

## Things to Understand About The Internet, Social Media & Society

- Websites & social media platforms collect information on you (a LOT of information!) - and may (will) use it to manipulate you, demand more of your time & attention or market stuff to you.
- Websites & social media platforms employ Artificial Intelligence (AI) to more effectively build a model of you and figure out how to manipulate you. This AI is aimed right at you (like a gun) through the screen of your phone, tablet or computer.
- Things you post may be difficult to erase - there is somewhat of a permanence to what you post during your life - so think carefully about the future, and specifically YOUR future, before posting! Your views and opinions may change with time and as you mature.
- First, do no harm! Don't use the Internet or social media to attack or harm anyone or their reputation.
- Social Media and the Internet can be a huge source of distraction - and you may become addicted to it - so respect/fear it a little like you would water.... Practice self-limiting access to technology. Set boundaries and stick to them!
- The Internet and social media can be awesome when used in a measured, healthy and productive manner. It is a tool - but learn how to use it safely and with extreme caution!
- Search results can be biased - be familiar with , and use more than one search engine.
- Get your news from various sources - ones with a contrary "narrative" than that with which you are accustomed.
- Follow people and sources that you disagree with to expose yourself to different viewpoints and ideas.
- Remember - this country (and the first amendment) was founded on the premise that it is GOOD to have a marketplace of ideas and let the populace distill the good ideas from the bad ones. Be very wary of censorship.
- Both the blessing and the curse of the Internet and social media is how easy it is to share something. So consider that when you share or send something that better judgement would discourage you from posting at all.

- Just because you see it on the Internet or social media does NOT mean that it is true! Fact-Check before sharing!!! Fake news spreads 6 times as fast as real news!
- Think about how a post might affect other people.
- People tend to post things to make their lives seem better than they are. The grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence!
- People sometimes behave differently online than they would in person. Don't be one of those people.
- Social media "friends" aren't really substitutes for real-life friends in the real world.
- Recognize & identify when an item or post is calculated to trigger you emotionally - and engage the rational, logical part of your brain before reacting or sharing.
- The pre-frontal cortex area of the brain does not fully develop until the early 20s. That area is crucial in understanding consequences, planning, decision making, moderating social behavior, impulse control and other higher level reasoning skills (executive function). So when in doubt if you should do or post something online - error on the side of caution and restraint!
- When the choice comes down to on-line connections or off-line connections - choose off-line connections first and foremost!
- If a family member or close friend expresses concern that you are spending too much time online - take that to heart. They care about you and don't want anything bad to happen to you!