

'I have a right to privacy'; Parental Monitoring Of Adolescents use of Social Network Sites.

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Abstract

The objective of this paper was to examine how parents monitored adolescent's use of social networking sites and to ascertain whether different monitoring techniques resulted in different levels of conflict or understanding.

Introduction

Since the advent of the internet there have been huge advancements in technology. Smart phones such as the iPhone allow users to access the internet from any location. Adolescents spending more time away from the family, in what has been coined a 'bedroom culture' has raised concerns among sociologists about the quality of interaction between family members (Chambers, 2012). Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts found that American's aged 8–18 use a computer for about one-and-half hours per day, 59% of this time was devoted to instant messaging, emailing, social networking, and video sharing (Rideout, Foehr & Roberts, 2010). These types of interactions are defined by theorist John Thompson as 'mediated quasi-interactions' (Thompson, 1995). Chambers states that 'parents are frequently poorly informed about their children's activities and often fail to monitor them correctly' (2012, P. 88). After examining the body of research in the area of parental monitoring this study was able to define four methods of monitoring, direct, indirect, restrictive and uninvolved. This research project examined what type of parental monitoring takes place in relation to adolescent's use of Social Networking Sites in Ireland and the level of parent-adolescent conflict

'They are very private once they get to a certain age... I can get up to 14/15 I can't get anything after that...From half way through first year they start to move away from you, you hear them saying 'aw you're stupid'



'They tell me that they are entitled to their privacy then that opens a new can of worms. You say yes your entitled to your privacy but I need to trust you and I can't trust you'

Method

The research was conducted using a qualitative research design and the researcher carried out six semi-structured interviews. The findings were then coded into nivio and examined through the use of thematic analysis

Results

The paper found that many parents are unsure of how to monitor their adolescent's use of social network sites due to a lack of technology awareness. Of the six participants interviewed two participants used direct monitoring, one relied on indirect methods and one on restrictive practice. The final two reported to less involved in the monitoring of social network sites however one used restrictive practices in other areas of risk. Indirect and restrictive methods resulted in a higher level of conflict, a perception of secrecy and distrust on both parts, whereas direct monitoring resulted in lower levels of conflict and more trusting relationship between parent and adolescent. This result tallied with previous studies regarding parental monitoring in other areas of risk. Furthermore the findings show that parents are more aware of certain risks, such as cyber bullying than other possible risks. This shows a need for more discussion on the possible risks and for parents to be given more information of the benefits of direct monitoring and its methods

References

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