carers, same-sex attracted, gender diverse, newly arrived refugees, and culturally and linguistically diverse (YAWCRC, 2012). This research aims to ‘generate baseline data about how vulnerable young people integrate existing technologies into their everyday lives, track how this use changes, and carry out predictive mapping of target groups’ technological needs’ (YAWCRC, 2012). As a result, the program plans to introduce new tools that may reduce the stigma associated with those suffering from a mental health disorder, and thus also provide support to young people and promote wellbeing (YAWCRC, 2012).

Finally, the last project, *User-driven and Empowered*, focuses on creating new and innovative services for those young people who are suffering from a mental health issue, and aims to ensure that the services are not only easily accessible to all but also available in an environment that caters for all young people (YAWCRC, 2012). This project also aims to develop these resources to not only young people but by health professionals who are providing clinical services, and will ‘conduct cutting edge research to revolutionise the resources used in clinical practice’ (YAWCRC, 2012).

To turn back to the research most relevant to this study, this Safe and Supportive program indeed compliments this research. A part of the *Safe and Supportive* research involved a project called *Safe and Well Online*. This is the research that is imperative for the future and vital for young people’s development in the cyberbullying world. The *Safe and Well Online* project will ‘develop and test a program of online, youth-centred social communications to promote young people’s safety and wellbeing online’ (YAWCRC, 2012). This involves a five-year study of the most effective ways to design and deliver online social marketing campaigns that will improve the safety and wellbeing of young people. This project involves not only the use of young people themselves, but also the community, government, end-users, research organisations and the digital media industry, and will ‘develop and evaluate an online social marketing framework, executing at least four campaigns and will use longitudinal tracking and innovative digital data collection to measure reach, outcome and impact of campaign activity whilst determining the efficacy of attitudinal and behaviour change in young people’ (YAWCRC, 2012). This research will use online advertising techniques and methods to engage with young people themselves and delivery educational messages to create positive behavioural change (YAWCRC, 2012).

This *Safe and Well Online* Project, as part of the *Safe and Supportive* research, has launched a new campaign entitled ‘*Keep It Tame*’, which went live on November 12, 2012 (visit: <http://keepittame.youngandwellcrc.org.au/> to view the campaign). This

campaign can be explained as an ‘unprecedented online campaign targeting Australian teenagers, drawing attention to the consequences of thoughtless and hurtful use of social media and empowering them to act with respect online’ (YAWCRC, 2012). Up to 80 per cent of young Australians between the ages of twelve and eighteen will be exposed to this interactive online campaign, which has not only been backed by the nation’s top twenty youth-focused websites and developed by young people, leading marketers and top academics, but is led by the University of South Australia in conjunction with the University of Western Sydney, Zuni and the Queensland University of Technology (YAWCRC, 2012). The *Safe and Well Online* project also builds upon the original and well known *Smart Online Safe Offline* initiative developed by the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) (YAWCRC, 2012).

What is so unique about the *Keep it Tame* campaign is that that is involves the use of a new digital tracking methodology will measure the impact of the campaign on behaviour change. The campaign involves a cohort study that will survey and interview young people over time alongside the use of the digital tracking, the campaign itself involves guiding young people through a series of mock posts and as things turn ‘nasty’ and animated creature becomes more and more grotesque (YAWCRC, 2012). This is intended to highlight the hurtful effects that online behaviour can have on young people and to encourage young people to act with respect and consideration for others. Program Leader, Dr Philippa Collin, from the University of Western Sydney, explains that the project will ‘provide a snapshot of how young people interact online while also mapping how they react to prompts on their behaviour’ (YAWCRC, 2012). In the words of one of the young people involved in the design of the project, *Keep It Tame* shows the risks and harms of ‘taking a “joke” too far, and really puts the person doing the wrong in the other position – understanding whether it would be any different if they were on the receiving end’ (YAWCRC, 2012). Dr. Barbara Spears, lead researcher from the University of South Australia, says that the program encourages young people to take ownership of what happens to their relationships because of online actions, rather than simply telling young people what to do and how they should behave (YAWCRC, 2012). Rather, it focuses on them claiming responsibility for their actions and realising that their behaviour can hurt others and even their own friendships.

What is of concern though is that the messages for young people may need to adapt over time, as the faces of social networking sites and the many issues associated with them are constantly changing. This project takes this into consideration by planning on changing the messages portrayed through the campaign each year. Dr.

Spears explains this by stating ‘we’ve set the project up to allow us to test new approaches to social communications, and as the project progresses over the next few years we will develop new campaigns that build on the messaging of earlier ones’ (YAWCRC, 2012). Therefore, this research will continue to be relevant over the next few years even if the issues facing young people change.

This research is imperative as young people need to realise the consequences of their actions. Dr. Collin of the University of Western Sydney states that ‘many people unfortunately experience hurtful behaviour online at some stage, and it’s crucial that this generation of Australians doesn’t grow up thinking this is the natural way to communicate online, because it isn’t’ (YAWCRC, 2012). Therefore, this program is vital as Dr. Collin also states that ‘the reality is there are lots of young people who don’t think it’s okay to make fun, tease or bully someone online and this campaign is all about empowering young people to take advantage of the tools and techniques that are already available to them to take control of ugly situations and use mobile phones, computers and tablets positively to interact with each other’ (YAWCRC, 2012). This campaign will ensure young people understand what they can do to prevent cyberbullying.

This campaign has already received some media attention. An article in The Telegraph explains the importance of the campaign and how it encourages young people to be kinder to one another online and that over the duration of the five year project it is hoped that cyberbullying behaviour will decrease and help-seeking behaviour will increase (Holderhead, 2012). Furthermore, this article involved an interview with Dr. Barbara Spears, who states that ‘we’re not anticipating them to change behaviour overnight but the first campaign is about respect so, if young people understand how to be respectful of themselves and others, that’s a good basis for promoting values and better behaviour’ (Holderhead, 2012). Furthermore, another article in The Herald explains that the use of social media has become the norm for young people, and that bullying is being amplified online and this campaign aims to highlight the consequences of such online bullying (Schneiders, 2012). This article discusses a study conducted in Australia in 2012 by AU Kids online, which involved interviews with four hundred young people aged between nine and sixteen and found that 30 per cent had experienced something online that had upset or bothered them and 13 percent had been bullied online (Schneiders, 2012). This situates the relevance of not only this *Keep It Tame* campaign but also this study as whole. Often what young people consider to be funny or mindless things online soon get out of hand and turn nasty, and this campaign will, hopefully, encourage young people how to handle these situations as well as how to

avoid getting involved in them in the first place, as well as what to do if they witness it happening.

To turn away from this research, there are also some other positive uses that the internet and social networking can be used for in terms of social marketing. For instance, it has been suggested that the Internet can be used as a medium to treat young people that may be suffering from illnesses or disorders such as depression. Stephenson-Reicher, Metcalf, Blanchard, Mangan and Burns (2011, p. S58) suggest that information communication technologies (ICT) are an effective media to support the mental health of young people, particularly those that are at an increased risk of developing a mental disorder and can be considered 'hard to reach' through traditional intervention methods. They explain that the Internet is a 'powerful health promotion tool, unrestricted by geographical, temporal or physical constraints', and has the advantage of providing anonymity, continuous access twenty four seven and immediate feedback (Stephenson-Reicher, et al., 2011, p. S59). Furthermore, the setting of the Internet can be modified and tailored to meet each individuals needs and outcomes, and can thus be considered a mediator of social determinants of mental health as these online experiences can consequently shape outcomes in the offline world (Stephenson-Reicher, et al., 2011). Additionally, in regards to the use of social marketing techniques discussed earlier, research affirms that ICT based strategies, as just discussed, is most successful when implemented as a part of a social marketing campaign (Stephenson-Reicher, et al., 2011). Thus, it is imperative that future research addresses this notion of using both ICT intervention strategies as well as social marketing campaigns to help reduce cyberbullying as well as the consequences of it.

#### *Future considerations for research*

Other than the brief points discussed about what future research could be done in this area and how research can be improved upon, there are several study ideas that I would like to mention in regards to suggestions for the future on how to reduce cyberbullying. Several 'before and after' studies would be extremely beneficial if implementing new techniques to reduce cyberbullying to determine if they are effective or not. A worthy study, or studies, to do would be to survey both parents, teachers, and students about cyberbullying, and then to implement some kind of education course and then survey several months after to see if there are any changes in behaviour and/or beliefs. The same idea could be applied to a social marketing campaign, to survey before the campaign begins and then again afterwards to determine if there are any

significant changes. This is very much like the Keep It Tame campaign that has just recently gone live, but other research could be done in a similar manner but through education courses or discussion, rather than through social media. It would be a worthwhile study to survey young people, then put them through a series of education sessions about the risks of cyberbullying and sexual predation, and then to survey them again perhaps a year later to see if any changes were made. It would be irrelevant to survey them immediately after the education because naturally they will respond differently if the anti-cyberbullying messages are fresh in their mind. It is important to leave some sort of time for the message to either 'sink in' or disappear completely to determine if the education is affective and beneficial or not.

Furthermore, it is imperative further research is conducted around the issue of bystanders, as this is clearly a significant problem. A study questioning the role of bystanders as well as beliefs and opinions would be beneficial. Furthermore, longitudinal studies are always useful in determining changes over time, so this is another suggestion for future researchers looking in to this area.

#### Concluding remarks

Social networking sites have become a part of everyday life to the majority of people all over the world. Not only to adults but to companies, businesses, organisations and clubs, and of course, young people. This research has barely touched the surface of the risks of social networking sites, and there is always more that can be discovered. This study has found that the issue of cyberbullying is prevalent amongst young people in South Australian High Schools. The general belief in regards to sexual predation was found to be that young people believe you are only at risk if you display too much information or are naive, and, fortunately, young people seem to be aware of the risks of sexual predation and are taking measures to protect themselves. In regards to cyberbullying, this study found that cyberbullying is a huge problem, particularly as it is being witnessed by many people, and includes physical violence in some situations. This research has provided the unique and rare opportunity for young people's voices to be heard around these issues and has shown their opinions on the matter. It is imperative that students, schools, teachers, and parents be educated further about the harms of social networking sites and what can be done to reduce these risks. Finally, it is important that young people, alongside social marketing techniques, are considered to come up with some kind of solution to reducing cyberbullying. Luckily, due to the existence of the *Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre* and its *Safe and Supportive* research, the *Keep It Tame* campaign as part of the *Safe and Well Online*

project will discover the effectiveness of online marketing techniques. Furthermore, it aims to educate young people about the dangers of their behaviours online and the long lasting effects it can have on other young people. This campaign could be considered to be the next big step in preventing cyberbullying, and will produce some interesting results. This study as a whole can compliment this research as it reflects the current views and voices of young people themselves. It will certainly be relevant to compare the opinions of young people in this study to the voices of young people involved in the *Keep it Tame* campaign, and even more so to gain an insight into how these views change over the next few years as the campaign develops and gets around to more and more people.

The issues of cyberbullying and sexual predation are clearly relevant issues given the existence of many organisations that are battling it. Furthermore, the very existence of such large scale research in conjunction with so many professionals and other organisations indicate that social networking sites are having a huge impact on the lives of young people. Therefore, this research has, clearly, come at the right time. This study gives the young people of 2011 (as this was when they were surveyed) a voice, and paints a picture of what was happening at this time. This will be extremely relevant in the future to refer back to in order to determine if there has been any change, be that positive or negative. This research is imperative and there is always more than can be done. This study has shed some light on the issues of cyberbullying and sexual predation, and has signalled why future studies are so vitally important if we are to intervene in these issues getting worse.

# Appendices

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# Appendix 1.1

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Education, Humanities, Theology and Law  
School of Law  
Flinders University  
GPO Box 2100  
Adelaide SA 5001  
Tel: 08 8201 2861  
Fax: 08 8201 3630 (Law)  
derek.dalton@flinders.edu.au  
www.flinders.edu.au  
CRICOS Provider No. 00114A

## LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

### *Questionnaire*

Dear Participant,

This letter is to introduce Larisa Karklins who is a Masters student in the School of Law at Flinders University. Larisa will produce her student card, which carries a photograph, as proof of identity. Larisa is undertaking research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications entitled:

“The risks of social networking sites to South Australian high school students”.

This research will examine the negative influences social networking sites are having on youth. Particularly, this research will explore the prevalence of risks to youth, specifically cyber bullying and the dangers of sexual predators. Furthermore, this research will examine youths’ understanding of such risks.

Larisa would be most grateful if you would volunteer to assist in this project, by completing a questionnaire. This questionnaire is only available to students enrolled in particular high schools within South Australia. The questionnaire will take approximately thirty minutes to complete.

You are entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions that make you feel uncomfortable. Participation in the questionnaire is entirely voluntary. Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence, stored securely and anonymously, and your name will not be identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications.

On completion of the questionnaire, please place the questionnaire in the sealed envelope provided and place it directly into the secure container present. This container will then be moved to the Law School Office at Flinders University.

Given the sensitive and personal nature of some of the questions to be asked, a list of counselling services and relevant supportive websites is provided should you desire them.

If you have any concerns or questions about the data or the project after you have completed the survey, please feel free to contact Larisa by e-mail at [kark0006@flinders.edu.au](mailto:kark0006@flinders.edu.au).

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours sincerely

Dr Derek Dalton  
Senior Lecturer  
Director of Studies – Criminal Justice  
School of Law, Flinders University,  
GPO Box 2100,  
SA 5001  
Australia

*This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 5281). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 8201 3116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email [human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au](mailto:human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au)*

*This research project has also been approved by the Departments of Education and Children's Services.*

# Appendix 1.2

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**CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH**

***Questionnaire***

I ..... being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to for my child..... to participate as requested in the questionnaire for the research project examining the risks posed to youth through their use of social networking sites.

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Letter of Introduction and Consent Form for future reference.
4. I understand that:
  - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
  - My child is free to withdraw from the project at any time and is free to decline to answer particular questions.
  - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, neither myself nor my child will be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
  - My child may decline from answering any particular questions in the questionnaire they do not feel comfortable answering, and they may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.
5. I have had the opportunity to discuss taking part in this research with my child.

**Parent's signature.....Date.....**

**Participant's signature.....Date.....**

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

**Researcher's name:** Larisa Karklins

**Researcher's signature.....Date.....**

# Appendix 1.3

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## INFORMATION SHEET

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**Title:** ‘The risks of social networking sites to South Australian high school students

**Investigators:**

Miss Larisa Karklins and Dr Derek Dalton  
School of Law  
Flinders University

**Description of the study:**

This project will explore the prevalence of the risks involved with social networking sites, specifically: cyber bullying and online harassment and the dangers of sexual predation to youth in South Australian high schools. Students enrolled in years 8, 10 and 12 from six different high schools across South Australia will be asked to complete a questionnaire in order to gain information about the prevalence of aforementioned risks, as well as the understanding of these risks. This research is supported by the school of law at Flinders University.

**Purpose of the study:**

This project has the following objectives:

- 1) To develop an understanding of the prevalence of specific risks (e.g. cyber bullying and online harassment and the dangers of sexual predation) associated with social networking sites in relation to youth in South Australian high schools.
- 2) To explore how well youth understand the risks of using social networking sites, and how much, if at all, this understanding influences their conduct on these sites.
- 3) To reveal how much of an impact these risks are having on youth, as well as gain an understanding of how much social networking sites are altering the behaviour of youth in general.

**What will I be asked to do?**

You are invited to complete a questionnaire that will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. Your responses will be entirely anonymous and you will not be identifiable from the resulting publication.

**What benefit will I gain from being involved in this study?**

The sharing of your experiences will add to the currently limited research on social networking sites. As such, by participating in this research you are contributing to increasing the public knowledge about the risks of social networking sites.

**Will I be identifiable by being involved in this study?**

We do not need your name and you will be anonymous. The completed questionnaires will be kept in a secure container and placed in the law school office at Flinders University which will only be accessible by me. Any comments you make will not be directly linked to you.

**Are there any risks or discomforts if I am involved?**

The investigator anticipates few risks from your involvement in this study. If you have any concerns regarding anticipated or actual risks or discomforts, please raise them with the investigator.

**How do I agree to participate?**

Participation is voluntary. A consent form accompanies this information sheet. If you agree to participate please read and sign the form. You may also withdraw from participation at any time or decline to answer any questions if you wish.

**How will I receive feedback?**

Outcomes from the project will be summarised and given to you by the investigator if you would like to see them.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and we hope that you will accept our invitation to be involved.**



# Appendix 1.4

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## Who can help – A list of counselling services and websites

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Flinders University has its own counselling service. Visit <http://www.flinders.edu.au/current-students/healthandcounselling/counsel.cfm> for more information.

If your school has a counselling service, do not hesitate to talk to them about any issues.

There are many websites that have been created specifically for young people and social networking. Here is a list of websites that can help you:

- Stay Smart Online has information on dealing with cyber bullying, as well as other information about social networking in general. Visit:
  - <http://www.staysmartonline.gov.au/teens>
- For information regarding cyber safety help, visit:
  - <http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/Report.aspx>
- For a website that provides web counselling and email counselling specifically for young people, visit:
  - <http://www.kidshelpline.com.au/teens/>
  - or call **1800 55 1800** to talk to a counsellor.
- For general information about social networking, visit:
  - <http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/kids/>

This website also includes a list of links to who you can talk to about a number of issues (including cyberbullying and sexual predation), visit:

- <http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/kids/tell.asp>
- The Department of Education and Children's Services also provides a website with access to online resources regarding cybersafety. Visit
  - <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/speced2/pages/cybersafety/>

# Appendix 1.5

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## **Verbal script to be said to potential participants**

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Hello. My name is Larisa and I am a Masters student at Flinders university. I am currently researching the risks of social networking sites to South Australian youth by surveying the students of 6 different high schools across the state. I would greatly appreciate it if you could take the time to assist me by completing my questionnaire. I have provided you with a letter of introduction and information sheet which both outline my research, as well as a consent form for you to take home for your parents and yourself to sign. Participation is entirely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. If you would like to be involved, I will see you next week at [allocated time slot as organised with each school].

Thank you for your time and attention.

# Appendix 1.6

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**Questionnaire**

**Please complete the following questionnaire if you fulfil one of the following criteria:**

- You have/have had a social networking site account;
- You have witnessed incidents occur in regards to social networking sites

Details:

Age:

Gender: M F (please circle)

1) At what age did you first begin to use social networking sites? (please tick)

- Younger than 12    
  12    
  13    
  14    
  15    
  16    
  17    
  18+

2) For what reasons initially did you begin to use social networking sites?

- Peer pressure    
  Meet people    
  Contact friends/family    
  Play games    
  Other.....

3) Which sites in particular have you used?

- Facebook    
  Twitter    
  Myspace    
  Bebo    
  Other: .....

4) How often do you use social networking sites?

- Every day    
  4-5 times    
  2-3 times a week    
  Once a week a week    
  Once a month    
  Other: .....

5)

a. How many 'friends'/contacts do you have on your site?

- 0-50    
  51-100    
  101-200    
  200-300    
  300+

b. How many of these 'friends'/contacts have you met in person?

- 0-50    
  51-100    
  101-200    
  200-300    
  300+

c. Can you explain this?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

6) How many people in your age group do you believe use social networking sites? ( please tick along the line)



7) Please explain what you **like most** about social networking sites:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

8)

a. Using social networking sites is risky.

- 1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Strongly disagree     Disagree     Neutral     Agree     Strongly Agree

b. Why do you believe this?

.....

.....

.....

.....

**PLEASE TURN OVER**

c. What do you think these risks are?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

....  
9)

a. There is a risk of sexual predation when using social networking sites (in other words, there is risk of being contacted by people who have a sexual interest in you)

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly disagree      Disagree              Neutral              Agree              Strongly Agree

b. Why do you believe this?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

10)

a. I am afraid of using social networking sites.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Strongly disagree      Disagree              Neutral              Agree              Strongly Agree

b. Why/ why not?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11) Have you ever had someone you **do not** know

Yes No

- Contact you seeking personal details?  Yes  No
- Make a personal comment about you (e.g. "I think you are sexy")  Yes  No
- Bully or harass you in any form?  Yes  No
- Engage in an argument with you?  Yes  No
- Hack or inappropriately access your account?  Yes  No

12) Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 which out of the following events apply to you:  
**(1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)**

- a. I say things to people online I would not say to them face to face  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- b. I have been in situations online that would not have happened if social networking sites did not exist  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- c. I have been bullied online by people that bully me at school  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- d. I do not like social networking sites, I just have one because my friends do  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- e. None of my 'friends' on my site are really my friends  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- f. I have a lot of photos on my site  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5
- g. I always accept friend requests even when I do not know the person  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5

13) Which of the following actions have your parents used in regards to your use of social networking?

Yes No

- My parents do not have any rules about my internet time  Yes  No
- I can only use the computer after I have finished my homework  Yes  No
- I can only use the computer for a certain amount of time  Yes  No
- My parents have password protection on all computers in the house  Yes  No

Other.....    
 .....  
 .....

- 14) Which of the following forms of bullying have you witnessed? In other words, what forms of bullying did you observe? Yes No
- |   |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Unwanted/cruel emails/comments                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Emails sent to friends                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal details published                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal details changed (e.g. through hacking) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rumours spread                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other .....                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- .....  
 .....

- 15) Which of the following forms of bullying have you experienced personally? Yes No
- |   |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Unwanted/cruel emails/comments                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Emails sent to friends                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal details published                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal details changed (e.g. through hacking) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rumours spread                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other .....                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- .....  
 .....

- 16) Which of the following actions have you had to use to manage bullying or harassment? Yes No
- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Change password  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Increase privacy settings  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delete contact/contacts  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Modify actual site (e.g.: remove photos, change information etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delete account   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Discuss with your parents  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Use counselling services   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Change school  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Move home  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Involve police   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other .....  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- .....  
 .....

- 17) Have you ever witnessed actual physical violence (such as a fight) as a result of the use of social networking sites?

Yes                  No

If Yes, could you please indicate the seriousness.

1	2	3	4	5
Not serious at all	Not too serious	Neutral	Serious	Very serious

Please elaborate on the nature of the incident of violence if you wish:

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

- 18) Have you ever experienced actual physical violence (such as a fight) as a result of from the use of social networking sites personally?

Yes                  No

If Yes, could you please indicate the seriousness.

1	2	3	4	5
Not serious at all	Not too serious	Neutral	Serious	Very serious

Please elaborate on the nature of the incident of violence if you wish:

.....  
 .....



.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

19) Please explain what you **do not** like about social networking sites:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

20) If there is anything else, any experience you have had or witnessed in relation to social networking, please explain here:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

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*This research project has also been approved by the Departments of Education and Children's Services.*

# Appendix 1.7

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## Quantitative Results - Totals

### 1) At what age did you first begin to use social networking sites?

		<12	12	13	14	15	16	17	18+
Nuri	Year 8	5	13	4	-	-	1	-	-
	Year 10	4	9	12	5	1	-	-	-
	Year 12	1	2	6	5	3	2	-	-
Faith	Year 8	8	9	10	1	-	-	-	-
	Year 10	7	11	6	9	3	1	-	-
	Year 12	3	4	8	6	9	4	1	-
A High	Year 8	18	16	12	1	-	1	-	-
	Year 10	8	8	16	4	2	1	-	-
	Year 12	2	5	6	12	7	-	2	2
CBC	Year 8	27	10	11	1	-	-	-	-
	Year 10	5	8	5	5	3	1	-	-
	Year 12		1		2	2	3	1	-
St.Peters	Year 10	1	14	10	7	4	1	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>89</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>21.1</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>25.1</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>.9</b>	<b>.5</b>

### 2) For what reasons initially did you begin to use social networking sites?

		Peer pressure	Meet people	Contact friends/family	Play games	other
Nuri	Year 8	1	-	21	2	-
	Year 10	-	4	29	4	F=1 popular thing to do
	Year 12	2	1	17	3	-
Faith	Year 8	2	1	25	1	-
	Year 10	5	3	32	7	-
	Year 12	3	3	30	4	1 sister set it up
A High	Year 8	4	4	38	2	1=to be in the loop
	Year 10	2	6	30	9	-
	Year 12	8	5	29	3	1 bored
CBC	Year 8	5	6	43	10	1-felt left out, 1-freinds said
	Year 10	6	6	19	2	-
	Year 12		4	6	1	-
St.Peters	Year 10	3	1	33	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>9.7</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>83.4</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>1.4</b>

### 3) Which sites in particular have you used?

		Facebook	Twitter	Myspace	Bebo	Other
Nuri	Year 8	22	1		1	msn1,1skype
	Year 10	27	3	10	3	1tumblr,4msn,4skype
	Year 12	19	5	14	4	3tagged,1msn
Faith	Year 8	28	-	1	1	3skype, 2msn
	Year 10	37	2	9	2	8msn,3skype,1tumblr
	Year 12	33	9	15	3	1skype,3msn
A High	Year 8	45	5	3	2	5msn,7tumblr,3steam,6skype,3formspring
	Year 10	39	9	17	7	2msn,1formspring,1tumblr
	Year 12	36	4	22	10	1msn
CBC	Year 8	50	7	7	3	3skype,5msn, 3youtube, 1tumblr
	Year 10	26	2	6	2	3msn
	Year 12	8	1	3	2	1msn
St.Peters	Year 10	37	6	12	1	1tagged, 3msn, 7tumblr 1formspring
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>407</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>96.5</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>21.8</b>

4) How often do you use social networking sites?

		Every day	4-5 /week	2-3 /week	Once/ week	Once/ month	other
Nuri	Year 8	5	6	8	2	2	-
	Year 10	20	7	-	1	-	1not often
	Year 12	22	1	2	1	1	-
Faith	Year 8	9	10	3	4	1	-
	Year 10	23	10	4	2	-	-
	Year 12	27	6	-	2	-	-
A High	Year 8	22	15	7	1	-	1=2/3months
	Year 10	30	3	3	1	1	-
	Year 12	21	8	6	1	1	-
CBC	Year 8	27	11	7	3	2	-
	Year 10	12	11	1	2	1	-
	Year 12	6	1	1	-	1	-
St.Peters	Year 10	28	5	2	2	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>252</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>59.7</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>.5</b>

5) A: How many 'friends'/contacts do you have on your site?

		0-50	51-100	101-200	200-300	300+
Nuri	Year 8	2	3	4	7	8
	Year 10	1	3	7	5	13
	Year 12	-	-	6	3	9
Faith	Year 8	3	2	5	4	13
	Year 10	3	3	9	5	19
	Year 12	-	-	6	10	18
A High	Year 8	4	2	9	13	18
	Year 10	1	1	5	6	28
	Year 12	2	1	6	5	23
CBC	Year 8	4	1	7	19	19
	Year 10	1	1	5	5	15
	Year 12	-	-	2	1	6
St.Peters	Year 10	-	2	6	8	21
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>49.8</b>

One with 600

B: How many of thee 'friends'/contacts have you met in person?

		0-50	51-100	101-200	200-300	300+
Nuri	Year 8	3	4	4	9	6
	Year 10	3	2	6	8	9
	Year 12	-	1	6	3	8
Faith	Year 8	3	2	5	7	10
	Year 10	3	5	9	11	9
	Year 12	-	1	12	9	13

A High	Year 8	4	3	14	15	10
	Year 10	3	4	5	13	15
	Year 12	3	4	5	10	14
CBC	Year 8	5	2	11	20	12
	Year 10	4	2	5	9	7
	Year 12	-		2	6	1
St.Peters	Year 10	-	2	8	12	15
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>7.4</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>30.6</b>

6) How many people in your age group do you believe use social networking sites? ( please tick along the line)



Nuri	Year 8		1	4	1	5	4	17	1		
	Year 10		1	1		6	3	15	6		
	Year 12					1	1	3	3	11	
Faith	Year 8					4	7	7	6	4	
	Year 10					1	8	12	13	4	
	Year 12					1	7	1	18	9	
A High	Year 8					1	14	7	14	10	
	Year 10					1	4	12	7	15	
	Year 12						7	22	5	3	
CBC	Year 8			2			2	18	14	13	
	Year 10			1			2	6	4	13	
	Year 12						2	2	4	1	
St.Peters	Year 10			1			10	4	15	7	
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>%</b>			<b>.2</b>	<b>.2</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>.9</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>23.1</b>

8) Using Social Networking Sites is Risky

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Nuri	Year 8	1	2	9	7	2
	Year 10	2	3	17	5	-
	Year 12	-	3	7	7	2
Faith	Year 8	1	7	8	7	6
	Year 10	-	-	28	8	2
	Year 12	1	7	10	16	2
A High	Year 8	-	4	22	14	4
	Year 10	-	6	18	11	5
	Year 12	4	7	18	6	2
CBC	Year 8	-	5	28	13	3
	Year 10	2	3	10	12	-
	Year 12	-	4	3	2	-
St.Peters	Year 10	-	2	18	15	1
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>2.6</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>6.9</b>

9) There is a risk of sexual predation when using social networking sites (in other words, there is risk of being contacted by people who have a sexual interest in you)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Nuri	Year 8	-	-	4	11	8

	Year 10	-	3	11	15	1
	Year 12	-	1	3	9	4
Faith	Year 8	-	3	12	10	3
	Year 10	-	-	9	23	5
	Year 12	1	1	13	13	6
A High	Year 8	3	3	15	23	5
	Year 10	1	2	10	18	9
	Year 12	3	3	12	14	6
CBC	Year 8	2	8	13	19	7
	Year 10	-	2	9	15	1
	Year 12	2	-	5	1	1
St.Peters	Year 10	-	2	11	21	3
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>2.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>14.1</b>

**10) I am afraid of using social networking sites**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Nuri	Year 8	4	9	7	4	-
	Year 10	12	14	2	-	-
	Year 12	9	6	3	1	-
Faith	Year 8	8	9	9	2	-
	Year 10	10	24	2	2	-
	Year 12	12	20	2	1	-
A High	Year 8	17	19	7	4	-
	Year 10	15	12	7	4	1
	Year 12	23	9	4	2	-
CBC	Year 8	22	20	6	-	-
	Year 10	12	6	8	1	-
	Year 12	6	2	1	-	-
St.Peters	Year 10	11	17	7	2	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>144</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>34.1</b>	<b>39.6</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>.2</b>

**11) Have you ever had someone you do not know**

		Seek personal details	Make personal comment	Bully or harras	Engage in argument	hack
Nuri	Year 8	4		4	4	2
	Year 10	10	7	6	10	5
	Year 12	8	9	5	6	4
Faith	Year 8	6	9	2	5	1
	Year 10	12	17	7	14	4
	Year 12	6	13	7	14	4
A High	Year 8	9	16	8	12	7
	Year 10	14	16	11	17	8
	Year 12	11	13	11	19	9
CBC	Year 8	16	10	6	17	4
	Year 10	6	10	6	11	3
	Year 12	4	3	3	4	1
St.Peters	Year 10	12	11	4	12	5
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>102</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>57</b>

%		<b>24.2</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>12.5</b>
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12) Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 which out of the following events apply to you:

**a. I say things to people online I would not say to them face to face**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Nuri	Year 8	11	4	3	5	1
	Year 10	9	10	5	2	-
	Year 12	12	4	1	-	1
Faith	Year 8	7	14	2	5	-
	Year 10	9	22	6	5	-
	Year 12	14	14	3	2	1
A High	Year 8	19	13	8	4	2
	Year 10	7	5	12	10	5
	Year 12	13	9	4	8	3
CBC	Year 8	17	10	11	5	14
	Year 10	7	8	7	4	2
	Year 12	3	2	-	-	4
St.Peters	Year 10	12	16	5	3	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>33.2</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>12.6</b>	<b>7.9</b>

**b. I have been in situations online that would not have happened if social networking sites did not exist**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Nuri	Year 8	8	6	2	3	4
	Year 10	8	4	10	6	1
	Year 12	6	2	2	4	5
Faith	Year 8	7	8	5	6	2
	Year 10	7	9	4	14	5
	Year 12	11	6	8	7	3
A High	Year 8	13	12	8	7	6
	Year 10	6	3	8	14	8
	Year 12	9	4	12	6	6
CBC	Year 8	11	7	10	11	10
	Year 10	6	6	6	7	3
	Year 12	2	1	1	2	3
St.Peters	Year 10	9	7	10	10	1
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>103</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>24.4</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>13.5</b>

**c. I have been bullied online by people that bully me at school**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Nuri	Year 8	17	1	2	-	3
	Year 10	20	7	-	-	2
	Year 12	14	-	3	-	1
Faith	Year 8	20	4	1	1	2
	Year 10	19	12	3	2	2
	Year 12	24	7	1	2	-
A High	Year 8	19	9	4	9	4
	Year 10	22	5	5	6	1
	Year 12	22	7	3	3	2

CBC	Year 8	36	7	3	1	2
	Year 10	13	4	5	3	1
	Year 12	7	1	-	-	1
St.Peters	Year 10	27	7	2	-	1
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>260</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>61.6</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>5.2</b>

**d. I do not like social networking sites, I just have one because my friends do**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Nuri	Year 8	13	4	4	1	2
	Year 10	18	7	2	-	-
	Year 12	9	5	2	2	-
Faith	Year 8	15	6	3	2	2
	Year 10	22	14	1	1	-
	Year 12	20	11	3	1	-
A High	Year 8	20	12	5	6	2
	Year 10	17	6	7	9	-
	Year 12	19	10	4	4	1
CBC	Year 8	35	4	8	1	-
	Year 10	13	6	5	3	-
	Year 12	2	4	1	-	2
St.Peters	Year 10	15	13	4	2	3
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>218</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>51.7</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>2.8</b>

**e. None of my 'friends' on my site are really my friends**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Nuri	Year 8	20	1	1	-	1
	Year 10	20	5	2	1	-
	Year 12	13	2	3	-	1
Faith	Year 8	17	9	1	1	-
	Year 10	26	9	2	1	-
	Year 12	27	8	-	-	-
A High	Year 8	23	11	2	7	3
	Year 10	19	7	7	4	1
	Year 12	28	4	3	1	1
CBC	Year 8	34	8	3	1	1
	Year 10	16	7	3	-	1
	Year 12	5	3	1	-	-
St.Peters	Year 10	26	7	3	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>274</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>64.9</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>2.1</b>

**f. I have a lot of photos on my site**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Nuri	Year 8	8	5	4	3	3



	Year 10	7	7	6	3	4
	Year 12	3	5	2	6	3
Faith	Year 8	3	11	10	3	1
	Year 10	10	9	11	8	-
	Year 12	4	11	7	9	4
A High	Year 8	9	10	11	9	6
	Year 10	4	8	13	13	1
	Year 12	5	6	9	9	7
CBC	Year 8	12	18	13	3	3
	Year 10	5	13	6	2	1
	Year 12	1	2	4	1	1
St.Peters	Year 10	3	10	14	8	1
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>74</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>17.5</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>8.3</b>

**g. I always accept friend requests even when I do not know the person**

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Nuri	Year 8	19	2	1	-	1
	Year 10	7	6	2	-	1
	Year 12	12	3	2	1	1
Faith	Year 8	16	5	6	1	1
	Year 10	22	13	2	1	-
	Year 12	18	13	2	1	-
A High	Year 8	27	10	1	8	1
	Year 10	19	6	3	7	4
	Year 12	18	7	4	5	3
CBC	Year 8	26	10	6	4	3
	Year 10	13	3	4	6	1
	Year 12	8	1	-	-	-
St.Peters	Year 10	16	18	2	1	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>221</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>52.4</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>3.8</b>

**13) Which of the following actions have your parents used in regards to your use of social networking?**

		No rules	After homework	Certain amount of time	Password protection	other
Nuri	Year 8	10	11	16	7	3-mum as friend, 1-parents block sites
	Year 10	14	6	6	6	1-only on weekends
	Year 12	16	2	-	2	-
Faith	Year 8	6	16	13	7	-
	Year 10	14	16	17	8	1mum knows password
	Year 12	19	11	9	6	1mum is friend, 1dad monitors when on fb
A High	Year 8	13	23	26	8	1=dad monitors fb
	Year 10	18	10	11	8	-
	Year 12	27	3	6	2	1-internet turned off at midnight
CBC	Year 8	24	24	15	12	1-parents look at account every 3 weeks 1-parents know password
	Year 10	18	6	6	6	
	Year 12	4	3	3	3	

St.Peters	Year 10	20	10	7	11	1 (block on fb after 9:30pm), 1 (have to be my friends on fb), 1 (banned)
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>203</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>48.1</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>

**14) Which of the following forms of bullying have you witnessed? In other words, what forms of bullying did you observe?**

		Unwanted emails	Emails to friends	Personal details published	Personal details changed	Rumours spread	other
Nuri	Year 8	10	4	3	7	7	-
	Year 10	15	8	7	10	16	-
	Year 12	15	7	7	7	11	-
Faith	Year 8	10	7	7	9	21	-
	Year 10	27	12	13	14	24	1 Isolated from group, 1 naked photos of friend
	Year 12	28	12	14	17	29	1 Creating a fake account
A High	Year 8	18	16	20	16	22	-
	Year 10	21	18	16	21	28	-
	Year 12	23	11	14	19	18	-
CBC	Year 8	24	17	13	19	28	1 relationships broken up
	Year 10	19	7	11	6	16	-
	Year 12	4	1	2	2	6	-
St.Peters	Year 10	27	10	14	13	21	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>241</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>57.1</b>	<b>30.8</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>.9</b>

**15) Which of the following forms of bullying have you experienced personally?**

		Unwanted emails	Emails to friends	Personal details published	Personal details changed	Rumours spread	other
Nuri	Year 8	7	1	1	-	8	1
	Year 10	7	4	1	5	11	1-things thrown on bus, verbal
	Year 12	7	5	3	2	7	1
Faith	Year 8	3	2	3	1	9	-
	Year 10	11	1	7	4	9	1 Porn sent to friends
	Year 12	10	3	2	4	8	1 Threats via messages
A High	Year 8	12	8	10	4	3	-
	Year 10	16	9	8	12	10	-
	Year 12	10	5	3	7	12	-
CBC	Year 8	10	5	3	4	14	-
	Year 10	10	4	5	4	11	-
	Year 12	3	2	2	2	3	-
St.Peters	Year 10	7	1	1	2	5	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>113</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>%</b>		<b>26.8</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>1.2</b>

**16) Which of the following actions have you had to use to manage bullying or harassment?**

		Change password	Increase privacy	Delete contacts	Modify site	Delete account	Discuss with parents	Counseling	Change school	Move home	Involve police	other
Nuri	Year 8	9	14	10	8	5	4	1	-	-	1	-
	Year 10	9	17	15	9	2	6	1	2	-	1	-
	Year 12	6	10	9	5	1	2	1	-	-	-	-
Faith	Year 8	7	16	9	4	3	4	-	1	-	1	-
	Year 10	12	22	19	11	5	7	3	-	-	-	-

	Year 12	11	25	17	10	1	8	2	-	-	-	1Threaten with police
A High	Year 8	21	21	20	16	9	6	4	1	1	1	-
	Year 10	20	26	22	23	6	5	1	-	-	1	-
	Year 12	9	18	21	13	2	12	2	-	-	1	-
CBC	Year 8	15	22	22	11		5	5	1	-	-	-
	Year 10	10	13	11	6	1	3	3	-	-	2	-
	Year 12	1	2	3	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	-
St.Peters	Year 10	15	17	17	14	-	9	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>145</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>
%		<b>34.3</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>.2</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>.2</b>

17) Have you ever witnessed actual physical violence (such as a fight) as a result of the use of social networking sites? If Yes, could you please indicate the seriousness.

		Not serious at all	Not too serious	Neutral	Serious	Very serious	
Nuri	Year 8	-	-	4	2	1	
	Year 10	1	3	3	3	-	
	Year 12	-	-	3	3	-	
Faith	Year 8	-	2	3	2	1	People fought and it went to court – sever injuries
	Year 10	-	1	1	3	-	
	Year 12	-	-	1	2	1	
A High	Year 8	1	4	3	4	1	
	Year 10	-	2	2	6	2	
	Year 12	1	2	4	14	-	
CBC	Year 8	2	4	3	6	6	A stabbing
	Year 10	-	2	4	8	3	Comments resulting in fights, people pretending to be others and starting
	Year 12	-	1	2	2	1	
St.Peters	Year 10	-	-	3	-	-	
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>16</b>	
%		<b>2.1</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>3.8</b>	

18) Have you ever experienced actual physical violence (such as a fight) as a result of from the use of social networking sites personally? If Yes, could you please indicate the seriousness.

		Not serious at all	Not too serious	Neutral	Serious	Very serious	
Nuri	Year 8	-	2	3	1	-	
	Year 10	1	-	2	-	-	
	Year 12	2	-	1	1	-	
Faith	Year 8	-	2	-	-	-	7 people attacking 1 person, over racist comments - AH
	Year 10	-	-	-	-	-	
	Year 12	1	-	-	-	-	
A High	Year 8	-	-	-	2	-	
	Year 10	-	-	-	-	1	
	Year 12	-	-	-	-	1	
CBC	Year 8	-	1	-	1	1	Comments resulting in fights, police involvement
	Year 10	-	1	-	1	2	
	Year 12	-	-	1	1	1	
St.Peters	Year 10	-	-	-	-	-	Too traumatic, had to involve police
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	
%		<b>.9</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	

Nuri	Year 8	24	79
	Year 10	33	
	Year 12	22	

Faith	Year 8	27	98
	Year 10	36	
	Year 12	35	
A High	Year 8	46	122
	Year 10	40	
	Year 12	36	
CBC	Year 8	50	86
	Year 10	27	
	Year 12	9	
St.Peters	Year 10	37	37

TOTAL= 422

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