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Roy, Ratnakirti; Das, Dipjyoti

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## **Dilution of Social Media Privacy: Security Vulnerabilities and Psychological Implications**

RATNAKIRTI ROY & DIPJYOTI DAS  
Inspiria Knowledge Campus, India

In the contemporary society, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram are not merely words, but are synonymous to a person's identity. Though the extensive use of social media is capable of rendering a huge amount of benefits in terms of ease of communication, lightening marketing reach and so on, the graver sides of the same requires thorough research to evaluate its role in modelling the psychological structure of the society and the possible threats it poses to the new generation who are glued to the use of social media platforms on a daily basis. This paper aims to perform a deep dive into the psychological effects of social media platforms on the young population and attempts to experimentally relate the same with dilution of social media privacy as a possible side effect. At the same time, possible alternatives and corrective measures to such a problem are also suggested.

**Keywords:** Digital communication, social media, social space, privacy infringement, social identity

In this era of advanced communication technology, social media has emerged as the most popular forum, intended to promote and accelerate human interaction and socialise with greater effectivity and efficiency. It not only facilitates rapid dissemination of wide range of information and messages but has also transformed our lives into an augmented virtual reality. They are designed to encourage the sharing of various information, views, pictures and videos which helps to expand our social space within the periphery of the online world. The digital world has brought the entire globe together, enriched our personal life, and professional relationships, and even made us more productive. Yet with data breaches, identity theft, the sharing of personal information by service providers on the rise, such considerations are set to shape our future relationship with the connected world in which we live. The privacy and security issue is a matter of great concern although it may not arise in the minds of the normal netizens who are in constantly accessing the social media for performing various social activities with numerous known and unknown persons.

The current research focuses primarily on finding out the privacy concerns associated with the use of social network and their direct and indirect effects on the society. Since the use of social media encompasses almost all dimensions of the human behavioural pattern, there are many people who unknowingly or sub-consciously allow predators on the social web to trespass their privacy. Such a breach not only can bring enormous financial losses but can also inflict massive damage to one's perception, identity and acceptance. Not only this, the younger generation who are the most ardent users of the

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Correspondence to: Ratnakirti Roy, Department of Computer Applications, Inspiria Knowledge Campus, Siliguri-734 010, West Bengal, India. Email: ratnakirti.r@inspiria.edu.in

social media platform are gradually drifting away from being social and a good many of them tend to suffer from a dual identity crisis. Surprisingly, all these effects, linked to the uncontrolled use of the social networks can also be related suitably with privacy infringement over the web.

A survey performed on a suitable sample of population, mostly youngsters reveal how sub-consciously the social media has become a platform for indirect, inadvertent (as well as deliberate) personal privacy breaches and dilution of social space. Such a survey also reveals how such breaches can negatively affect relationships, social identity and overall behaviour patterns of the youth. This paper not only analytically presents the trends but also tries to pave a path towards finding a practical and applicable solution to the problems associated with privacy over social media and its effects so that the technological breakthroughs in designing social networks can be really used to reap the benefits in a sustainable manner, helpful in the advancement and holistic betterment of the society.

## **Scope of the Study**

The frequent breaching of security and lack of privacy measures has been a matter of concern and discussion among various research studies and analysis. Are we really concerned about security and privacy while accessing and sharing information over the social media platforms? Is it a matter of priority to address this sensitive issue with great care and in-depth study? Analysing the online users attitude and behavioural traits relating to the matter may be of great help in unfolding this complex issue as in spite of the prevailing problems, the net users especially youngsters doesn't seem to reduce or decrease the usage of the digital platform. They constantly spend a huge amount of time in the digital world sharing and interacting with peers and friends which often expands to strangers whom we encounter deliberately or inadvertently. A normal interaction is perfectly acceptable in any forum, as we often practice such activity in real life taking into account various factors and circumstances to maintain privacy. However, the danger arises when we disclose confidential information and data to a person who is generally anonymous or sometimes fake and has malicious objective. We fall victims to such threats which results in adverse consequences. The greatest concern is how the privacy settings are managed and structured in order to maintain security and safety of a Social networking site (SNS). There is a sense that majority of the internet users are nonchalant or lack the understanding of how their personal data is actually being used in the modern digital world especially the social networking sites.

The contribution of technology in this aspect can be a major factor taken into consideration while we are analysing and studying the various factors of the issue. Since all the activities performed are over the digital platform, we also need to emphasize on the role played by technology in not only creating such forums to assist in social interaction and communication digitally but also try and build mechanism or suggest remedies whereby any loopholes and limitations can be eliminated to ensure privacy and security of an individual within the periphery of the social media.

## **Social Media Privacy: Emerging Trends**

With the ever increasing popularity of the digital world, it is not a secret anymore that users devote a major portion of their daily life to connect with a huge network of known and unknown people. It has evolved into an addiction which enables them to connect with

their friends, colleagues and acquaintances, sometimes even with individuals who may be complete strangers unaware of the potential dangers. It helps them to keep in touch with them often round the clock irrespective of the proximity and time. However access to personal information depends on the privacy settings offered by the respective social media sites.

There is apparently no potential danger in giving personal facts with proper security settings to ensure privacy. But the fact of the matter is how much of attention is paid to this sensitive issue by the respective social media users are worth exploring. The interesting fact is that a very little knowledge is required to create a profile and get started. Increasing amount of information is being shared by the users in attempt to increase social visibility and identity. Majority of the users do not change the default privacy settings or are not aware about the importance it relates to their profile. It is always advisable to ensure security of the profile in order to avoid any risk of being hacked with malicious intent or harassment. Without doubt, the social media platform is interactive and vast, provides enormous opportunity with greater speed and convenience compared to any other medium, but preventive measures and awareness have to be maintained in order to create an environment of safety and certainty.

The very nature of the medium which persuades and promotes sharing of personal information in order to garner maximum social engagement and traffic within the virtual world makes an individual vulnerable to expose his personal information in the public domain without any perceptible knowledge about the possible consequences. Majority of the youngsters spends an ample amount of time chatting with friends in SNS. Accepting friend requests from strangers and gradually interacting with them is a very common phenomena in the social networking sites like Facebook.

The human behaviour or tendency to incline towards an informal conversation with his or her counterpart is quite a natural occurrence. The very reason for this act is very fascinating to explore and understand. Humans are social beings afraid to reside in isolation and loneliness with a constant urge of social interaction and presence within a particular community or forum. A fast faced modernised urban life has left many in isolation from the near and dear ones. Hence, completely alienated from the real world. They often look out for friends and acquaintances with whom they can socialize and interact. Each and every individual craves for a social identity and engagement and consequently looks for platforms to re-engage and establish the socialisation process. This perception itself leads to belief that an alternative platform like the SNS provides the opportunity to eliminate this aspect of abandonment and rejection. However, chatting with a complete stranger over the SNS is very casual by nature. But the conversation eventually leads to sharing of extremely personal information as evident in many of the interaction in SNS.

There have been several reports of popular social networking sites being effected by privacy issues and they are continuously updating their security mechanism. A very option would be to close down the account or change the privacy settings when there is a security breach. However that does not necessarily mean the account is safe and secure. When one signs up for the first time supposedly in Facebook for example (reminiscent of opening a gmail account) some of the basic information to be disclosed by the user are name, age, sex, occupation, address etc. Apparently all these information may seem extremely harmless. But the question arises that at this point is why we are supposed to provide these facts to friends who are known to us and they are completely aware about us.

In spite of this why are we compelled to provide such information? The argument can be drawn as to maintain the authenticity of the profile by the respective SNS to curb the menace of anonymity and fake account. Again it can be subject to scrutiny the entire

purpose of this information sharing when is it vulnerable to be compromised. It is believed that SNS are designed to make new friends, get in touch with long lost friends, and also facilitate in professional growth as well. Actually it would be unacceptable if we draw to a conclusion that net users are least bothered about privacy issues. The primary purpose of its usage is to reach and interact with the massive world digitally. But while doing so are we aware of the dangers and threats and the privacy claims made by the SNS?, are they sufficient enough to keep one's profile and account safe and secured? A look at the huge directory of the users constantly accessing the sites for various purposes are least bothered about safety measures being provided by the sites and it seems to rapidly accumulate the number of users, raising contradictory questions about the privacy issue. A major psychological and behavioural pattern can be noticed which arises serious question about the nature of human conduct in respect to the online social world.

The tremendous spurt in the online forum is contributed to the advent of the interactive social media platforms that offers a scope of greater connectivity in this virtual world almost any time of the day. Social networking sites stimulate the net users to use their real identities to make a profile in Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. The netizens are constantly in touch with their near and dear ones through the digital platform. In social media sharing of information and posts, tagging of photos and videos, which also includes updating of day to day activities is a common trend. It has been observed people are more comfortable sharing information online rather than personally with the concerned individual. The dependency on the sites to socialise has grown. The evolution of the online forum has greatly affected our communication process. The behavioral pattern of the users are revealed through the analysis of the information and it has been determined that the major factor contributing to this symptom revolves around hobbies and interests although it may have several other dimensions. A keen observation of the behavioural pattern of the social media users reveal that the apparent openness of the users of the social networking sites often attracts attention from adversaries with high possibility of being led to online victimization. It is quite easy to register for a social networking site but without correct knowledge of the security measures, it is easier to be trapped by third parties such as online criminals and hackers (Gangopadhyay & Dhar, 2014).

## **Privacy Concern and Identity Threats**

There is a growing tendency among the young brigade to socialise over the digital world because it's easier, convenient and faster. As one of the noted studies in the related domain points out, with almost 1.5 billion users active of Facebook, followed by 340 million with Google+ and a whopping 280 million Twitteratis, social networks has revolutionized the way people communicate from interpersonal communication to mass media communication. People have the freedom to talk to anybody regardless of their mutual know each other. However, the concern with social media is how genuinely they keep users' privacy in private. There are a multitude of possibilities that may lead to privacy of a social network user be compromised : unintended release of private information due to poorly understood defaults, accidental data exposure, unintentional use of private data for organizational marketing and so on (Chewae et al., 2015).

Although there may be several other factors contributing to this emerging trend within the online community. As soon as individuals share information with their online social networks, they no longer have sole control over the information, but must rely on others for privacy protection. There is a strange phenomenon among the young net users, inspite of an increase in sensitivity of the privacy issue, the social media users rarely

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change behaviour even if they encounter a major mishap relating to infringement of social space. For e.g. Facebook encourages users to create profile by giving authentic details under the default settings which can then be accessed by friends, friends of friends and almost everyone present in the forum which makes it vulnerable under several grounds and can have severe consequences. However there are a large section of young digital population who simply don't bother about the privacy settings and the need to make the necessary changes in order to ensure privacy and also how much of the personal information should be visible and shared with the people accessing the concerned person's profile. The question arises are they not aware or simply ignorant or is there a degree of careless approach developed among the youngsters of sharing as much information as possible among their peer groups like posting pictures or selfies or updating relationship status. This is clearly a paradigm shift in many ways, because privacy is not just about the individual anymore but also a well-coordinated and collaborative process (Jia & Xu, 2016).

The digital world has made it extremely convenient for most of the net consumers especially among youths and adults to find like-minded individuals to communicate and self-express in spite of the prevailing threats. It has opened up a plethora of opportunities to discuss and share information with other users who has a common interest such as photos, likes, dislikes, interests, relationship status, job details, current town details, political views, religious views etc. Majority of the users are not aware of the privacy risks associated with the technology whenever they are sharing sensitive information online. The constant changes in the security and privacy measures by the social networking sites also make it extremely difficult for a layman to understand and get familiar with the various options available at their discretion with minimum knowledge.

According to consumer security risks survey 2014, done by B2B International in conjunction with Kaspersky Lab, shows that even using social networking is worldwide, there are minority of them understanding the risks of using social networking especially in terms of using mobile device to access the sites. More than 78 per cent of correspondents did not express concern about their information being targeted by cyberattacks and they perceive nothing dangerous with any activities on their social network. The survey also found that 10 per cent has ever conversed to anonymous person about personal information, whereas 15 per cent have sent personal information which has not been exposed anywhere before through social network. Furthermore, 12 per cent of correspondents used public wi-fi to fill online account information, but only 18 per cent of them were concerned that their personal information disclosure is excessive and 7 per cent seriously considered their communicating through social networking as one of the major factors through which information might be compromised (Chewae et al., 2015).

In an example, a teenager was chatting with one of her unknown friends in Facebook. Her informal attitude leads to her account being hacked. The unknown stranger with whom the girl was chatting forwarded her a link and requested to watch an interesting video. The young girl obliged and the page that opened looked reminiscent of the login in page of the Facebook. The difference was that the duplicate page was hosted by some other webpage and not Facebook. The young girl was then asked to enter details about her username and password to access what is there in the new page. It was just a trick to collect the username and password of the girl to hack her account. The account was hacked and all her personal information, messages, posts and data were infiltrated. Few minutes later one of her friend informed about the strange updates and vulgar posts and comments in her account. She realised that her account had been hacked and the username and the password had been changed which meant she was unable to access her account and inform her friends about

the actual story. The malice doesn't end here as her Facebook friends continue to receive similar requests of visiting a site and fall prey to watching the videos or images.

The very act of being persuaded by a stranger and being tempted to explore an unknown territory itself is a unique behavioural pattern especially among the youths who are mostly nonchalant about the potential hazards of such malice intents. The most absorbing fact is also the trust and faith which is gradually developed over a very short period of time by a stranger who creates an environment of credibility to fulfil his or her evil intentions. We are easily convinced by a stranger's words and expressions which are shared over the virtual medium and don't possess any authenticity whatsoever. It is highly susceptible that the person may not exist in real or may be a totally different person with a different identity or a fake profile whose sole purpose is to execute social privacy infringement. It is again a matter of debate and discussion why do individuals behave in such strange manner over the SNS whereas in real life we are completely ignorant about a stranger when he approaches without any formal intimation and procedure.

A general perception is to maintain a safe distance and keep everything confidential. A complete U-turn is observed in the SNS where everyone is freely interacting and socialising on range of topics and issues including personal matters without pondering over the consequences which can be dangerous. It is thereby advisable not to trust strangers in the digital forum irrespective of the individuals' whereabouts and information mentioned and frequent changing of passwords is a viable option to keep the accounts safe.

In SNS like Facebook, it is very common to receive "likes" and "comments" when a user updates any post or picture or status. The very purpose of sharing any information over the SNS is to engage the person concerned friend's and stimulate a healthy conversation. There is nothing wrong in posting or sharing comments. However, it has been revealed that people start chatting with general comments and gradually many confidential things regarding any particular topic or person is made public knowingly or unknowingly. A mere like to a picture or a response to a post may seem completely innocent and rational. However the series of discussions which flows from a particular post or a comment is an interesting observation. The comments which may be completely irrational in the real world can be easily uploaded and shared in the digital forum. It is also accepted in the virtual world without much objection which raises the question again on the behavioural pattern of the SNS community and individuals accessing such forums. But leaking of facts and information is also prevalent like one instance where a young non-governmental organisation (NGO) worker shared pictures of one of the charity events of his organisation. Likes and comments poured in and what seemed a random post gradually transformed into a forum where during the course of chatting in the comment section, the young lad unknowingly revealed many confidential matters of his organisation. It was completely unintentional on his part but it obviously had a negative impact on his career as he was labelled irresponsible.

The review of the entire incident clearly highlights the fact a individual is prone to reveal materials in flow of interaction unknowingly over SNS without even realising what actually may be the ultimate result in the end which can be detrimental. Such instances are common and makes a case for serious introspection of how individuals behave under certain circumstances and differently otherwise. So, it's extremely important to exercise caution before writing anything on the open public forum because the sequence of comments can ultimately lead to unwanted exposure of information which can be potentially harmful.

## Psychological Impact of Social Networks: Dilution of Privacy

Not too long ago, a girl in her early twenties was teased relentlessly by her sister when she revealed her strategies of deriving the best possible feedback for her picture posts on Facebook. There were date basics stating which days of the week to avoid pictures being posted and also sensitivity to time zones. Nevertheless, attention to Facebook's algorithms for sharing information was also given due importance. Though it sounds ridiculous at the beginning but it does sparks a few important questions like why in the world did one care so much about an un-liked photo? When and how did Facebook responses become such valued social currency?

For better or for worse, she was hardly alone in her experience. Recent research concludes that technology and SNS have contributed largely to a growing obsession among youth towards impression management and self-portrayal online. Whether it is searching for the perfect photo to be uploaded to Instagram using filters, updating Facebook status or carefully crafting a humblebrag, there is an extremely increasing tendency among the users to adopt different selective strategies to portray an "ideal self" through the social media network (Chou & Edge, 2012; Manago, Graham, Greenfield, & Salimkhan, 2008). If the social media behaviour of ourselves and that of the others be observed, it becomes increasingly interesting to evaluate the psychological consequences of our increased online presence. Put simply, is our relationship with the social media healthy?

When considering the potential negative effects of social media, there appear to be risks associated with certain *types* of online activity, rather than SNS usage at large. For example, social media use can be greatly maladaptive when it is in the form of inactive or passive browsing. People spending considerable time on sites like Facebook and Instagram exclusively browsing through their news feed and looking at others posts, pictures and profiles, it can trigger a sense of exclusion, jealousy, as well as acute cases of loneliness (Krasnova, Wenninger, Widjaja, & Buxmann, 2013). Such a sort of unintended or psychologically driven online surveillance activity can result in emoting feelings of inadequacy or jealousy in relationships, especially among people who subject themselves to stalking their ex-boyfriends or girlfriends on social media (Marshall, 2012; Muise, Christofides, Desmarais, 2009). Similarly, in friendships, extensive *invasion* of others' profiles may lead to a syndrome called the *fear of missing out* where an individual feels emotionally intimidated by the slightest sight of pictures of a friends' party where he/she was not invited (Przybylski, Murayama, DeHaan, & Gladwell, 2013).

On social media platforms like Facebook, people often engage in social comparison which can be traced back to be a leading cause of mental distress. As an example, it has been observed that viewing profile pictures of attractive people can provoke more negative emotions than viewing photos of comparatively less attractive ones. Not only this, more photo related activities on Facebook are related to body disturbances in teen girls (Meier & Gray, 2014). Social comparison on social networking sites, under certain circumstances, can be associated with mental abnormalities too. In a recent study of adolescents, Nesi and Prinstein (2015) link technology-influenced "social comparison and feedback-seeking" (SCFS) in the development of symptoms of depression. It was found that adolescents who were more engaged in behavioural practices linked to social comparison and feedback-seeking online experienced greater symptoms of depression. This was more prevalent among females and students who were in general less popular in school. Given that profiles of majority of social networking websites often portray over exaggerated information about the users in the form of pictures, responses to posts and so on, teenagers who engage in social comparison in the cyber space may feel like "everyone else is happier than me".



In this context, we argue that both the positive psychological aspects of the social networking sites such as Facebook and the depressive psychological symptoms induced by the same have nearly equal possibilities of directly or indirectly forcing users to divulge their confidential private information to many potent predators on the social network. To validate this claim, a survey was performed with a large number of respondents in the age group 17–45 years. The respondents were asked questions pertaining to their social media usage habits and their awareness about the security issues over the social networking sites. The survey revealed that Facebook is one of the most preferred social media platforms among the youth, followed by WhatsApp and Instagram.

A significant finding was that 60 per cent of the sample population remain logged in to some form of social media for more than 6 hours in a day and therefore it is evident that these form the most vulnerable group who are possible victims of privacy dilution and security threats. The respondents on being questioned further revealed interesting figures in terms of the security awareness, objective of social presence and victimization over social network sites. A whopping 90 per cent of the sample claimed to be aware of the privacy issues and ways to protect privacy over social networks while a similar percentage of people used social media for friendship and for increased social presence.

As mentioned previously, social media platforms can create illusion of increased popularity in the society and therefore may pose an indirect threat to personal privacy by trading personal information for popularity. Such a claim is backed by the results of the survey which further revealed that more than 30 per cent of the respondents did interact with strangers on the basis of their looks and images in the respective profiles. On being asked about the psychological aspects, 55 per cent of the population agreed that on being extensively used, social networking platforms can control an individual's behavioural pattern, especially during emotionally demanding moments of joy or distress. This is an important observation as because these groups are vulnerable to predators who can use the features of the social networking media as a bait to convince users to divulge their personal information over the air. According to a respondent,

“...It depends on the person's communication skill. If the person is too good to manipulate the other person by his/her way of texting or replying he/she can easily make them reveal their personal information...”

Such a claim is supported by the results of the survey which reveals that through a large number of people were aware of the security issues over the SNS and had taken requisite measures to protect their privacy, a significant 28 per cent of them were victims of privacy breach and had suffered humiliation, abuse (verbal or sexual) and bullying over the social media. This is a strong proof in favour to the claims made earlier regarding the ability of social media to directly or indirectly influence the psychological behavioural pattern of an individual. As said by one of the respondents who was a victim of such a privacy breach,

“...Had I been in my senses I would not have been victimized over anything. It is definitely due to my negligence I would be victimized...”

Another young girl responded on similar lines as,

“...Because, the person who was my friend did all that... he was in my friend list too. We can never know, how the next person thinks about us even in our friend circle...”

Such responses trigger the alarm that an increasing desire of creating an ideal self-identity over social network sites in a short time can lead to dangerous consequences in the societal structure and on the emotional framework of young people who use social media to inculcate their feelings, emotions to a large extent. Such modelling of their behavioural patterns make them more predictable and susceptible to emotional setbacks and shocks. As some of the student respondents who were questioned on the effects of privacy dilution over social media said,

“...It is a mental torture. Yes, there has been friends of mine whose behaviour were severely affected. Also, the victims think their life is at stake...” and “...I was not aware of this incident...then a classmate of mine who is also an active Instagram user saw those pictures and informed me... initially I was very upset, I was broken... then I understood that it all happened due to my negligence. Though those pictures were not mine still they held very vulgar content...”

Such findings clearly indicate the threats and vulnerabilities that exist in the over-usage of social media to share information are not to be ignored. As it cannot be denied that social media is an extremely powerful platform to reach out to people, it is important to devise a framework that might help the young people as well as anybody else to reap the benefits of the upgraded technological boon yet not finding themselves amidst a privacy breach compromising their emotional and social security.

### **Towards a Safe and Secure Social Media Usage**

Before it can be concluded that it's high time that you deactivate your profiles on Facebook/Instagram/Twitter, it is also of extreme worth to acknowledge the benefits of social media to our psychological health. Facebook in particular provides opportunities for increased digital presence, increased communication, social interaction and also identity development. Utilizing Facebook for certain types of communication among college students have revealed its role in strengthening social ties with recently introduced classmates (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Facebook also serves as a trusted platform to maintain pre-existing/ long distance relationships and strengthen close friendships and family ties through innovative expressions of love and intimacy (e.g. photo sharing, wall posting, emoticons, post tagging; Watkins & Lee, 2010).

In case of identity development and mental health, research outcomes suggest that positive feedback on social media resulted in increased self-esteem and sense of general well-being among youth (Valkenburg, Peter & Schouten, 2006). Similarly, it was also interesting to figure out that college students who are the heaviest Facebook users showed greater signs of being satisfied with their lives and also exhibited greater social engagement (Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Not only this, few studies have even confirmed that gazing at one's own profile for just several minutes can result in significant surge in self-esteem as well as self-affirmation (Gonzales & Hancock, 2011; Toma & Hancock, 2013)!

It is extremely fascinating to explore how young generation socialise over the social networking sites. Every piece of information is readily available in the social media and the technology savvy youth have constant access over them without really emphasising about the security concerns consciously or unconsciously revealed through the survey conducted. The definition of world for them is internet and SNS where they remain connected

with friends, relatives and acquaintances including new ones who may be complete strangers. The primary reason for entertaining new friends is to increase social presence and interaction and also broaden the horizon of friendship. Updating status, posting selfies, stylish pictures is the common trend 24x7 among the youths. It clearly shows that inspite of the serious implications prevailing within the digital forum; the youths do not hesitate to disclose personal information more than just the normal information like name and age. The digital world and the SNS have opened a plethora of opportunities for interactive communication as well as a high probability of social media addiction, which is constantly rising.

Making friends with complete and anonymous individuals over the SNS may apparently seem very trendy but can result in very serious threats as whatever is showcased in the digital platform may not be real as the study has revealed. The psychological impact and the resulting consequences can have detrimental effects to the overall behaviour of young users which is sometimes often ignored. But has been aptly highlighted by the survey conducted which clearly states there is a tendency among the young users that privacy issues are diluted inspite of them being vulnerable to malicious threats.

The frequent change in the privacy and account setting is one option which should be appropriately implemented to avoid threats as well as keeping the profile settings secured at all times from any anonyms views and posts. Extreme caution must be observed while sharing and tagging of photos and status with strangers. A comprehensive verification of profiles must be maintained at all times from the SNS managers to ensure authenticity of profiles. It is quite understandable to maintain a very casual and informal approach while interacting through the SNS but we need to ensure measures whereby we remain aware about the level of intimacy we develop with strangers and anonyms users.

It is paramount for the young users to be completely aware and vigilant about the existing security measures and settings in the respective SNS. It is pivotal to maintain the secrecy of an individual's personal information and also not be persuaded to disclose it under any circumstances. It is also the responsibility of the concerned SNS managers to deliberate the pros and cons to the users and avoid any sort of jargon to create ambiguity or confusion which might lead to the dilution of the SNS privacy. The user have a clear idea about the privacy setting and choose the appropriate option to maintain secrecy and confidentiality of his or her profile from any possible emerging threats. There should be absolute simplicity and clarity about the information relating to security and privacy issues in order to ensure an environment of complete safety and security for all the netizens to continue to socialise and interact safely over the SNS.

## Conclusion

Considering this body of research in a holistic aspect, what's the final verdict? As with many technological inventions, social media presents both positives and some really unhealthy negatives. The detrimental effects to the psychological paradigm of the young social media users are a big reason to fuel research to find an alternative to such a *necessary evil* which can otherwise be a super powerful communication and outreach tool. So, if you find yourself pleading for Facebook likes or you see your mood being controlled by your Facebook or Instagram account, try shifting the focus away from your virtual audience.

Instead, use your social network profile to reflect on meaningful aspects of your own identity and social connections with cherished others. At the same time, youngsters

must also keep themselves abreast of the best in practice security features of the social network sites and also critically evaluate the intimacy levels they develop with otherwise attractive people over the web to completely reap the benefits of this technological revolution, without jeopardizing their own privacy and security.

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Ratnakirti Roy is an assistant professor in the Department of Computer Applications at Inspiria Knowledge Campus (a management college), Siliguri, India. His broad research interests include computational photography, steganography, water-marking and cyber psychology. His specific interests in these domains include aesthetic evaluation of digital photographs, secure data hiding systems and behavioural aspects of humans over social media.

Dipjyoti Das is an assistant professor in the Department of Media Science at Inspiria Knowledge Campus (a management college), Siliguri, India. His specific research interests include new media and its social implications, theological understanding of the mainstream and alternative media and impact of the digital platform in the dynamics of contemporary journalism.