

# Social Networking: What parents need to know

---

Heavenly Father, Your loving servant Maximilian Kolbe spent his life in service to others, using technology to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. You crowned his life with the grace to give his life for another, in imitation of Jesus who said, "There is no greater love than to lay down your life for a friend." Through the intercession of St. Maximilian, may we always use technology for Your glory and to draw others close to You and to your blessed Mother, Mary. *St. Maximilian Kolbe, pray for us!*

## **Social Networking is a TOOL which can be used for good or evil**

### **Catholic Church – Media Saavy**

- Since Vigilante Cura by Pope Pius XI in 1936, the Church has regularly written and taught about the use of Social media.
- Benedict XVI has embraced and endorsed some social networking.
- World Youth Day – Australia – Benedict sent a text to every youth pilgrim who submitted a phone number.
- Vatican sponsors YouTube channel & Twitter accounts in 6 languages; also has iPhone app for WYD – Madrid & YouCat (Youth Catechism)
- Benedict XVI: "Today, the proclamation of Christ in the world of new technologies requires a profound knowledge of this world if the technologies are to serve our mission adequately."

### **Internet Use and Parenting**

- You do NOT need to be tech-savvy to be net-wise
- Social use of the Internet (IM, Social Networking, etc) should be a privilege, subject to being taken away if not used correctly -
- If your child is on Social Networking, you should be also!
- Facts\*
  - 93% of teens 12 - 17 go online daily
  - 63% go online daily
  - 89% go online from home, and most go online from home most often
  - 77% go online at school
  - 71% go online from friends or relatives house
  - 60% go online at a library
  - 27% go online from a mobile device
  - 12% of households with teens do not have home internet access
- CNN / Nielsen: Average teen sends 3,339 texts per month (October 15, 2010)

## 2011 PEW Survey to 800 teens ages 12 - 17

- “On which social networking site or sites do you have an account?”

Where teens maintain their social media accounts  
*% of teen social media users*

	Among those with only one account	Among those with two or more accounts
Facebook	89%	99%
MySpace	4	54
Twitter	<1	29
YouTube	<1	15
Yahoo (unspecified)	2	13
Tumblr	0	6
Skype	0	6
myYearbook	1	2
Google Buzz <sup>16</sup>	0	2
Other (unspecified)	2	17
Don't know / Don't have own profile	2	0

### A real story

- Father of 2 teens had been having teens pay for cell phones
- Decided to provide them with phones to take advantage of AT&T parent controls / logs
- One child: Texted 5000 X in first 2 weeks
- Freshmen in Catholic high school – boy directly asked her to go to bed; another said, “would you be a distraction for me in my pickup truck?”
- 27 emails in ONE 7<sup>th</sup> period (not a study hall) at school which doesn't permit cell phones.

### PLEASE NOTE

- “SMART” Phones – any phone with the ability to run apps (applications) – or do web browsing can quickly and easily access pornography.
- Pornography is not only intrinsically evil, and mortal sin – it is exceedingly addictive.
- Pornography sites often carry computer viruses.

### What is that?

- Lime Wire, Napster, Wikisend – file sharing – NOT SAFE!
- Blog – weB LOG – a website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order.
- Social Networking – any site that allows you to connect with other people. YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, Bebo are most popular with school-age youth. Twitter and LinkedIn are popular for adults
- Chatroulette:
  - a web site that pairs random strangers from around the world together for webcam-based conversations.
  - Reports say as many as 80% of the initial connections show “x-rated” video shots.
- Virtual Worlds
  - Websites where a users avitar can walk.
  - a computer-based simulated environment, through which users can interact with one another via avatars visible to others graphically.
  - Second Life
    - One of many “Virtual Worlds” where a user can download their software, create an account, and you get an avatar to move around in their world.
    - From the Second Life Wiki: “Can we have sex?” Sure you can -- cybersex is quite common around here. ... everything is allowed here between consenting adults. You should stick to **Adult** areas, though. Be warned, while cybersex is mostly done through chatting, most people also use all sorts of visual props -- many of those who

"animate" your avatar...Also, respect people's lifestyles. You'll see all sorts of sexual behaviour here -- don't be too harsh in judging others. Remember, anything is fair between \*consenting adults\*, and we're quite a lively bunch in SL :)

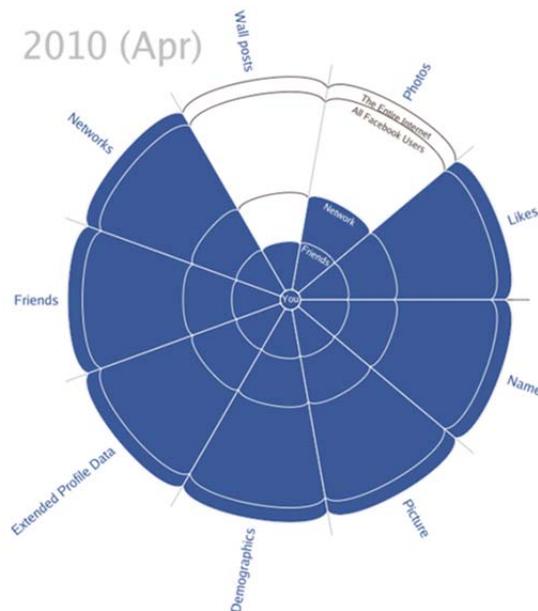
- <http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/top-news/index.cfm?i=62229>
  - The FTC surveyed 27 online virtual worlds, including those specifically intended for young children, those designed to appeal to teenagers, and worlds intended only for adults. The report found at least one instance of either sexually or violently explicit content in 19 of the 27 worlds. Five of the virtual worlds examined showed a heavy amount of explicit content, four contained a moderate amount, and a low amount appeared in the remaining 10 worlds in which explicit content was found.

### **Pediatrics Magazine Article (Dec 21, 2009)**

- "Because of their limited capacity for self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure, children and adolescents are at some risk as they navigate and experiment with social media."
- "The main risk to preadolescents and adolescents online today are risks from each other, risks of improper use of technology, lack of privacy, sharing too much information, or posting false information about themselves or others. These types of behavior put their privacy at risk."
- "... parents often lack a basic understanding that kids' online lives are an extension of their offline lives. The end result is often a knowledge and technical skill gap between parents and youth, which creates a disconnect in how these parents and youth participate in the online world together."

### **Did you Know?**

- Facebook: User must be 13 (or lie about their age)
- By default,
  - everything except the "wall" is set to view by the public
  - Public Search: ON
  - Instant Personalization: ON
  - Apps share information
  - April, 2010 default settings



- From Pediatrics Magazine: "In general, if a Web site specifies a minimum age for use in its terms of service, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) encourages that age to be respected. Falsifying age has become common practice by some preadolescents and some parents. Parents must be thoughtful about this practice to be sure that they are not sending mixed messages about lying and that online safety is always the main message being emphasized."

## MY CHILD WANTS TO BE ON FACEBOOK! WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

Social Networking: Problems not considered

- Opportunities for virus spreading
  - Some applications on Facebook have spread viruses
  - Any Application has the potential to carry a virus. It can be “clean” when you add it, and the code can become infected later. One typical example: FarmTown Application carried virus.
  - Links on a page or in IMs can lead to virus-ed websites
  - Aug 13, 09: “a new worm - Koobface - is propagating through social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, hi5, Bebo and Twitter... by sending spam with a link to a video to people on these sites.”
  - REAL FB virus warnings – look at Sophos site.
  - Even phones can get viruses (usually ‘smart phones’)
    - July 31, 09: “The iPhone 3G and 3G S, just like other mobile phones have their own Achilles Heels, so to speak. The iPhone virus, iPhone text virus or SMS virus (however you want to call it) only shows that every digital device is vulnerable to malfunction and exploitation.
- Kids don’t think about what they post
  - A teen posted “on vacation w/ fam” and her house was broken into. Thieves admitted status tipped them off.
  - Recently, A metro Louisville man was arrested on charges he stole items from the home of a Facebook friend after seeing a post on the social networking site that said she'd be out for the evening.
- SN profiles easily hacked
  - Google “Hack Facebook” -- **162,000,000** results
  - YouTube Search “Hack Facebook” – **220,000** hits; step-by-step instructions on video
  - [www.hackfacebook.com/](http://www.hackfacebook.com/)
- SN sites archive profiles, and can be searched later. Things posted now can ruin a later public career.
- Elite colleges, military recruiters, potential employees canvass SN profiles and screen candidates
- A recent legal battle has set a precedent that ANY social networking site, even if set to private, can be subpoenaed and used in court.

## Cyber-bullying

- Definition: involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that is intended to harm (an)other(s)
- Because of the anonymous nature of social communications, bullies don’t see the reaction of the victim, and don’t see the consequences of their actions.
- Many bullies think they are pulling harmless pranks – but the victim is deeply hurt.
- Suicide is a common response to Cyberbullying.
- So, what’s the problem?
  - 33% of kids have been threatened online
  - 42% have been bullied
  - 53% admit to bullying
  - 58% have not told an adult
- Impersonation – it happens!
  - Creating a fake profile and offering sexual services or claiming a specific sexual orientation
  - Claiming a crush on, affection for, or a desire to date, a lonely youth
  - Posting photos make it easy for another to impersonate you

- Easy to find other like-minded youth
  - Parents think an online friend is better than no friends – not always true!
  - Suicide, drugs, run-away together
- Parents and Cyberbullying
  - DO
    - Talk to your child about it
    - Be your child's support system
    - Remember many victims become bullies
    - Remember most youth will not willingly talk about it – but you need to try
    - Be Firm!
    - Set rules, and stick to them
    - Supervise your child's accounts
    - Help your child to save the evidence
    - Parents and Cyberbullying
  - DO NOT
    - Blame the victim
    - Having Internet or cell phone taken away is the victim's fear
    - Retaliate
    - Overreact
      - **1<sup>st</sup> step: ignore / block**
      - **2<sup>nd</sup> step: parent to parent**
      - **3<sup>rd</sup> step: school administrator, if appropriate**
      - **Police involvement may be necessary, but not an immediate reaction (unless threat is direct, clear and immediate or involves sexual exploitation)**
- Worse-Case
  - Sexting
    - Done more often by older teens
    - Often, sent to a current boyfriend/girlfriend
    - Occasionally, sent to someone they want to date
    - Biggest problem comes when it is not deleted, or is passed on
    - Having unlimited texting plan increases sexting
    - After sexted pictures have been passed on 'en masse,' the social stigma created has lead to suicide on several occasions.
    - Sexting is a federal offence, if the individual is a minor: child pornography.
    - <http://www.lge.com/us/mobile-phones/text-education/homeroom.jsp>
  - Predators DO exist
    - They seek out youth who express desire for companionship / understanding
    - They often take months to groom their victim, luring the child into a sense of trust, eventually making the youth believe the predator is their best (or only) friend.
    - A registered sex offender was Facebook friends with over a dozen girls at a Catholic high school. The girls did not know who they had 'friended.'
  - Pedophiles do exist
    - <http://thetrenchcoat.com/2010/07/20/today-in-pedophiles-world-of-warcraft-edition/>
      - Today in Pedophiles: World of Warcraft edition - July 20, 2010
      - 30-year-old Robert Olney, possibly of New York, has been arrested for allegedly kidnapping a 15-year-old Ainsworth, Nebraska girl. The pair are said to have met while playing the MMORPG video game World of Warcraft.

- Internet Predator – in Lincoln
  - A 25-year-old Lincoln man was jailed Thursday, accused of having a sexual relationship with a 14-year-old girl he met online. JWD, 25, was arrested on suspicion of first-degree sexual assault of a child, Lincoln Police Officer Katie Flood said. Davis began talking with the girl in an online chatroom last summer. They met three times, and had sexual contact during each meeting. D was aware of the girl's age and knew what he was doing was criminal.

### **Facebook – the bottom line**

- NEVER younger than 13
- Make sure account is locked down
- Parent knows log on and checks it regularly
- Discuss:
  - NEVER give out password – even to best friend
  - Do NOT post ANYTHING inappropriate
  - 'just say no' to apps / games
  - Christian Charity – at all times

### **FBI tips – for Parents**

- Communicate, and talk to your child about [appropriate online relationships,] sexual victimization and potential on-line danger.
- Spend time with your children on-line. Have them teach you about their favorite on-line destinations.
- Keep the computer in a common room in the house, not in your child's bedroom.
  - It is much more difficult for a computer-sex offender to communicate with a child when the computer screen is visible to a parent or another member of the household.
  - Youth are less likely to take risks if they know someone may be watching over their shoulder
- Utilize parental controls provided by your service provider and/or blocking software.
  - Use of chat rooms, in particular, should be heavily monitored.
  - While electronic chat can be a great place for children to make new friends and discuss various topics of interest, it is also prowled by computer-sex offenders.
  - While parents should utilize these mechanisms, they should not totally rely on them.
- Always maintain access to your child's on-line accounts and randomly check his/her e-mail [and other sites].
  - This is easy to do, if you can do it from the start. It is much harder if your child is already on a SN site.
- Teach your child the responsible use of the resources on-line.
  - There is much more to the on-line experience than chat rooms.
  - [Your child can make it to adulthood without ever seeing Facebook!]
- Teach your child – BEFORE allowing online activity:
  - to never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they met on- line;
  - to never upload (post) pictures of themselves onto the Internet or on-line service to people they do not personally know;
  - To never download any software without asking you
  - to never give out identifying information such as their name, home address, school name, or telephone number;
  - to never download pictures from an unknown source, as there is a good chance there could be sexually explicit images;
  - to never respond to messages or bulletin board postings that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or harassing;
  - that whatever they are told on-line may or may not be true.

**Other topics to discuss with your child**

- Texting while driving? <http://www.getizup.com/>
- Social Network security settings
- Music downloading – legal, illegal, moral, immoral?
- Music downloading – is it safe for your home computer?
- ANY LINK – in a email, SN site, or IM can be to a virused website
- Plagiarism – immoral AND the price you pay
- Pornography – immoral, addictive and often virus-laden

**You are the parent!**

- Do not be manipulated into allowing something you do not believe is good for your child.
- Other than for school, any use of the Internet should be a privilege.
- No child under 13 is legally allowed to be on any social networking site

**For More Information**

<http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm>

<http://www.safekids.com/>

<http://www.getnetwise.org/>

<http://www.cyberangels.org/>

<http://www.wiredsafety.org/parent.html>

Email: [sr.mary-kansier@cdolinc.net](mailto:sr.mary-kansier@cdolinc.net)