

# Personal Identifiable Information about Minors Disclosed By Parents on Social Networking Services

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## LITERATURE/BACKGROUND

Personal Identifiable Information (PII) about secondary school children (Aged 11-16) posted onto Social Networking Services (SNS) by their Parents.

This study focusses on 4 popular SNS platforms utilised by parents - Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and Twitter. This research asks parents what kind of features use on SNS, what posts they make that may include PII of them or their children and their personal network and connections on SNS.

This research builds from research conducted by Pew Research Center (2018) and Ofcom (2018) on children's social media use, expanding into parents SNS use. Previous academic research in this area does not encompass the objectives covered in this study. The amount of PII shared on SNS leaves users vulnerable as it allows individuals identities to be stolen or used by malicious actors. Parent's posts on SNS may result in their children's PII data loss.

### Research Aim:

Explore parents understanding of PII data loss possibilities on SNS that can potentially lead to privacy, security risks and harm to children by establishing their sharing habits and networks.

### Research Objectives:

- Establish what parents post on social media that may leave them or their children vulnerable regarding PII data loss.
- Establish kinds of connections parents have on their SNS profiles that they share their posts with
- Determine where parents currently get guidance on on protecting child's PII on social media
- Establish where parents believe they should get guidance on protecting child's PII on social media

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research utilises an online survey hosted on Qualtrics, it required participants to volunteer to the study using an online link. This study was advertised online on different SNS platforms, on the University of Huddersfield News page, and the local newspaper.

This was a relatively small first study with 90 participants over several months that fully completed the survey. There were more participants who part-completed the survey, those results are not included. SPSS was used to conduct initial descriptive statistics and further data analysis is currently being conducted.

## RESULTS

Participants were heavily skewed towards female respondents with Female = 65 (72.22%) Male = 24 (26.66%) Other = 1 (1.11%).with a mean age of 40 – 49 with over 50% of the participants fitting into this age bracket.

80% of participants have their work colleagues on their social media accounts. Over 50% for Facebook and Twitter users. Over 80% had old school friends on their social media. Over 70% had distant friends on their social media. Over 65% had strangers on their social media with results being heavily skewed towards Instagram and Twitter.

Over 60% of participants use social media to post family updates. Over 50% of respondents stated that their child got their first social media profile between the ages of 11-13 years old.

Over 40% of respondents stated that they "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that they understand what information is collected about their child's identity on social media.

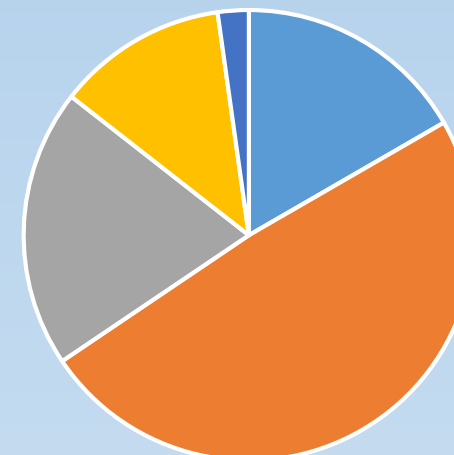
30% of participants stated that they used social media to announce their child's birth. Over 40% shared their child's first day at school/ Over 40% shared their child's moments with their pet.

## RESULTS

Over 45% of participants stated that they get information about protecting children's personal information on social media from their child. Over a third of participants stated they get information about protecting their child's information from their child's school. 50% of participants stated that they get this information from the news.

When asked to rank who they believed has the most power to protect children's personal information on social media websites from five options: (1) The Child (2) The Child's Parents (3) Charities (4) Legislation/Regulation (5) Social Media Websites. Over 30% of participants ranked (2) as the highest and over 30% ranked (5) as the highest. Charities were ranked by over 50% of the participants as being least powerful.

Participant believes child's school should provide information on protecting children's personal information on social media websites



- Strongly Agree (16.67%)
- Agree (48.88%)
- Neither Disagree or Agree (20%)
- Disagree (12.22%)
- Strongly Disagree (2.22%)

## CONCLUSIONS

As this is only the first study, these results are preliminary. Work will be done to extend this study so that more data can be collected.

Drawing on the current sample of data there are significant issues regarding parents connections on platforms they share PII about themselves or their children on.

This study also demonstrates a need to assess how and what internet safety messages are getting to parents regarding their own social media use.

The original contribution to knowledge, should this study be extended would be be "Establishing actions parent's take on SNS that lose their children's PII and the potential knowledge gaps that lead to it."

## REFERENCES

- Pew Research Center. (2018). Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018. Washington: Pew Research Center.
- Ofcom - Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2018 (2018) London, UK.

## KEY TERMS

PII – Personal Identifiable Information (Any information that can personally identify an individual such as answers to security questions, date of birth, first school, first pet, mothers maiden name)

SNS – Social Networking Services (A SNS allows users to create a profile with their personal information, often allowing them to form connections with other profiles and make posts including various media.