

Media-WISE

A **SMART** guide for **YOUTHs**





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A SMART guide for YOUThs



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Dear Digital Citizen,

I'm sure many of us can't live without our smart phone or computer today. We message, we surf, we watch TV, we learn, and network, all with the touch of a finger. In today's digital age, the Internet has not only opened up a vast trove of views and information, it has also given us the potential to be opinion shapers and change makers. It's an exciting time!

On the internet and social media, we can instantly become famous or infamous. We can become predators or fall prey to people with less than honourable intentions. We have the power to shame or encourage others.

We have the choice in how we use online technology and digital media. Use it irresponsibly and face the consequences – whether legal or social. Or use it wisely and open up a world of opportunities and make the world a better place.

We hope you'll find this little book useful in helping you navigate the exciting digital world that never sleeps. Try out the tips – how many do you know?

Be Safe, Be Smart and Be Kind online.

Let's Create a Better Internet and Better World Together.

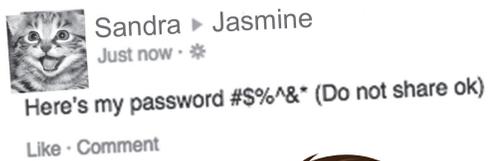
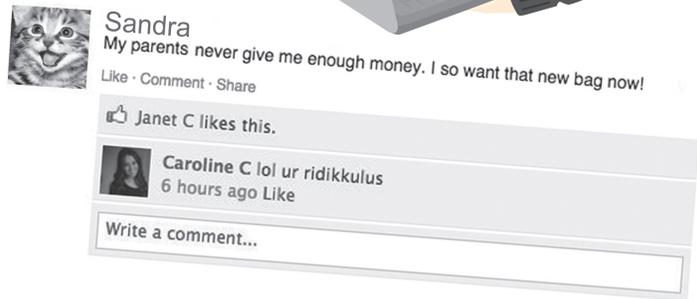
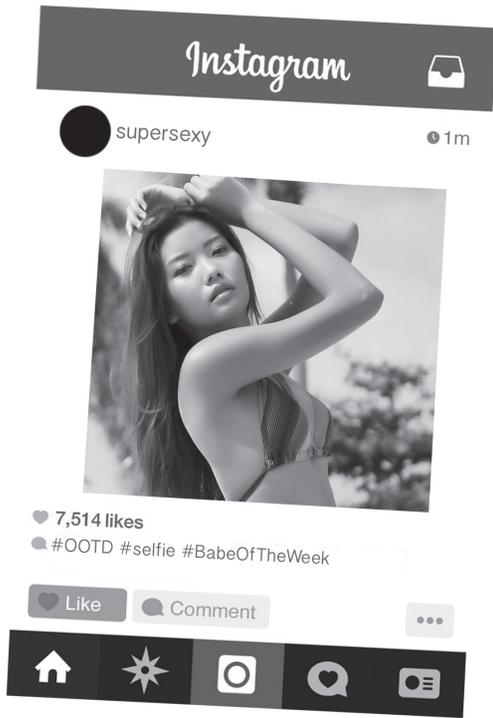
Media Literacy Council





BE SAFE ARE YOU AN EASY TARGET?

Bad guys get good ideas from your posts to prey on you. Protect yourself - be careful what you share!



ONLINE SAFETY...

While social media is a great place to make new friends, it is also where **hackers, sexual predators and conmen** hang around, waiting for the right opportunity to prey on unsuspecting users.

You compromise your safety when you add friends indiscriminately and share personal information on social media.

Bad guys will try to learn more about you through your social media posts, become your friend, gain your trust and then 'attack' you when you least expect it. Be careful what you share!

Learn to protect yourself by using privacy settings on social media, so that only people you know and trust can see your posts.

... AND ONLINE SECURITY

Your email, social media accounts and gadgets (smart phone, tablet, and laptop) serve as playgrounds for hackers and malicious viruses.

Always use strong passwords and anti-virus software.

Be careful what you click!

BE SAFE GEOTAGGING

Christine keeps in touch with friends by sharing photographs and information on social media about her activities. She “checks in” when she goes bowling every weekend at the community centre, when she shops, when she eats at a new café, and so on. She loves reading her friends’ comments about her status updates and photographs. Sometimes, she even gets “likes” from strangers.

Does the above sound familiar to you? Do you upload group photos of outings with friends and add a location tag? When you go for a family holiday, do you update your social media accounts by “checking in” at the airport?

Geotagging or location tagging allows you to reveal your location and activities through photo tags, status updates or tweets. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Foursquare allow you to “check in” so your friends know where you are at a particular day and time.

Social media sites also include maps of the places you have checked in. The information you reveal through geotagging can be compiled into a map, which provides a summary of the places you go to regularly.

While it can be fun, be aware that geotagging attracts risks. For example, if you often “check in” at places, a stranger could easily discover what you or your family habits and routines are. Think about the “friends” you have on Facebook. Are all of them people you actually know? What about their “friends”?

You may not know them but they could easily be accessing your information. Are you comfortable with strangers knowing so much about your routines?

How does geotagging work?

Like a notebook that contains personal information, your smartphone contains data files that could enable a stranger to identify who you are. One of these files is called exchangeable image file (EXIF). When you snap a photograph, the camera settings are saved into this EXIF. If the GPS on your phone is on, your location will be saved in the EXIF too. Your friends on social media and even strangers can easily see where you are and what you are up to.

✔ TIP: Stay Smart, Stay Safe

1. Adjust your privacy settings on your social media accounts.
2. Choose what you share carefully.
3. Avoid adding “friends” you have never met or do not know well to your social network.

BE SAFE & SECURE

HOW MANY DO YOU KNOW?

TIP SHEET

I know what I share online affects my safety

I know how to use the privacy settings on my social media accounts

Allowing your personal information and photos to be easily accessible to strangers is never a good idea. Would you tell strangers you meet on the streets details about your life? If not, don't share private information online and do make use of privacy settings. Here's how to protect your privacy and share only what you want to share with the world:

- Before you post something, think about who it is for and ensure that the privacy setting for the post is correct
- Review your privacy settings and past activities of your social media account to make sure you are comfortable with the privacy level as well as the information you have shared.
- Go through your activity log and change the group of people who can see your posts, likes, comments and photos.
- You may also wish to "untag" yourself if you do not want certain photos to be visible to the public.

Even with privacy settings, be aware that no post is totally private because your post can be screen captured and shared without your permission.

I don't share personal details that may impact me negatively later in life

Thinking of sharing a silly or incriminating photo of yourself, or a very sexy one? Imagine yourself 10 years from now. Ask yourself what people would think about you if they saw those photos? Anything you share online is permanent and it could make or break your reputation based on what you have shared.

I don't add as friends people I don't know in real life

While it can be fun to add many friends on your social media, this may potentially be a risk. Many conmen and criminals disguise themselves online to prey on the innocent. Be mindful and do not add strangers as friends.

I can easily become famous or infamous even if I am a nobody

If you think nobody cares about what you say because you are a nobody, think again. Posts and photos can go viral easily. Be careful what you post.

BE SAFE & SECURE

TIP SHEET

I know how to keep secure

I always create strong passwords for my online accounts

Create a password of at least 8 characters with a mixture of letters, numbers and special characters (e.g. fishface -> f!\$hf4c3). Avoid using passwords that are easy to guess, e.g. your name, birth date. A way to manage many passwords is simply to use one strong password and then add relevant prefixes and suffixes.

I always log out from my online accounts after each use

Always log out from your online accounts, especially when you are using a public computer. Also, remember to clear "History" and uncheck the "Remember my password" or "Keep me logged in" box.

I use cloud services and I know how to secure my accounts

Your cloud accounts could become potential targets for data theft. To minimise the risk, you should step up your account security:

- Ensure that the auto back-up feature is turned off, so that your photo files are not automatically sent to your cloud account.
- Activate the two-factor authentication for your account. This strengthens your account security as you will be required to enter a short temporary code in addition to your usual username and password.
- Be wary of emails asking you to reset your password. Such emails often appear to come from a legitimate source. However, if you have not requested for a password change, be very careful when you receive such emails. It is best to ignore such requests. If you need to reset your password, do so through the official website. This applies to all your personal accounts e.g. bank accounts, email accounts, etc.

I know how to keep myself safe at public WiFi hotspots

Public WiFi is not secure. Use it for general surfing but do not log onto your personal accounts or perform online transactions.

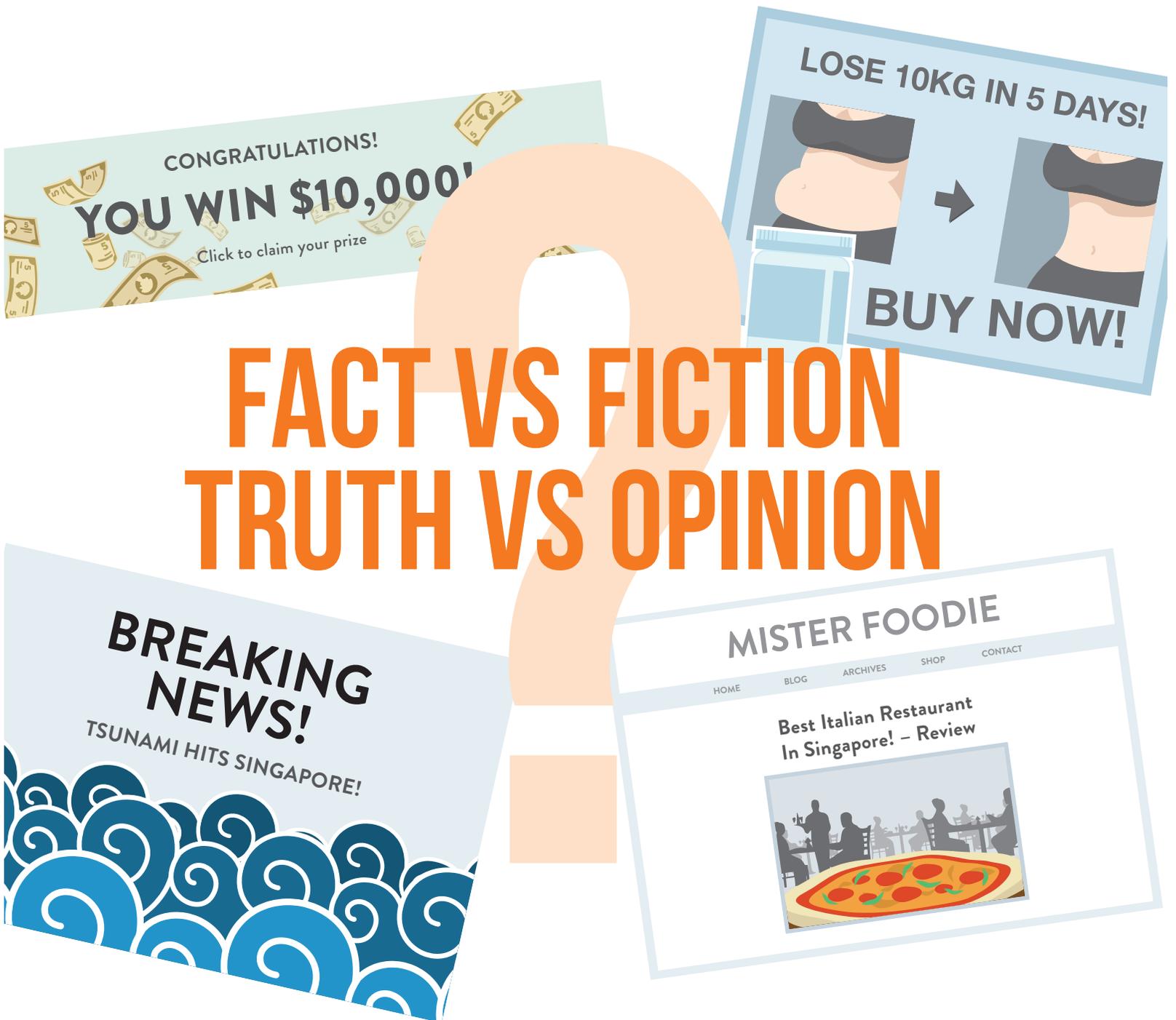
I update the anti-virus programmes on all my devices regularly

Protect your personal data and other valuable information from hackers and attacks of malware and viruses by installing anti-virus programmes on all your internet-enabled devices. Update your anti-virus programme regularly as there are hundreds of new threats every day.



BE SMART ARE YOU INFO-SAVVY?

What you see may not be what is true. Be smart. Don't be fooled!



FACT VS FICTION TRUTH VS OPINION

SHOULD YOU BELIEVE



EVERYTHING YOU READ?

So what if you read something on a popular blog? Does it mean the information is credible? Scammers and conmen are also online – How do you see through their tricks? Do you know the difference between opinion and fact?

What about advertising messages? How much should you trust them?

We are bombarded by information every day. It is important to critically evaluate what you read – whether blog posts, news sites, social media accounts, advertising messages. Learn to evaluate information and make informed decisions about what's true and minimise harm to yourself.

BE SMART BEST PRACTICES

So, how can you make sense of all the information out there? How do you know what to believe without being taken for a ride?



Here are some tips to help you critically evaluate information:

Remember C-S-I when evaluating information!

- Credibility:** Assess credibility of content – does the content have various perspectives or just one point of view? Is it an opinion?
- Source:** Assess who the source or sources are – what is their reputation? Are they trustworthy? Can the information be independently verified? The publisher, e.g. newspaper, website, is one source. The author is another source. You should try to suss out the credibility of both.
- Intent:** What is the agenda of the source? What are they hoping to achieve by publishing the information?

Cross-check information

Is the news true?

Important business and socio-political news can often be cross-checked across multiple sites for accuracy. Does it sound like a hoax or urban legend – you can fact-check “interesting” stories on snopes.com, urbanlegend.com or hoaxslayer.com

Remember the 4W1H (Who What Why When How)

Use “Who? When? Why? What? and How?” questions to guide you in your C-S-I.

BE SMART ONLINE SCAMS

How NOT to fall for scams!



1. What do scammers want from me?

Your money, mostly. Scammers will try all sorts of ways to trick you to part with your money. Another thing scammers want is your personal information e.g. passwords, bank accounts and credit card numbers. Once they get your personal information, it's easy for them to impersonate you or hack into your accounts with criminal intent. Sometimes, they sell your personal information to other criminals.

2. What are the common platforms used by scammers?

You may encounter scams in various ways through emails, social networking sites, messaging apps, banner ads, classified ad sites such as Gumtree or Craigslist, and even through text messages sent to your mobile phone.

3. How do I recognise common tactics used by scammers?

Scammers typically use what they understand about human psychology to get people to fall for their tricks. Here are some common psychological tactics they use:

a. Familiarity/Trust

Is the scammer posing as someone you trust? For example, the scammer could pose as your friend or relative. By playing on your emotions, the scammer can easily trick you into believing whatever they want you to, or to give away your personal information.

BE SMART ONLINE SCAMS

b. Fear/Authority

Is the scammer posing as an authority figure? Scammers could pose as police officers, bank officers or computer security experts. They could also pose as companies that you do business with e.g. your email host, major shopping sites and payment providers. By doing so, scammers hope to project themselves as having more credibility and try to manipulate you into revealing your personal information. A common tactic they use is to ask you to click on a link to a spoof site. Once you've done so, they would use the information you enter to hijack your real account!

c. Greed

Have you ever received emails congratulating you for winning a prize or offering you something for free? Do you get offers for free plane tickets, free movie passes, or even free vouchers for well-known brands. Or, have you ever been promised tons of money for working from home? Be wary of strangers bearing gifts that seem too good to be true. Don't be too quick to click on links or fill out forms with your personal details.

d. Love & Friendship

Do you receive friend requests from strangers? Do you receive flattering messages from strangers that make you feel special? Do the messages tell you that you have a beautiful smile or that a stranger would like to get to know you better. If you respond, it may lead to the beginning of a dangerous relationship. Scammers often prey on your emotions and declare their love for you very quickly. After securing your trust, they may suddenly have an urgent need for money and ask you to transfer funds to them, e.g. to cover travel costs to visit you.

e. Shock Value

Do you receive alerts with catchy or shocking headlines? Scammers use catchy headlines to entice you to click on links as well as to share apps. Examples of such headlines include "Check out who has been viewing your profile" or inviting you to read celebrity gossip. Many of these scammers take advantage of real news to trick you. For example, in the wake of a major airline accident, people received messages urging them to click on links to view videos of the crash. Another example – after Hollywood celebrities' private accounts were hacked and their nude photos released, many messages containing supposed links to the photos surfaced. Clicking on such links and apps may open the door to scammers who will launch spyware, trojans and viruses to your computer.

f. Compassion

Do you receive email requests imploring you to donate money to support charitable causes? These requests may appear to come from reputable sources like the Red Cross. Very often, scammers capitalise on a person's goodwill after a natural disaster to encourage them to donate to charities that do not exist.

BE SMART MEDIA AND PERSUASION

Be Smart - Think About What You See!

We are constantly bombarded by advertisements everywhere. For example, on TV, in newspapers and magazines, outdoors and even on our phones and smart devices!

But why do advertisers go to such great lengths to catch our attention? The main reason is simple, to sell and convince us to make that purchase decision. Very often, we hear the positive aspects of a product, while the negative aspects are noticeably absent. Sometimes, the product may not even be what we want.

We need to critically evaluate advertising claims so that we can be wiser consumers.

Association

Instilled in us are values, hopes and dreams, and advertisers are fully aware of them.

They associate their products and services to taglines and symbols like popularity, love, family, values and aspirations that resonate with their target audience.

These taglines and symbols are usually deep seated desires that we harbour and hope to achieve. Hence by tagging their products and services to these symbols, it elicits a strong emotional response of connection, spurring us to make the purchase decision.

What kind of values do you associate with Nike? Perhaps victory, determination and strength?



Photo credit: <https://www.facebook.com/nikebasketball>

Join the bandwagon

No one likes being left out.

Advertisers capitalise on that feeling by depicting messages where “everyone is doing it” and if you don’t hop on the bandwagon, you might miss out.

Celebrity endorsements

We all love and admire celebrities. Often times, ads catch our attention because our favourite celebrity is modeling or endorsing that particular product or service. And for some people, that is an influence as they want to emulate their idols.

Getting an expert

Advertisers make use of experts to give some form of credibility to their product or service, in hopes of persuading us. But advertising being advertising, we cannot be fully sure that the “experts” depicted are really experts. Even if they are, we might want to question their objectivity given that they would typically have been paid to appear in the ad.



Photo credit: <https://www.facebook.com/SensodyneMe>



Photo credit: <https://www.facebook.com/hm/>

Beautiful people everywhere

If you're flipping through a fashion magazine, it isn't out of the ordinary to see good looking models on every single page. They want you to envy how good they look and convince you that with their product or service, you'll end up looking just like them.

Humor

When we laugh, we feel good, and when we feel good we associate that feeling to the brand, product or service.

Fear

Fear and shock tactics are used to propel us into action. You might have seen this technique used in anti-smoking ads and environmental awareness ads.



Photo Credit: <https://www.facebook.com/CasioBabygTaiwan>

Food for thought

As a consumer, we just need to be aware of how we can be influenced and to exercise good judgement for ourselves.

Online, many bloggers and youtubers recommend and endorse products and services. Do we know if they have been paid to say good things about the product or get other benefits in return? Should we take the words of these online personalities at face value?

We should always read multiple reviews, especially from different consumers, to cross-check such endorsements.

Whether online or offline, as you have learnt, advertisers use many tactics to appeal to our emotions to drive us to make certain decisions.

TEST YOUR CRITICAL THINKING

Book on MH370 claims disappearance was “deliberate”

Published on Jun 15, 2014 6:23 PM



PETALING JAYA (THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK)

A commercial pilot has co-written a book on missing Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370, claiming that the disappearance was “deliberated” and “calculated”.

The report, first published in The Independent newspaper, comes as Malaysia observed the 100th day of the aircraft disappearance with a fresh promise by the government that it will keep searching for its whereabouts.

The book, *Good Night Malaysia 370: The Truth Behind the Loss of Flight 370*, was written by pilot Ewan Wilson and New Zealand reporter Geoff Taylor.

The Independent said the pair wrote that the plane did in fact end in the Indian Ocean and that a conclusion of foul play was reached following the process of elimination.

This is the first time detailed analysis of the flight has been presented, Mr Wilson told stuff.co.nz, including the incredible route it took, and who they believed was in

charge of the aircraft as it plunged into the Indian Ocean. “The disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 captured the world’s attention and shocked everyone - (the outcome) is gut-wrenching,” he said during the interview without divulging much details.

Mr Taylor said the incident was no accident and that it was deliberate, calculated and should never have been allowed to happen.

The authors had also recommended immediate changes to the management of flight crews and the introduction of tamper-proof technical systems to ensure the aircraft could be tracked at all times.

Flight MH370 with 239 people on board disappeared en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing on March 8 and is believed to have crashed in the southern Indian Ocean.

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PRACTICE GUIDE – HOW SMART ARE YOU?

Let's deconstruct the MH370 article to analyse what's fact or opinion and what's believable.

BOOK ON MH370 CLAIMS DISAPPEARANCE WAS "DELIBERATE"

Published on Jun 15, 2014 6:23 PM

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The Independent said the pair wrote that the plane did in fact end in the Indian Ocean and that a conclusion of foul play was reached following the process of elimination.

How can we be sure of this "fact"? Can we cross check this information with other sources? Compare this information with at least 3 other sources.

Check when the article was written. Is it timely and up to date?

This is a third party story – Who is "The Independent" newspaper? if you search, you will find out that the book authors held a press conference in the UK to publicise their book, and this was covered by several UK newspapers including The Independent.

Note that the publicity for the book was timed to coincide with Malaysia's observance of the 100th day of the aircraft disappearance. What do you think is the purpose – to extract maximum publicity for the book?

Whose points of view is the article trying to convey? What are the backgrounds of the authors? Are they credible people?

Note the background of the main author, Ewan Wilson. If you do a Google search on him, Ewan was previously CEO of Kiwi Airlines and later convicted for fraud. Kiwi Airlines also went into bankruptcy. There were also many other negative comments about his deals and character. Does this lessen his credibility?

This is the first time detailed analysis of the flight has been presented, Mr Wilson told stuff.co.nz, including the incredible route it took, and who they believed was in charge of the aircraft as it plunged into the Indian Ocean.

“The disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 captured the world’s attention and shocked everyone - (the outcome) is gut-wrenching,” he said during the interview without divulging much details.

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Source: *The Star Online*

The launch of the book “Goodnight Malaysian 370” was also picked up by major international newspapers around the world, including Malaysian newspaper, *The Star*. You can find similar articles with a google search. But does that make the claims credible because every newspaper is covering it? The newspapers all published their stories based on the authors’ claims at press conferences. That’s why their stories are similar, but we need to go beyond the news articles to ascertain the credibility of the authors.

Note that these are the authors’ opinions/beliefs. Based on what we know about Wilson’s character, can we believe him? Bear in mind that opinions should never be treated as facts. Note also that this article did not present other views who might disagree with the authors. What other views could have been added? What other questions could the reporter have asked to help the reader make a more informed view about the incident?

This is an opinion, not a fact. Is this the authors’ personal bias to make a case for their argument that the MH pilot committed suicide?

BE SMART

HOW MANY DO YOU KNOW?

TIP SHEET

I know how to be smart when evaluating information

I know how to check the accuracy of information

- Credibility – Check whether the information or content comes from a reliable person or source.
- Sources – Verify information by checking multiple sources.
- Intent – Learn to analyse the intention and motivation behind a person’s message. What is the person’s reason(s) for sharing the information? Is the person biased?

I know that information can be manipulated or doctored

Always be analytical when consuming or seeking information online or offline. Remember that all photographs, videos and texts can be manipulated and taken out of context to distort or influence my perceptions.

I am aware of my biases and how that may affect my objectivity

People tend to read and believe information that confirms their opinions, while rejecting information that does not support their beliefs (even if the information is true). I should remain open-minded when evaluating information.

I will be a smart and responsible media consumer and creator

I will not share information that has not been verified. Where I can, I will debunk gossip and fake information.

I know that scammers make use of psychological tactics to scare or trick people into revealing information or paying money

Greed, fear and compassion are some of the more common emotions that scammers prey on. Anything that sounds too good to be true is usually not true.



BE KIND ARE YOU A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ONLINE?

THINK before you post.



T

Is it True?

H

Is it Helpful?

I

Is it Inspiring?

N

Is it Necessary?

K

Is it Kind?



Your actions online reflect who you are. Create a positive reputation. **You have the choice to make a better internet.**

WHAT IS YOUR



DIGITAL REPUTATION?

What if one day you wake up and find your picture on the front page of the newspaper? All because of an insensitive or offensive comment that you made online about someone? How would you feel? How do you think others would perceive you?

The Internet is a public space. Our actions online determine how others perceive us. Every comment, post or video that we post can be made available to a larger global audience, many of whom we have never met in person.

It is important for us to be careful about what we post online because everything online is searchable, replicable, and contributes to our permanent digital reputation. This can be great news to you if you are posting positive things online and building a good digital reputation. But what if your negative posts or inappropriate comments or photos also find their way online? What kind of reputation are you building?

BE KIND PUBLIC SHAMING



Have you ever uploaded a video of a “bad behaviour”, reposted a mean comment, or jumped into a thread to criticise people?

Do you think you are righting a wrong, putting a stop to bad behaviour?

Do you think this is the right way of resolving problems in a civilised society?

Does publicly shaming someone resolve problems?

These days, empowered by social media, people feel they can simply shame and criticise others online for doing something unacceptable. The speed and anonymity of the internet makes it easy for people to point fingers. As a collective, we are not accountable for what we say, but before we know it, the person being scolded has received death threats, abusive rants, and may even have his private information like the name of his school/ workplace and address made public. He may even get fired from his job because the shamers may pressure his workplace to “do the right thing”.

“So, what’s wrong with that?”, you may ask. The guy deserves it for posting that insensitive remark or for displaying bad behaviour.

But think again – does he really deserve it? Does he deserve death threats? If you were in his shoes – how will you feel? Scared? Deeply embarrassed? Want to apologise and clarify but unable to because nobody is listening, just busy criticising. Does he deserve to have his future taken from him because online, these comments branding him will stay forever?

Online, repercussions are magnified because the punishment may be disproportionate to the size of the actual wrongdoing. The other problem that online shamers should think about is this: there is always the possibility that the person you’ve just shamed didn’t really commit the “crime”. What if it’s a case of a mistaken identity or misunderstanding? Have the shamers just unwittingly crucified someone innocent? And even if it’s not a mistake – did anyone give the poor chap a chance to explain himself? In court, an accused gets a chance to tell his side of the story. In the online court, many people jump in to pronounce judgement and abuse, often without understanding the issue.

So the next time you feel like uploading a picture or video of someone “doing wrong” or becoming part of an online mob to shame others on social media, think twice. Everyone makes mistakes. As we increasingly live our lives online, think about what kind of society you would like to live in. A society where mob justice abounds and online shaming is a way of life? Or a society where people are compassionate and gracious, and know where to draw the line?

Instead of shaming, here’s how you can be more constructive in “righting a wrong”:

- Before you post photos or videos shaming anyone for a “bad behaviour” – be very conscious that there is a possibility of misunderstanding or misrepresentation. You can get into trouble too.
- If you truly believe that someone has done wrong and deserves to be sanctioned, report him/her to the relevant authorities.
- You don’t have to join the online mob in a crusade against anyone. If you must, you can point out the wrong behaviour, but don’t attack the person. And don’t doxx (expose private information).
- Be sensible. Don’t endorse abusive and threatening comments.
- Want to seek redress to your personal grievance? Why not talk offline with the person? Trying to settle scores online will only make matters worse.

BE KIND MEDIA LITERACY CORE VALUES & SKILLS

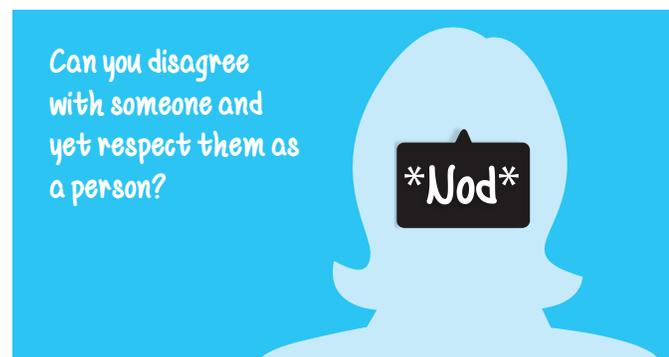
Online interaction is tricky because we often communicate through a screen and can't really see people's reactions. It is easy to misunderstand and we are quick to react. We all know it is important to have Emotional Quotient or EQ. **It is even more important to have iEQ or internet EQ because online, every action, reaction and consequence is amplified.** The best way to show you have good iEQ is to interact with people whilst being guided by values.

EMPATHY



It is not uncommon to come across mean and nasty comments online. Do you add fuel to fire, or do you think about what if you're on the receiving end?

RESPECT



"We don't need to share the same opinions as others, but we need to be respectful." – Taylor Swift

How we can show empathy online:

- Disagree with someone? Try to see things from their perspective first. Avoid the rush to judge.
- Have a problem? It may be better to talk it out with the person, rather than to start an online trial.
- Remember that your words have power. They can make someone feel encouraged or feel shamed.
- Most important of all, treat others the way you want to be treated.

How we can show respect online:

- If you have an opinion to express, how and when you say it matters.
- Expressing yourself with sensitivity and respect makes people more likely to listen to your point of view.
- If you disagree with someone, don't insult or attack people. Express your disagreement politely, using logic. Don't get emotional.

BE KIND MEDIA LITERACY CORE VALUES & SKILLS

The internet, and the world, can be a much nicer place if we all just remember to post with responsibility, empathy, respect and integrity.

RESPONSIBILITY



“One’s philosophy is not best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes... and the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility.”
– Eleanor Roosevelt

INTEGRITY



When you know that something isn’t right, will you still do it? Most of us will say “no” because we know it’s important to have integrity.

How we can show responsibility online:

- You are accountable for whatever you say and do online. If it’s not something you are comfortable saying face to face, then don’t post it online.
- Every action has a consequence. Think before you post.
- The internet has empowered you. Use it to spread positivity, goodwill and to help others.

How we can show integrity online:

- Let’s not make things up, or spread gossip and rumours.
- Have the courage to stand up for someone being bullied, don’t be a bystander.
- Do what’s right, but do it appropriately. Don’t post online what you would not say in person!

BE KIND

HOW MANY DO YOU KNOW?

TIP SHEET

Do I want a world where people are generally nice or nasty? I have a choice in making the internet a better place.

Ranting online does not help to manage my anger, frustration or resolve the issue

Expressing yourself online without thinking can lead to serious consequences. There is no need to vent your anger and frustration online. What you think is a harmless rant can hurt your own reputation or get you into trouble with the law. Your rant can be perceived to be insensitive and also hurt others. In an extreme case, it may go viral, causing further harm to yourself and others. Never vent online.

It is not right for me to join in online “witch hunts” to shame people

Shaming or identifying somebody who has done wrong (by sharing their pictures, name, other information publicly) is a form of online abuse. Don't take the law into your own hands or jump on the bandwagon to hunt the 'offender' down. Publicly shaming someone else could turn you into a bully! Report the wrong-doer to the relevant authority instead.

I know how to handle “problems” online

If people post a picture you don't like, ask nicely for it to be taken down. Tell them it embarrasses you. Most people will remove it if you ask nicely. If they don't, you can report it to the site administrator. If you have disagreements, it is best to settle it face to face.

I respect others and their differing views

Everyone has their own views, opinions and beliefs. We should all respect these differences. Respond by making your case politely and objectively if you disagree with what others say. There is no need to shout, label or use vulgarities. Focus on the discussion, not the person. It is ok to agree to disagree in the end – diversity is what makes the world beautiful!

I seek my friends' permission before tagging them or uploading their photos online

Always respect your friend's privacy. Check with them and ask for their permission before tagging them or uploading photos of them on social media sites. Encourage your friends to do the same for you too.

I am responsible and I know I should not spread rumours

What harm can gossip and rumours do?

At best, the victim is embarrassed. But more often, it can result in unfortunate consequences as innocent people may end up losing their privacy, getting hate mail and harassed. If it's a rumour that concerns public safety, it can lead to mass panic. Then we just end up wasting public resources and time (which can be put to better use to benefit society) to investigate an untrue event. If you can't verify the information, then it is best not to share it, especially online, because the speed of the internet often makes things worse.

BE KIND

TIP SHEET

How to Disagree without being Disagreeable

1 Start by acknowledging the points made by the other party. Tell them what we have learnt from them.

2 Focus on the argument, not the person. There is no need to insult or make personal attacks on anyone.

3 Put across our points and views in a civil and rational way. Being emotional, rude or argumentative will turn people off and make them less likely to be persuaded.

4 It's ok to agree to disagree. Many issues are not black nor white.



Food for thought!

If we believe in free speech, we must also be responsible in the way we use that freedom. More precisely, we must be responsible enough not to misuse or abuse that freedom. Disagreeing in a civil manner is a good sign of societal progress towards responsible free speech.

THE LAW HOW IT AFFECTS YOU

Understanding Rules and Regulations

Laws are meant to protect people and they apply to both the physical and digital worlds.

If you are a victim of someone's words or deeds, the law can help you find "justice". But if you do wrong, you need to know that there are consequences.

Learn about how these laws apply to you.

Defamation Act

- If you insult someone or spread lies to tarnish a person's reputation, you may be sued for defamation.
- Libel (printed words or images) and slander (spoken words) are forms of defamation.
- The law focuses on the effect of your actions, not your intentions, e.g. you did not intend for someone you defamed to commit suicide, but you are still accountable under the law.
- Repeating untruths started or spread by someone else is still defamation.

Tip: If you are not sure about some gossip regarding someone, it's best not to spread it.

Breach of Confidence

- If you upload photographs of someone without permission, especially when the person wants the photographs to be kept private, you are committing a breach of confidence.

Tip: Respect your friends' privacy and ask before posting photos or other information about them online.

Racial and Religious Harmony – Penal Code (Chapter 224) and Sedition Act

- You can be punished under the Penal Code or Sedition Act if you promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different races or religions in Singapore.
- You could be fined, imprisoned, or both.

Tip: You may see racist or sexist jokes as funny but others may find them hurtful. Being gracious and considerate is especially important in our multicultural society.

Public Order Act

- You need to get police approval to organise gatherings or meetings of 2 or more persons, if the purpose is to:
 - > Demonstrate support or opposition to any person or group
 - > Promote a certain cause or campaign
 - > Commemorate any event
- This also applies when you organise the gathering through online media.

Incitement to Violence – Penal Code (Chapter 224)

- In 2010, a Singaporean was fined for posting a video of the assassination of a former Egyptian president with a comment that the act should be re-orchestrated at the National Day Parade. (You need to know that nobody can tell you are just joking!)
- It is an offence to encourage violent acts through social media, email or SMS.
- Guilty persons could be imprisoned for up to 5 years, fined, or both.

Tip: Don't post messages that threaten harm or violence to anyone.

Distribution of Obscene Materials – Penal Code (Chapter 224)

- Uploading sexually explicit photos of yourself or others is an offence. Avoid downloading or sharing pornographic videos or pictures, or links to such content.
- It is illegal to download, distribute, or possess any obscene materials including videos, pictures, books and drawings.

Tip: Sexting, especially if it involves explicit photos, is not okay. It's not just the legal consequences. Imagine the damage to your reputation and emotions if your explicit photos get shared.

Computer Misuse Act

- It is unlawful to access someone else's computer without permission.
- It is a crime to hack into someone's computer regardless of whether the person suffers actual harm from your actions.
- Offenders could be fined and/or imprisoned for more than 2 years.
- The penalties are more serious if you change any content in the computer.

Tip: To avoid becoming a victim of hackers, use strong passwords.

Copyright Act

- All original works that are expressed in a tangible form, e.g. songs, videos, photographs, books, computer programmes are protected by copyright.
- If you use a copyrighted work without permission, even if you used only a part of it, it is still considered an infringement.

Tip: The "Public Domain" database offers royalty-free images for use. Try searching online for:

- [Public Domain Photos / Pictures](#)
- [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Protection from Harassment Act 2014

- Introduced in 2014, this act makes it a criminal offence to harass others in both the online and real worlds. As long as an act is threatening, abusive, insulting and causes distress to victims, it is considered harassment.
- Offenders can be fined up to S\$5,000 and/or be jailed for up to 12 months.

Tip: Think twice before you post. Don't be mean as you can get into trouble, especially if your post attracts more comments that can cause even greater distress to the recipient.



MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT ONLINE

E S P N

Emotional
Social
Psychological
Net-bourliness



Who is this for?

This section is for student leaders, cyber wellness ambassadors and young persons who want to make a positive impact online. It will help you to be aware of your unconscious responses online and teach you how to make sense of what is going on when interacting with others in cyber space. It will equip you with coping strategies, so you can respond positively online and learn to make a difference and be a positive influence on others. Teachers and counsellors can use this section to guide young people to develop healthy and positive responses, manage emotions and the stress of online interactions.

In this learning journey, you will:

- Be introduced to the concept of E-S-P-N, which stands for the Emotional, Social, Psychological impact of social interactions, and how to be “Net-bourly”.
- Be asked to role-play various scenarios to help you be more aware of your emotions and to recognise that different people express emotions in different ways.
- Be challenged to draw on your willpower to help you achieve and make a conscious choice to be a force for good.

The E-S-P-N concept and learning framework is developed by Nicholas Gabriel Lim, a psychologist with CARE Singapore and Youth Outreach Chair, Media Literacy Council. The learning materials are guided by concepts in psychology – mainly, William Glasser’s Choice Theory and Gary Rolfe’s Reflective Model.

THE ESPN FRAMEWORK

Introduction to E-S-P-N

Choice Theory

William Glasser's Choice Theory states that everyone has a choice, so we do not need to depend on others to achieve our goals or happiness. We just need to understand what we want and work towards it. If we do not achieve what we want, then maybe our actions or behaviours are not appropriate for getting us there. Therefore, we would need to modify our behaviours.

Choice Theory suggests that we examine our thoughts, feelings and actions to understand what our body is telling us. This is when we examine the emotional, social and psychological impact of various situations, and the reasons to take action in the spirit of "net-bourliness".

The focus of Choice Theory is on the Internal Locus of Control. It says that to make any change to our behaviour, we must first want to make that change. So, unless we understand how our actions impact us, it is hard for us to be convinced that we should make any changes or modifications. We need to be able to process information encountered in different situations or challenges we face because of our actions, in a structured and organised manner.

Reflective Model

Gary Rolfe's Reflective Model or otherwise known as the "What", "So What" and "Now What" model can help us assess situations and process information before we take action. Essentially, when something is about to happen or has happened, we want to ask "what" it is or was about. Often, we examine the situation or circumstance as though looking into a fish bowl. Instead, we should look at what is happening inside the bowl and describe it in as detailed a manner as possible.

Next, we should ask "so what" about that situation to determine what we have. The "so what" question helps us to extract the lessons to help us make better and more positive decisions. At this juncture, we must ascertain how we "feel", what we want to "do" and what we "think" about the situation. This will then help us to move forward – "now what".

At the "now what" stage, we choose actions or behaviours that will help us achieve the outcomes we want. When we are able to achieve the outcomes we want, we will be happier and more positively disposed for greater success, including performing well in school.

Here's How You Can Be The Change

Once you consciously adopt Rolfe's Reflective Model, you will be able to reflect on any situation. When you apply Choice Theory in your life, you are ready to start looking out for yourself, your friends and loved ones, and make a difference. You can help yourself and others to look at situations in a more reflective way before deciding on the best actions to take.

According to William Glasser, all of us seek to belong and find love. When we start to consider others' interests, we begin to fulfil that need. A good way to bring people together is to care, protect and empower each other. That's how you can be the change and make a difference!

Introduction to E-S-P-N

In this section, you will learn to identify the emotional, social and psychological impact the internet has on users. When you recognise the impact of these factors, you can adopt a more “net-bourly” attitude and treat others in the way that you want to be treated.

Emotional

Writing negative things about someone on a social networking site can make the person upset. Be sensitive to the feelings of others during online interactions and be a positive influence.

Social

Posting videos or comments to embarrass or poke fun at a friend may influence others to join in. Respect your friends’ privacy in the same way you want to be respected.

Psychological

Vulnerable persons may use self-harming behaviours to cope with life’s difficulties. Use positive self-talk and learn non-destructive ways to resolve problems.

“Net-bourliness”

Understanding the emotional, social and psychological impact of different situations will enable you to consciously look out for others. Translate this attitude into positive thinking and behaviours when engaging in online activities. This will result in a safer and more conducive environment for work and play.

When someone is troubled, it affects those who care about them. In serious cases, mental health practitioners like counsellors, therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists may even need to step in. This programme will show you how you can help.

The internet can be a safe place for everyone. You have the power to promote healthy interactions online and help those who are experiencing negative online behaviours e.g. cyber bullying.

Understand the power of your voice and use it to speak up for what you believe in. For example, if you believe that everyone should have positive experiences in cyber space, you can be the voice for positive online behaviour.

Cyber Bullying

Look at the story below and give your response to the questions.

1. A teacher introduces a new girl to the class.
2. The new girl raises her hand to answer a question in class. Some classmates are smirking.
3. Some classmates start to post comments online that the new girl is trying to be the “teacher’s pet”.
4. Teacher is pleased with the new girl’s active participation and initiative in class. She comments on the girl’s good progress.
5. Classmates post online about how the new girl manipulated the teacher and managed to become the “teacher’s pet”.
6. New girl is ostracised in school. Everyone in school stares at her and online, they accuse her of being a manipulator.

- How do you think the girl felt? Why do you think she felt that way? (E)
- In what ways do you think the girl’s behaviour will change over time? (S)
- What do you think went through the girl’s mind every time? (P)
- How were the people close to the girl affected? How and why? (N)

MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT ONLINE

ESPN FRAMEWORK

Emotional Impact

Young people who encounter negative experiences online may feel so sad or depressed that it hurts their self-esteem, or worse, makes them think about taking their own lives. If you are a victim of cyber bullying, having the courage to share your problems with someone can improve the situation. If you are a bystander witnessing a cyber bullying incident, you can make a positive impact by extending friendship and support to the victim.

Harmless activities like playing online games or chatting online can lead to heated exchanges. There are people who think they can do anything in cyber space because they are too internet-savvy to get caught. Not true!

Social Impact

People who encounter a negative experience in cyber space may be too embarrassed to talk about it. Others may fear being scolded or judged. But we unconsciously communicate our feelings in non-verbal ways sometimes. Even though we don't talk about our feelings, the people close to us may notice that something is not right. Our social interactions often have immediate impact whether we realise it or not.

Psychological Impact

We are influenced by the opinions and behaviour of the people around us. Over time, we may begin to take those opinions seriously and even emulate those behaviours.

Negative comments from others can affect our thoughts and the way we view ourselves. However, this can be avoided if you take steps to prevent it. This may mean not engaging in friends' negative online posts.

We need to be proactive in promoting good online attitudes and practices. Share positive strategies with your friends and school mates about how to behave appropriately and intelligently in cyber space.

Net-bourliness

We do not live in isolation; everyone needs to go through life with others. Therefore, we must be careful about what we do and say both in the real world and in cyber space. Irresponsible behaviour online can directly or indirectly hurt people close to us.

Being "net-bourly" means caring about the people in your life e.g. parents, siblings, friends, classmates, teachers online. Whether it is posting a comment, photo, video or blog entry, you must consider the feelings of the people around you. Once something is posted online, the impact could be irreversible.

Be Proactive

Most of us lead busy lives. There is no excuse not to pay attention to the emotional, social and psychological impact of our online activities. When online, be aware of the kind of actions we participate in and how our behaviour could potentially affect the people around us.

We may not be naturally attuned to look out for others when it comes to online behaviour. However, we can learn to be more sensitive to others' feelings.

We can also take a more proactive stance in our online engagement. Start by helping our school friends and family members learn about the emotional, social and psychological impact of online interactions. We would not want our family members or friends to fall victim to cyber bullying or sexual predation, become addicted to gaming or pornography, or even get into trouble with the law for hacking activities and committing fraud. Remember that we can be the voice for positive change.

Understanding Emotions

Now that we are aware of the psycho-social complexities of interacting online and the potential impact on us, let's go a step further to understand the root of most of the problems online. The following are a series of case studies to help you understand what drives online behaviour (good and bad) and the impact of such behaviour on others.

First, read these three stories, adapted from true accounts:

Case One:

Woman fired for making racist comments online

A manager was sacked after posting offensive comments about another race on her personal Facebook account. She had not been able to rest because of the loud noises from a party that was going on in her void deck. The woman apologised when her insulting post went viral and sparked a furious backlash on social media.

Case Two:

Victim of cyber bully kills herself

A 16-year-old girl killed herself after her ex-boyfriend allegedly insulted her on Facebook. She ended her relationship with her boyfriend, who had tried to reconcile with her. When she refused to see him, he posted mean comments about her. Upset, she confided in her aunt about the accusations and how they affected her. Subsequently, the young girl decided to end her life.

Case Three:

Teenagers disciplined after posting offensive comments

Students from a school were caught making racist remarks about their teacher on Facebook. A concerned individual saw the derogatory comments and reported the girls to school authorities. The school suspended one of the girls and gave the others a stern warning. Many people get hurt when bullies post negative comments online.

In the above cases, why do you think individuals post offensive, racist, hateful or derogatory comments about others online?

Here are some possible explanations:

1. They are upset.
2. They are angry.
3. They are offended.
4. They are revengeful.
5. They are exasperated.

If you notice, all the reasons are primarily emotional. That is the root of most of the problems online. If left unchecked, one is potentially going to get into trouble.

Now, we are going to learn about Rolfe's Reflective Model to help keep our emotions in check, and to respond to online situations more positively. We will discuss this further using the three case studies.

MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT ONLINE

ESPN FRAMEWORK

You will notice that each main character could have chosen to take a different course of action and the outcome would have been very different. For example, in case study one, the woman was unable to get rest at home due to a party going on at her void deck (WHAT). Sure, she was upset and frustrated (SO WHAT). She chose to vent her frustration by posting offensive comments about the group of people at the party.

From Glasser's Choice Theory perspective, her emotions led her to think that it would help her relieve some distress by posting the offensive comments online.

However, if we were to reflect on the "so-what", she could have evaluated further on "what" was happening. Then, she could have decided to put up with the noise because such parties do not happen very often. Or, she could have chosen to "give and take" by appreciating the fact that we all live in a multi-cultural society and tell herself to bear with the noise for one night.

If she had done some reflection using this model, she would have found a few options for how to respond to the stressful situation (NOW WHAT). If you use a reflection process like this during a stressful encounter, the coping behaviour would be less likely to lead to a negative outcome.

In this case, the woman chose to react negatively by ranting and posting offensive comments. She did not expect a backlash because she probably thought that it was okay to express her point of view and personal experience. Wrong!

Whatever comments you post online, especially emotionally negative ones, you should always anticipate the potential of a backlash. The question is to what degree. That is why we must all be especially careful about what we say online. Do not post or tweet when you are angry or upset. Choose the right course

What

Describe what happened by focusing on the facts; there is no need to blame others or decide who is right or wrong.

So What

The "so what" question helps you to extract the options, possible learning and opportunities to make positive decisions. At this juncture, you are also trying to ascertain how you "feel" about what happened, what you "think" about it, how your physical body is responding to it and what you want to "do".

Now What

Having assessed your options, learning and opportunities, you can decide what and how you want to feel and respond to the situation. At this point, you can choose actions or behaviours that will help you achieve the outcomes you want. When you are able to achieve the outcomes, you will be happier and more positively disposed for greater success, including performing well in school.

of action and avoid negative outcomes by evaluating with Rolfe's Reflective Model.

So now, you see that our emotions can lead us to behave in negative ways online. Next, let us try to understand our emotions better. Activity 1 will help us do that.

Activity 1 Emotions Charade

Look at the list of emotions below and get 1 or 2 of your friends to act out the emotions to a group. You may form two groups, with one person from each group volunteering to act out one set of emotions to his or her own group. To make it more fun, each group will get one point for every emotion guessed correctly.

What to do

- a. One person from a group picks a slip of paper with one set of emotion words and acts it out for the rest of the group members to guess. Once a group completes a set, the next group attempts the other set.
 - i. **Basic emotions** (Set 1): Happy, Excited, Scared, Shy, Angry, Sad, Tired, Proud, Lonely, Bored
 - ii. **Higher level emotions** (Set 2): Hurt, Mad, Satisfied, Confused, Embarrassed, Jealous, Hopeful, Energetic, Delighted, Exasperated
- b. Points can be given out to the group with the most number of correct guesses.

Reflect and Debrief

At the end of this activity, we will use the “WHAT – SO WHAT – NOW WHAT” reflective model to evaluate our experience. This is to stay close to what we have learnt earlier and to apply this important concept into our learning activity. Here are some questions to help you along:

- i. “What” were the groups’ responses to the emotion word?
 - a. What were some of the emotional responses? (E)
 - b. What were some of the interactions that happened during the activity? (S)
 - c. What were some of the articulated thoughts? (P)
 - d. How did it affect the entire group dynamics? (N)
- ii. “So what” can we understand from their responses?
- iii. “Now what” can we do differently moving forward from the activity?

Learning Points from Activity 1

- i. Everyone has emotions.
- ii. Emotions are expressed differently.
- iii. Expression of emotions differs from one person to another because of the different experiences we have in life and the different backgrounds we come from.
- iv. Most of the time, basic emotions are understood more easily than higher-level emotions.
- v. Emotions expressed face-to-face can be misunderstood. The likelihood of misunderstandings increases with higher-level emotions.
- vi. Expressing emotions online without visual clarity significantly increases the likelihood of misunderstandings.
- vii. We need to learn a different way of expressing our emotions online so others can understand us better. As we have experienced, one person’s understanding of a particular expressed emotion is very different from how another would express his or her emotions.
- viii. Different strategies need to be adopted to communicate our emotions online. Expressing your emotions online needs to be done with caution and with much deliberation.

So, let us come back to the earlier case studies and apply some learning points from the activities to increase our understanding and knowledge.

Negative things happen almost immediately following the online posts. Can you explain why?

1. We all express our emotions differently. Some people hide their emotions while others may not know how to express themselves. There are also those who may express their emotions with little or no consideration to the people around them – online or in real life.
2. We all have different life experiences and come from different backgrounds. Those reading the post may interpret things differently from the writer. This is true for those who post their comments online.
3. Over time, we can potentially understand someone better when we learn how someone expresses their emotions. Understanding can be cultivated. Some may express their emotions the same way we do, but others may not. Failing to understand this can lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Activity 2a Role Play

In this activity, you will role-play the scenario below. Then, we will use the “WHAT – SO WHAT – NOW WHAT” reflection model to guide our learning again. This time, we will assess the emotional, social and psychological impact. Then, you can determine how to modify your actions or behaviours in the spirit of “net-bourliness”.

Scenario for Victim

Your boyfriend/girlfriend just broke up with you and you are miserable. It hurts so much and you find it hard to talk about it.

Scenario for Victim's friends (two friends)

The three of you (including the victim) are best friends who love to joke and tease each other. You care a lot about each other. You are going to play a prank on the victim by photo-editing a picture of his/her boyfriend/girlfriend with another girl/boy. Then, you are going to post the picture on Facebook. After that, you plan to tell your friend (the victim) that you saw his/her boyfriend/girlfriend going out with someone else. Your intention is to prank your friend, but you also think that this may make him/her “give up” and stop being so miserable.

What to do:

- Invite one person to play the role of the victim who has just been ditched.
- Invite two persons to play the role of the friends.
- The person playing the role of the victim should not know the scenario of the persons playing her friends, and vice versa.
- Each person will perform their roles and respond accordingly.

Reflect and Debrief:

Using the “WHAT – SO WHAT – NOW WHAT” reflection model, assess the emotional, social and psychological impact, and determine how should the friends modify their actions or behaviours in the spirit of “net-bourliness”. Some sample questions are as follows:

- “What” was the victim’s response to her friends’ prank?
 - What were some of her emotional responses? (E)
 - What were some of the interactions that happened? (S)
 - What were some of her articulated thoughts? (P)
 - How did it affect the friendship dynamics? (N)
- “So what” can we understand from her response?
- “Now what” can we do differently moving forward from the activity?
- “What” were her friends’ trying to do?
 - What were some of their emotional response? (E)
 - What were some of the interactions that happened? (S)
 - What were some of their articulated thoughts? (P)
 - How did it affect the friendship dynamics? (N)
- “So what” if the victim truly fell for the prank?
- “Now what” can we do differently moving forward from the activity?

Learning Points from Activity 2a

- Everyone has feelings and express them differently. We must recognise and respect this fact.
- We need to know when is the right time and place for jokes and humour. We also need to know that good intentions can sometimes have bad outcomes if not executed appropriately.
- Teasing someone is okay as long as it does not hurt the person. It is cruel to make fun of someone when they are hurt by it.
- No man is an island. We all need support, appreciation and understanding, especially from family and friends.
- If we do not learn how to express our feelings appropriately, we may cause misunderstandings that result in more hurt feelings.
- It is important to learn how to talk about and express our feelings.
- To maintain good relationships, we need to recognise and respect each other’s feelings.



Activity 2b

Role Play as Winners

The purpose of this follow-up activity is to help everyone who actively participated in the previous activity. The scenarios and characters are the same – victim and two other friends.

Remember the learning points from your role play in Activity 2a.

In this activity, the learning points are applied as from the above debrief. The characters now enact out the learning points. Watch the positive role-play closely and apply the “WHAT – SO WHAT – NOW WHAT” questions on your own.

What to do

- Invite one person to play the role of the girl (victim) who has just been ditched.
- Invite two persons to play the role of the friends.
- Based on the learning points from the earlier role-play, each person will perform their roles and respond accordingly.

Reflect and Debrief

Reflect using the “WHAT – SO WHAT – NOW WHAT” questions. Write your personal learning below and explain why it is important to be positive.

Recap of Learning Points

- You have now seen and experienced the power of emotions behind many of the online behaviours that cause hurt.
- Some behaviours are the impetus to positive interactions.
- Remember, good and bad interactions can take place online. The key is to manage and express our emotions in a positive manner.

MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Activity 3 Cyber Bully Case Study

You are now ready to respond to an example using what you have been introduced to earlier. Read the following story and answer the questions on your own or with a group of friends.

My palms were sweating as I looked around the classroom; unfamiliar eyes stared back at me. It's never fun being the new kid in school. Last year, my parents transferred me out of my old school. I had to leave my old friends and start all over in a new school. Thankfully, things did not turn out as badly as I thought they would.

I cannot remember how it happened, but at the end of the first week I had a new group of friends. One of my new friends was Amy. She was funny, friendly and one of the most popular girls in school. She was also the class representative. She was the kind of girl I have always wanted to be, and I felt happy that she wanted to be my friend.

My form teacher, Mrs Neo, seemed to like me as well. She praised me for being hardworking, and made sure I was adjusting well to my new class. My grades were improving, and by mid-term, I was one of the top students in my class.

All seemed to be going well, until one day I chanced upon my friend's blog. In her entries, she wrote about a girl called "S".

"S is so fake! She just LOVES being the teacher's pet!" Amy wrote.

"Is it me she was talking about?" I asked myself. But I let it go and did not want to think too much about it.

One day, Mrs Neo announced that she was going to elect a new class representative.

"Amy, you have been a great class representative for the past semester. It's time we give someone new a chance. Selena is a diligent girl, and I think she would make a great class representative," she said.

Amy shot me a stare. She refused to talk to me that day. When I got home, I saw a Facebook status posted by Amy. "She doesn't deserve to be class rep! She's just the teacher's pet!"

I felt my face go red. She was supposed to be my friend. What did I do wrong? Confused and unsure of how to react, I pretended nothing was wrong for the next few days. But I slowly realised that people were avoiding me. One day, I received an anonymous comment on my blog. "You're so proud. No wonder you have no friends. Loser."

As I read these words, I felt hurt and lost.

As time passed, more and more nasty comments started piling up in my comment box:

"What a loser!"

"Teacher's pet..."

"Nobody likes you."

I wanted to pretend these words did not matter. But the truth is that they hurt me deeply. I could not take it anymore, so I shut down my blog.

For the next few months, nobody joined me for breaks and I slowly lost my appetite. My grades dropped and I could not focus on my studies. I felt so alone.

Alternate ending 1

I kept these feelings to myself for the next few months. But as the days passed, I felt worse. What did I do wrong? I was just trying to fit in...

I approached my school counsellor for help. But this led to rumours about me being “crazy” and “out of my mind”.

It was painful and I wanted it to stop.

This was how I started cutting myself.

Alternate ending 2

I knew I couldn't keep these feelings to myself. So, I told my older sister about it. She was very concerned and told me to have a good chat with Amy. I took her advice and decided to stand up for myself. It was hard, but I had to speak up.

To keep my mind off these things, I also decided to pick up a new sport. I joined the netball team and even made a new group of friends.

It was not easy at first, but with the help of my sister and my new friends, I've learnt to cope with cyber bullying and my emotions.

Your task now is to look at the scenario and determine how the situation affected Selena emotionally, socially, and psychologically. How were the people around her affected in the following ways:

- Emotionally (heart) (feel)
- Socially (behaviour) (act)
- Psychologically (mind) (think)
- Net-bourliness (other people) (action)



Power of the Will

You were asked earlier about why it is important to be positive. Do you know why? In addition to understanding how our negative encounters and situations can affect us emotionally, socially and psychologically, and knowing how to evaluate and respond to negativity, the drive to take any action happens when you know something good will come out of it. For a good outcome to be realised, a few things need to happen: (1) an evaluation of what happened (2) consideration of what realistic actions to take and (3) being optimistic that the outcome will improve.

We have discussed points (1) and (2) at length. In this section, we will discuss point (3). Optimism is about looking for the positive side of an encounter or situation and to expect the most favourable outcome. How do you do this?

We can achieve that by reprogramming the script in our minds and once we do that, our mind has the ability and power to bring us through negative circumstances and help us emerge victorious. The following activities will help you to understand that.

MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Activity 4 The Runway – How to Reprogramme Your Mind for Success!

This is a fun but challenging activity. Go through the activity and see how you feel emotionally, socially and psychologically.

What to do

- a. Every student has to walk the runway (use any suitable passage way) in a manner different from everyone else. The “audience” will observe, cheer and clap. The more different and interesting the walk is, the louder the audience should cheer and clap. If the walk is the same or similar to the person before, the audience should remain silent. That student will have to walk the runway again.
- b. During this activity, you can prepare music to accompany the walk down the runway.

Reflect and Debrief

Reflect using the WHAT – SO WHAT – NOW WHAT questions. Assess the emotional, social and psychological impact and how you should modify the actions or behaviours in the spirit of “net-bourliness”.

Learning Points

1. Was anyone worried that you could not complete the runway walk? Remember that you completed it! What did you tell yourself before the walk? How did you feel after completing it? When you really want to do something, you will find a way to do it. It all starts with what you tell yourself.
2. Research found that most people have about 50,000 thoughts a day, 75 per cent of which are negative. When we think like that, we are telling ourselves to fail, so we fail. That’s why more people fail than succeed!
3. If we want to succeed, we have to learn to think that we can succeed!
4. In other words, we need to re-programme our minds to think positive!

Activity 5 Mind Programming

Now that you understand a little about how our brains fundamentally works, let’s try some “mind programming”. In our last activity, through the lyrics of a special song “Make a Change”, you will be asked to take a courageous step.

What to do

- a. Read the lyrics of the song.
- b. Choose a line in the song that is meaningful to you.
- c. Take turns to share your reasons for selecting that particular line.
- d. As each person shares his or her line from the song, write the responses on the board. You can also write the following quotes on the board:

- We must **show empathy**.
- **Apply critical thinking** to all that we see.
- **Be responsible** for you and me.
- Time to **turn our lives** around.
- **Be aware** of what we do.
- A man is but the product of his thoughts. What he thinks, he becomes. – M. Gandhi
- The world we have created is a product of our thinking; it cannot be changed without changing our thinking. – Albert Einstein
- The mind is everything. What you think, you become. – Buddha
- Freedom comes with great responsibility. – Eleanor Roosevelt

Reflect and Debrief

Write down and share your responses.

Learning Points

1. Train yourself to think positive thoughts.
2. Remind yourself to adopt the thinking described in the statement you chose. Allow it to “reprogramme” the way you think about and see things.
3. Practising new behaviours is a form of “programming”. When you want to undo certain bad behaviours, you need to repeat a new behaviour as part of “reprogramming”.

Make A Change

*Music and lyrics by The Crooked Physics
(ITE College East)*

With guidance from Mr Arthur L. Pedida

The freedom of expression
Has taken us too far
We barely realise
That we've become the fallen star

All the crimes that we had done
Breaking rules all one by one
Cyber bullies are on the rise
Blinding us with all their lives

Misery loves company
We must show some empathy
Discerning all that we could see
Be responsible for you and me

It's time to turn our lives around
Be aware of what we do
Don't let the viruses take hold
Don't be the next victim

All the crimes that we had done
Breaking rules all one by one
Cyber bullies are on the rise
Blinding us with all their lives

Misery loves company
We must show some empathy
Discerning all that we could see
Be responsible for you and me

4. It may feel weird, crazy, awkward or unnatural at first but give yourself time to learn.
5. When you face difficulties or challenges, remember that it does get easier with time and practice.

If you managed to go through the above two activities, congratulations! I hope you had fun and took away some very powerful lessons.

Looking at Will Power

What is the key to managing your emotions?
Your willpower!

You can learn to “programme” or “reprogramme” your willpower and thinking, so that your emotions do not get the better of you, especially in cyber space.

Our minds are powerful engines that can help us overcome many things, but we must know how to use it. Learn how to programme your minds so you can effectively manoeuvre the online world and better still, the real world.



Left to Right: Mohammed Muzhaffar Bin Mohammed Mokh'ee (Bassist), Nashrul Nizam Bin Anual (Beat box), Farizulakif Bin Mohamed Basri (Lead Vocals), Muhammad Aidil Bin Adnan (Lead Guitar) Muhammad Adil Bin Mohamed (Drummer)

The Crooked Physics is group of up-and-coming young, talented musicians who are passionate about creating music for a cause.

■ NOTES



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