AN ANALYSIS DISCUSSING THE IMPACT OF TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA BY CURRENT STUDENTS THROUGH THE OPERATION OF ELECTRONIC TIME MANAGEMENT.

Rhodri Ellis Young
Cardiff Metropolitan University
BSc (Hons.) Computing
April 2017
Declaration

“I declare that this dissertation is my own work and effort and that it has not been submitted anywhere for any award. Where additional sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged”.

........................................................................

ST20061469: Rhodri Ellis Young
Abstract

The creation of this dissertation has an aim to analyse and discuss the impacts of time spent on social media by current students through the operation of electronic time management. Its objective is to reveal a variety of factors that have occurred in relation to social media and its growth, along with the different impacts it has had on students and their surroundings. Previous research has primarily focused on the specific fields such as the impacts and the growth of social media. However, this research project uses electronic time management to fully investigate the time period that six individuals spend on social media during a seven-day observation, and the numerous impacts that follow in relation to this. Primary research collection such as this will determine recent and relevant results, displaying an element of uniqueness that can be discussed and evaluated thoroughly in further detail. In order to encounter a successful conclusion, all data collection will need to be assessed and evaluated, specifying particular facts and figures that can reveal the exact amount of time the recorded students have spent on social networking sites, and the effects that have subsequently occurred.
Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my initial advisor, Simon Thorne, prior to his illness, and to my current advisor, Stuart McNeil, for their continuous help and support throughout the construction of my dissertation. I would like to thank my parents for the endless encouragement and motivation during my studies. Finally, I would like to thank all participants within the primary research sector for enabling personal data collection for my research.
Table of Contents

Declaration .................................................................................................................. i
Abstract.................................................................................................................... ii
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................. iii
Table of Figures ....................................................................................................... v
1. Introduction .......................................................................................................... 1
   1.1 Background ...................................................................................................... 3
2.0 Aims & Objectives ............................................................................................. 3
   2.1 Aim .................................................................................................................. 3
   2.2 Objectives ...................................................................................................... 3
3.0 Literature Review ............................................................................................... 5
   3.1 Analyse the amount of time spent on social media by students from previous years to the present time ........................................................................................................... 5
   3.2 Analyse and discuss how the data collection results compare with the questionnaire answers .................................................................................................................. 7
   3.3 Evaluating the real world impacts brought to the younger generation (students) via social media ............................................................................................................. 8
   3.4 Discuss the negative health impacts on students who spend copious amounts of time on social media ................................................................................................. 9
   3.5 Analyse both the positive and negative impact social media has had on society as a whole .................................................................................................................... 10
   3.6 Suggest more productive ways of controlling and implementing time management .................................................................................................................. 11
4.0 Research Methodology ....................................................................................... 13
   4.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 13
   4.2 Research Philosophy & Sampling .................................................................. 13
   4.3 Research Strategies ......................................................................................... 14
      4.3.1 Quantitative Research ............................................................................. 14
      4.3.2 Qualitative Research ............................................................................. 14
   4.4 Data Collection ............................................................................................... 15
      4.4.1 Questionnaires ....................................................................................... 15
      4.4.2 Informal Interviews ............................................................................... 15
   4.5 Research Approach & Techniques .................................................................. 16
   4.6 Reliability & Validity ..................................................................................... 16
   4.7 Ethics .............................................................................................................. 17
   4.8 Limitations ...................................................................................................... 18
   4.9 Summary ......................................................................................................... 18
5.0 Results, Analysis & Discussion ........................................................................ 20
   5.1 Partaker 1 ....................................................................................................... 21
   5.2 Partaker 2 ....................................................................................................... 22
   5.3 Partaker 3 ....................................................................................................... 23
   5.4 Partaker 4 ....................................................................................................... 24
   5.5 Partaker 5 ....................................................................................................... 25
   5.6 Partaker 6 ....................................................................................................... 26
   5.7 Estimation vs. Reality .................................................................................... 27
   5.8 Primary Research (Questionnaires) ................................................................. 29
6.0 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 30
Appendix ................................................................................................................... 41
References .................................................................................................................. 67
Table of Figures

Figure 1: Use of Social Networking, by age ................................................................. 5
Figure 2: Average Daily Time Spent on Social by General Public ............................... 6
Figure 3: Research Philosophy - Research Methodology .............................................. 13
Figure 4: Research Choices ......................................................................................... 16
Figure 5: Time Spent on Social in a Lifetime ............................................................. 28
Figure 6: Media Consumption Linked to Poor Grades .................................................. 32
Figure 7: What Drives Students’ Social Media Usage? .............................................. 33
Figure 8: What Are the Effects of Social Media on Youth ......................................... 35
Figure 9: Top 15 Most Popular Social Networking Sites ............................................ 36
Figure 10: Number Of Social Media Users Worldwide 2010-2020 ............................ 37
1.0 Introduction

Throughout this project, an analysis will be carried out discussing the amount of time current students spend on social media through the operation of electronic time management. Primary research will be essential within this task, which involves gathering continuous data collection, recorded and examined via a free Internet browsing software application called 'RescueTime'. From the data collection software results, a discussion will be carried out involving numerous real world impacts that social media has had on current students, both positive and negative. Continuous research will be collected throughout the creation of this project, which will increase validity and will gather up-to-date information that produces accurate results. The main focal point will target the various features within the chosen subject, which will be demonstrated and evaluated in the subsequent sub-headings. The principal aim of this analysis is to identify both the major and minor impacts that have influenced and encouraged students to spend time on social media.

Having researched numerous secondary sources, the data collection will enable the researcher to gather key factual information. In addition to this, the research will indicate how specific current students are encouraged to use their time on social networking sites. To guarantee the research will be accurately achieved, it is vital to find both strengths and weaknesses throughout this project, as the growth of social media has expanded enormously throughout recent years. The main type of research that will be primarily conducted is primary research, as data will be collected and examined from each individual student for a week-long period, covering 24 hours of each day. Questionnaires will also be created for the selected participants as part of the primary research, along with informal interviews to seek any additional information that may be supportive.

‘Primary research refers to research that has involved the collection of original data specific to that particular research project’ (Jones and Gratton, 2015: P8). However, secondary research will also be largely significant, as this research will be used to compare with the primary to help inspect information and make further decisions. It will also assist the researcher with findings within the review of literature, helping to seek contradicting statements that may be applicable. Additionally, secondary research is a fast processing method of discovering high quality information, which allows more time to be spent finding numerous facts and figures. ‘Secondary research refers to research where no such original data are collected, but the research project uses existing (or secondary) sources of data’ (Jones and Gratton, 2015: P8).

‘Social media such as Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Flickr, and others have been growing at a tremendous rate and the adoption rate of such media has been skyrocketing which, in turn, has delivered astronomical numbers of users in less than 10 years’ (Al-Deen, Hendricks, and Al-Deen, 2011). The reference above provides evidence to prove that the use of social media has been growing significantly during recent years, and this is due to social websites such as those stated above. From this quotation, further discussions will be delivered to show how this is applicable to current students and how this has affected the lives of the younger generation.
From the chosen topic, and the subsequent sub-headings, the main aim will be achieved by ensuring that all aspects of both research methods have been explored efficiently, providing valid material that can be discussed and evaluated.
1.1 Background

2.1 What is ‘RescueTime’?

‘RescueTime’ is a data collection application tool that tracks the amount of time spent on specific software applications and websites by an online user. The application specifically records the roaming of the social sites that are actively being used, which generates higher quality results and outcomes. The application is compatible with Windows, Mac OS and Android.

2.2 What is Social Media?

‘Social media is a collective term that describes the means of communicating and engaging with people. It’s something many people see as evolutionary, if not revolutionary, in helping people connect with each other in ways that are genuine, authentic and natural’ (Holloman and Adeyeri, 2012).

Please note; the examined partakers all agreed to use only one specific device (either a laptop or mobile phone) during the recorded week, regarding the browsing of social media, to ensure the provided outcomes are as accurate as possible.
2.0 Aims & Objectives

2.1 Aim

To analyse and discuss the impact of time spent on social media by current students through the operation of electronic time management.

2.2 Objectives

- Analyse the amount of time spent on social media by students from previous years to the present time.

- Analyse and discuss how the data collection results compare with the questionnaire answers.

- Evaluating the real world impacts brought to the younger generation (students) via social media.

- Discuss the negative health impacts on students who spend copious amounts of time on social media.

- Analyse both the positive and negative impact social media has had on society as a whole.

- Suggest more productive ways of controlling and implementing time management.
3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Analyse the amount of time spent on social media by students from previous years to the present time

Social media’s popularity increase has critically affected the time spent on social media by students from all over the world. Research illustrates that students aged ‘18 to 29 have always been the most likely users of social media by a considerable margin. Today, 90% of young adults use social media, compared with 12% in 2005, a 78-percentage point increase’ (Perrin, 2015: P4). According to the figures stated above, the time spent on social media has amplified extraordinarily, proving that social media within students has been trending at an increasing rate from 2005 to the present time. This margin growth has escalated, creating numerous effects, both positive and negative, that have stimulated the amount of hours students devote to social media. A simple representation of social networking’s usage is shown below.

![Figure 1: Use of Social Networking, by age (Perrin, 2015: P4)](image)

Secondary research also shows that ‘the average global daily time spent on social media sites has risen from 1.66 hours per day in 2013 to 1.72 hours per day in 2014’ (Curran, Fenton and Freedman, 2012). Although this reference is not related to students in particular, it indicates the global increase, demonstrating the time rise from one year to the following year, in which the cycle continues. However, the primary research collected is student based, which involves only a segment of the average global daily time, and only one selected group of people i.e. students.
Figure 2: Average Daily Time Spent on Social by General Public (Asano, 2017).

Figure 2 displays the average daily time spent on social media in the year 2017. Overall, this figure totals to 116 minutes, which averages 1.93 hours a day. This amount is once again an increase from the research collected in 2014, which clearly shows that the use of social media is increasing annually.

From the gathered primary research, results show that the 6 selected students spent a total of 86 hours on social media within the recorded week, which averages to a total of 14 hours and 20 minutes each weekly, and just over 2 hours each during an average day. These results prove that the chosen participants used social media for just over 8% of their average day (calculated over a 24 hour period). However, the given figures were averagely based, meaning not all contributors spent the same amount of hours as one another on social networking sites.

From the gathered primary and secondary research collection, we can see that the popularity of social media is growing continuously, with an even higher popularity growth amongst all ages as the years proceed, but particularly amongst the 18-29 age range. The current amount of hours spent on social media by the general public is rising daily, due to the appeal of the various Internet sites, which lure the younger generation in particular. These statistics are predicted to continue to rise in future years, meaning that the social networking industry will further develop and attract additional individuals in the future.
3.2 Analyse and discuss how the data collection results compare with the questionnaire answers

From the distributed questionnaires, participants were required to state the estimated number of hours that they thought they were spending on social media on average, on a weekly basis. The total outcome was 54 hours on average, which was split between 6 individuals. However, the actual data collection provided a much greater result than anticipated, having examined the participants for seven days. In total, the data recordings showed that the six students had actually spent 86 hours using social media, meaning that an additional 32 hours more than the original estimated time had been spent either on a laptop or a mobile phone.

Participants were also asked if they felt as though social networking affects their social life, and if so, why and how. From the questionnaire results, 5/6 (83.33%) of the participants felt as if social networking has affected their social life; however, these were all stated as a positive approach. All 5 participants stated that social networking was useful for communicating and contacting friends; alongside this, a specific participant also stated that social networking is a de-stressing activity. One other participant specified that social networking is advantageous when making social arrangements. The final partaker, 1/6 (16.66%) believed that social networking has not affected their social life whatsoever.

Another crucial question that was asked within the questionnaire was, 'What is the main purpose of you using a social networking site?' From the results, we found that 4/6 (66.67%) again said that the main purpose of using social networking was to keep in touch with friends. However, 1/6 (16.66%) stated that they use social networking for sports news only. The final participant 1/6 (16.66%) stated that their main reason for using social networking sites was for entertainment purposes only, such as daily videos on YouTube. Participants also specified that they used other online features, such as news feeds and social trends, when using social media. Although it wasn’t possible to view the total amount of time participants spent on social media when communicating with others, the short face-to-face informal interviews provided evidence that 4/6 partakers use Facebook to communicate with friends, family and university colleagues, spending very little time browsing socially.

Finally, the partakers were asked if they felt as though social networking sites are important in this day and age. The results indicated that 5/6 (83.33%) of the contributors answered ‘yes’ to this question, meaning that they do find social networking important. However, 1/6 (16.66%) said that they didn’t find social networking significant in this day and age. Coincidentally, this was the same applicant that uses social networking for sports news only. From the data collection, social networking is shown to be a significant feature in the daily lives of the partakers, which is clearly shown from the number of hours that is spent online. One partaker believes that ‘social media networking has become a fully integrated part of society in the 21st century. Not only are we more informed due to social media but we are also more entertained by its contents’.

From the above results, an analysis is revealed stating how a specific set of participants utilize social networking, and the main reasons for its use. Although there are similar
reasons why the selected individuals use social networking, the results also outline other characteristics that are involved when browsing the web. The data collection results and the questionnaire answers correlate well, meaning the validity of the results is very high. Due to the continual growth of social networking, the figures above are predicted to escalate, and results will continuously vary depending on whether the partakers were changed or increased.

3.3 Evaluating the real world impacts brought to the younger generation (students) via social media.

Real world impacts involving social media has a major influence on the younger generation of today, and their daily lives. Factors such as communication, content sharing and information accessing have changed immensely over recent years through the development of social media, allowing users to connect and transfer information instantaneously. These elements were extremely time consuming prior to the advancement of social media, meaning the older generation were not as advantageous as the youth nowadays when accessing these features. Online relationships are also an aspect within the world of current social media. Friendships and relationships can be created online based upon text, video, audio or even virtual characters. Internet relationships are a regular and common occurrence. Furthermore, there is the possibility that these individuals may not ever have met each other in person. ‘Today, though, the combination of people meeting first through social media sites, then in real life, allows everyone to make more friends and acquaintances much faster, allows deals to be brokered more quickly, and makes life in general a lot easier’ (Wolff, 2014).

Conversely, there are aspects of real world impacts that may not be favourable to the younger generation with regard to the rapid growth of social media. These factors include the lack of privacy, the social detriments and misinformation, which are all constant threats that can influence lives worldwide. Online relationships, as mentioned above, are continually rising, enabling individuals from all over the world to develop friendships and relationships, possibly without ever knowing or meeting one another. This could potentially pose a serious personal risk. An online friendship could enable a stranger to discover specific, personal information about others by browsing through their social media page and observing their online posts. Additionally, this can lead to a lack of privacy and misinformation, where online users can contact other individuals at any time of the day or night, and have the ability to frequently spam each other with messages or online posts. False information, and inaccurate, misleading descriptions regarding age, sex, gender and addresses can pose a serious threat to individuals.

Cyber bullying currently has a major impact involving online social media users, through ‘saying or doing intentionally mean or hurtful things via the internet or mobile phone, meant to make others feel bad. In addition, the victim cannot easily defend him- or herself’ (Walrave et al, 2016: P199). This can be considered as a frequent worldwide occurrence, and figures show that ‘11.7% (N=161) of the respondents indicated that they bullied someone at least once in the previous 6 months via the Internet or mobile phone’ (Walrave et al, 2016: P200) and ‘for victimisation, 10.2% (N=140) was involved in cyberbullying’ (Walrave et al, 2016: P200). Cyber bullying has a consistently adverse affect on the younger generation, impacting on their self-worth, their mental health and their stability.
Both of the above real world contradicting statements have their own value, which have, or may, heavily affect the younger generation's lives. Although the negative outcomes have, and currently are, affecting the younger generation severely, there are continual guidelines and restrictions imposed, meaning that these impacts can be minimised by online users in the forthcoming years. Therefore, I agree with the positive real world impacts as they have influenced today’s childhood, and the advancement of interaction has become increasingly significant through social media. Social media offers numerous elements that currently benefit the youth, as outlined above, and with this continuous evolution, social media will only expand due to its continual increase in popularity.

3.4 Discuss the negative health impacts on students’ lives that spend copious amounts of time on social media

Research illustrates that ‘Social media addiction has been linked to feelings of loneliness, generalized and social anxiety, depression, and insomnia’ (Landers and Schmidt, 2016: P91). These negative factors are linked to those individuals who spend copious hours of their time on social media on a daily basis, which can affect their health and the way they live. However, even without an addiction, some ‘Students generally think that the social media makes them lazy, which may cause physical development in a negative manner’ (Issa, Isaias and Kommers, 2016: P210). Impacts such as these can affect all ages rather than students specifically, yet reducing health risks whilst at a younger age would be beneficial for their future health, physically, mentally and socially.

(Hales, 2016: P88) displayed research stating social media’s effect and how ‘students also reported that social networking had a negative impact on their social interactions, emotional health, and work completion’. These negative factors illustrate exactly how simple a specific element is able to completely influence lives, especially those who spend numerous hours on social networking every day, and those who sit at a computer screen for a living. Due to social media’s heavy growth, there are many benefits that assist students with their daily procedures, however; in regards to human health, the impacts are all steered towards the negative sector. Students rely on social media for general information observation and to communicate with others rapidly nowadays. However, although they may not be aware of this, social media can become very addictive, with students constantly checking their devices countless times a day, either when browsing or contacting others online, which effectively increases the amount of time spent on these networking sites, and also increases the risk to their health.

Although there are several aspects of negative health impacts regarding the excessive amount of time students spend on social media, I feel that the positives outweigh the negatives, as these networking sites provide the younger generation with technical knowledge, which in my opinion is essential in this day and age as the world’s technical advancement develops. However, with more students dedicating several hours of each day to social networking websites, and with the number of hours increasing annually, the greater chance they have of developing negative health impacts, which may collectively and adversely affect them in the future.
3.5 Analyse both the positive and negative impact social media has had on society as a whole

There are numerous impacts related to social media that have heavily affected our society during the rapid growth of its recognition. Social networking benefits businesses in a variety of ways, from engaging with their targeted customers cost-free, to advertising their services and goods at a lower marketing cost. ‘It should be noted that social media affects the entire spectrum of business functions beyond just marketing. Social media is an integral part of IT strategy as well as marketing strategy’ (Lee, 2014: P284). Social media attracts countless clients for businesses nowadays, and Evans believes that ‘If social media is the vehicle for success, social business is the interstate system on which it rides into your organization’ (Evans, 2010). Social media's growth has also been very advantageous towards the educational sector with teachers and lecturers able to access numerous online sources linked to social networking sites.

While numerous studies believe that social media’s evolution has had a negative impact on pupils and their education as a whole, Sobaih believes that ‘social media activities in higher education are valuable for improving academic performance through collaborative learning where learners and faculty use social media that are appealing to them’ (Sobaih et al, 2016: P297). Online communication gives pupils the opportunity to contact other students regarding any enquiry instantly. This could assist their knowledge of specific elements of their coursework. With reference to the social media page, Twitter, ‘the use of Twitter for academic and curricular discussions was found to have a positive effect on grades for college students. Students who used Twitter showed higher levels of engagement and obtained a higher semester grade point (GPA) than students who did not’ (Brunty, Helenek and Miller, 2013: P91).

However, although social media has been proven to be an extremely valuable tool for businesses within our society, there are also associated downsides. These weaknesses are not specifically business-related. Social networking sites can have a negative effect on children and teenagers through the aspects of photo sharing and videos that contain inappropriate violence and sex, which can lead to future behaviour issues. ‘Internet pornography is affecting the lives of children, as well as adults’ (What Parents Need To Know About Internet Pornography, 2015: P5). Online security issues are also an enormous hazard in the world of social media. Too much personal information can be shared online, which may pose a threat to these online users. ‘With the Internet, people can now leak information to third-party sites that make the information available to everyone’ (Michael Cross, 2014: P141). Factors such as these can lead to great distress for online users, which can happen at any hour of the day or night, on any device that has the ability to connect to the Internet. ‘Online taunting and harassment do not just stop when one decides to go to sleep. Cyberterrorists do not stop planning just because it is after work hours. Identity thieves can steal information at any hour of the night – the availability of social sites is always constant’ (Brunty, Helenek and Miller, 2013: P91). Studies have also shown the damage to business productivity that has been caused by social networking. ‘Nucleus Research reported that Facebook shaves 1.5% off office productivity while Morse claimed that British companies lost 2.2 billion a year to the social phenomenon’ (Matthews, 2014: P30). According to the statistics, both productivity and business income have been affected by this social occurrence. Due to the lack of efficiency produced within the workplace and the loss of money from companies to
social phenomenon, this could further result in business closure, which could lead to numerous employees suffering job losses.

To conclude, both statements above have value in their own sense, expressing both the positive and negative impacts social media has had on our society. Due to both types of impacts being very important to humanity in this day and age, both statements need equal promotion, as the benefits equal the drawbacks. Nevertheless, the negative studies will always have room for improvement, to ensure that there is a reduction in the risk towards children being affected by inappropriate media. Online security should also be prioritised when improving online safety measures for specific users. However, due to the continual social networking increase within businesses, specific duties within the workplace will always produce productivity absence, which cannot be avoided within businesses that present marketing or permanent communication.

3.6 Suggest more productive ways of controlling and implementing time management

‘Time management is key to success. Those who manage time efficiently will get rewards; those who fail to do so, will face disappointments’ (Panse, 2014).

Having questioned the selected participants within my research, the partakers stated more productive and efficient ways in which they could make use of social media. From the questionnaire results, 4/6 (66.67%) of the contributors provided feedback informing that they could spend the browsing time of their social media usage in a more productive manner, with the completion of their university coursework being primarily stated. This statistic shows that the majority of the partakers find social media is distracting them from completing their coursework within the specific time scale, as they are not managing their time efficiently. ‘Now you’ve got a better idea of where you’re spending your time each day. You can probably already see in a few obvious areas that you’re not using your time very effectively’ (Evans, 2011). The collected primary research also indicates the amount of hours spent on specific social media websites within a typical given week. The feedback displayed a collected total of 86 hours that was spent on social media shared between six individual students within the data collection. This figure suggests that the substantial time quantity could be allocated towards additional rudiments, to help achieve better time management skills, and to effectively manage productivity on a daily basis.

‘Individuals are far too unique for me to believe that a single time management system works for everyone’ (Crane, 2015). This reference clarifies a different technique of time management, illustrating how each individual can handle their personal time management ability in distinctive ways. Although setting specific goals to complete certain tasks may sound constructive, this suggests that numerous people can work in a variety of different ways according to their most suitable approach, and what works best for them.

The control and execution of time management as a whole is critical when it comes to productivity in personal lives, and when managing businesses. ‘Effective time management has many benefits. These include reduction in wasted time, mitigation of work overloads, and higher levels of personal productivity. Perhaps more important, time
management ensures that the most important tasks get done’ (Luecke, 2005). Research shows that implementing time management, as a daily procedure for the vast majority of humans is extremely advantageous, due to the benefits of completing specific tasks on time. Successful task completion within an allocated time scale gives individuals great job and personal satisfaction and a feeling of achievement, and time management abilities play a key role in this.
4.0 Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research methodology is to clarify the different methods that have been used, in order to see if they are effective research fundamentals. In this section, primary research methods will be discussed, such as questionnaires and short one-to-one communications (informal interviews), alongside secondary research such as books, journals, articles and online reports. Reliability and validity throughout this project is crucial, as this will outline the efficiency. Within this study, both positive and negative aspects will need to be acknowledged to assist any grey areas, reducing the chance of further repetition. The ethical facet throughout this project should continuously be monitored, ensuring that all information is kept confidential. In order to accomplish the aims above, valuable data will need to be collected to regulate a strategic outcome for the chosen topic. The main focal point throughout this project is to study the amount of time spent on social media by a specific group of current students, and the associated effects. Having observed the colossal impact social media has conveyed during my upbringing, the topic, and the evidence discussed, shows the expansion is continuously occurring, and social media’s status as a whole is still currently escalating.

4.2 Research Philosophy & Sampling

‘Research philosophy deals with the source, nature and development of knowledge. In essence, addressing research philosophy in your dissertation involves being aware and formulating your briefs and assumptions’ (Research Philosophy - Research Methodology, 2016.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Popular data collection method(s)</th>
<th>Pragmatism</th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Realism</th>
<th>Interpretivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mixed or multiple method designs, quantitative and qualitative</td>
<td>Highly structured, large samples, measurement, quantitative, but can use qualitative</td>
<td>Methods chosen must fit the subject matter, quantitative or qualitative</td>
<td>Small samples, in-depth investigations, qualitative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: (Research Philosophy - Research Methodology, 2016).

Within the thesis, the choice of research philosophy involves both Positivism and Interpretivism. ‘Positivism adheres to a view that only “factual” knowledge gained through observation, including measurement is trustworthy. In positivism studies the role of the researcher is limited to data collection and interpretation through objective approach and the research findings are usually observable and quantifiable’ (Research Philosophy - Research Methodology, 2016). Although Figure 2 above displays large sampling in the positivism method, due to the downloading software demand, this feature was not fully possible, meaning slight interpretivism was involved through sampling a smaller focal group. As stated, the interpretivism method involves small, in-
depth samples. Also, ‘interpretivism values subjectivity. Interpretive researchers attempt to develop an in-depth subjective understanding of people’s lives’ (Rubin and Babbie, 2010: P37). Interpretivist methodology is based on a realistic approach of specific data gathering. These involve interviews and observations. The way data is collected throughout my thesis is by using the software to record and examine participants’ usage of specific social media websites.

4.3 Research Strategies

4.3.1 Quantitative Research

‘Quantitative research uses numbers and statistical methods. It tends to be based on numerical measurements of specific aspects to phenomena; it abstracts from particular instances to seek general description or to test casual hypotheses; it seeks measurements and analyses that are easily replicable by other researchers’ (Thomas, 2014: P2).

Quantitative data involves discovering facts about social phenomena, and data is analysed through numerical comparisons and statistical inferences. Quantitative data is the primary focus of this thesis. The informal and comfortable data collection method increases the likelihood of responses. The questionnaire used for data collection within this project will help gather specific information that will provide current data collection and up-to-date statistics for the researcher. ‘Questionnaires have advantages over other methods of data collection’ (Downs, Adrian and Downs, 2004 P106). Ensuring that responses are collected from students alone is essential to support any evaluation that will be undertaken. The data collection will be collected from the participants on a set date, helping with the scheduling of specific tasks, benefitting the time management process throughout this project. Quantitative research will be used to provide evidence for specific topics using facts and figures. Secondary analysis will be used within the project to help support statements and contradict with other statements, by bringing valid references, along with facts and figures, which will provide valuable information. The data collection will involve published books, reports, journals and articles, along with the roaming of the Internet for related material. ‘Secondary data can provide exploratory information that can aid in the planning design of the instruments used to gather primary data’ (Wrenn, Stevens and Loudon, 2007: P72). Secondary analysis is quick and efficient, therefore, more valued data can be found in a short period of time in relation to any specific topic.

4.3.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is ‘a form of social inquiry that tends to adopt a flexible and data-driven research design, to use relatively unstructured data, to emphasize the essential role of subjectivity in the research process, to study a small number of naturally occurring cases in detail, and to use verbal rather than statistical forms of analysis’ (Hammerslay, 2013: P12).

Qualitative data is collected through participant observation and interviews in this dissertation. Qualitative data refers to another person’s outlook, generating mass quantity of high quality responses that can be used as evidence. The generated information allows us to expand on any requested questions, which may not be
available within the secondary research field, helping to widen the knowledge within the specific field. Also, this allows the participants to provide their own opinion without having to select from any specific pre-requested answers, as it is their personal opinion. The use of short one-to-one communications between researcher and participant are required within this thesis, relating to the use of qualitative research. From the evidence gathered by these informal interviews, secondary research can be used to additionally assist the supporting knowledge, by providing critical structure to the reasoning of any information that has been collated. Face-to-face communications helps to 'gather information from the people you are interested in' (Evans and Rooney, 2014: P251). This method will be used within my project to interact with specific students in regards to the data collection, or any further unknown aspects that need to be discussed.

4.4 Data Collection

4.4.1 Questionnaires

Creating bespoke questionnaires for the selected participants enables a higher validity of results as well as a rapid response within the given time scale. All responses are current, accurate and up-to-date. The questions asked within the primary research will include a variety of questions involving the specific task e.g. use of social media. Both qualitative and quantitative research questions are asked, ensuring that responses of both figures and qualitative data such as personal information are provided for analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative data are essentially needed for the progression of my dissertation. Very few multiple-choice questions are provided, as answers need to be personally specified. Although there is no summary provided within the questionnaires that have been distributed, all information has been provided to the participants within the short informal interviews, ensuring they know exactly why it has been carried out, and where the information will be held, alongside the confidentiality fundamentals. It is relatively easy to analyse questionnaires, and distribution tends to be very straightforward and at a moderately low cost. The main requirement of the questionnaire sharing would be the response of the participant, meaning that the researcher would need to ensure that he/she knows exactly who to share the questionnaire with to guarantee a reply e.g. close student friends. However, to certify a complete response, it is important that communication is prearranged prior to the questionnaires being distributed. These questionnaires will be distributed to the partakers online, by sending them a brief description along with the questionnaire attached as a .doc file. Questionnaires will be useful to gain any answers prior to the software data collection, which will aid the debate between research studies and primary results. ‘Questionnaires have advantages over other methods of data collection’ (Downs, Adrian and Downs, 2004: P106).

4.4.2 Informal Interviews (Short one-to-one communications)

Informal interviews will be held to further discuss any information that the participant may not have provided in the questionnaire, and will be an opportunity for the participant to expand and explain any further thoughts on their current use of social media. These short one-to-one communications are aimed towards local, current students, focusing on aspects involving social media, and how they have been impacted by its mass development. Due to the quality of data provided from the questionnaires,
the interviews will not need to be formally arranged, allowing freedom of speech and additional personal views to prevail. Interviews such as these are commonly known to be the most appropriate method of collecting specific types of information from a specific individual, without having to spend a substantial amount of time searching for the necessary requirements. Face-to-face communications helps to ‘gather information from the people you are interested in’ (Evans and Rooney, 2014: P251). Online secondary data cannot always provide specific information, meaning that primary research such as this will bring extreme validity and successful information to the researcher, from the candidate. Informal interviewing can be used ‘to cross-check pieces of information, to fill in details, to explore new areas as they arise, and to take advantages of unexpected opportunities’ (Kane, 1997: P162).

4.5 Research Approach & Techniques

![Research Choices Diagram]

*Figure 4: Research Choices (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009: P152).*

‘Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Creswell, 2011: P4).

Both the above strategies, quantitative and qualitative, were research methods used within this project. Figure 4 demonstrates exactly how the chosen research approach occurred, showing the different stages used to produce the outcome. Multiple methods was the first chosen category relating to Figure 4, as the mono method would not have been an option due to the researcher’s use of both questionnaires and informal interviews to collect and analyse the provided information.

4.6 Reliability & Validity

To ensure the construction of the thesis is successful, data collection within the study will need to be valid, certifying precise results. Both reliability and validity connect to create successful outcomes, which will be needed for continual progression. To ensure
the accuracy of the research collection is gained appropriately, the questions within the questionnaires will need to be clarified in advance in order to ensure precise responses and good comprehension of the questions. Also, the informal interview questions will need to be evaluated beforehand, outlining the main elements that will be discussed, if needed. By undertaking these tasks prior to the examining, research will become clear and valid, enabling the data collection process to run smoothly. (Leonard Cargan, 2007) believes that ‘if your data collecting instruments are not valid and reliable, then the results collected will always be in doubt and little can be done to save the study’.

The questionnaire preparation needed to certify specific questions that will be delivered, ensuring the adaptation between the questions and the partakers are designed clearly, and are understandable in relation to social media’s usage. Using questionnaires is an achievable source of data collection within a particular field, as is being able to select exactly who should receive them. E.g. students, pensioners, teenagers etc. It is also beneficial to use self-administered, open-ended questionnaires, as open questions can provide much more clarification and detail towards the main focus.

For the informal interviews, participants were given the opportunity to provide additional data if required. Alongside this, if the interviewees needed any assistance during the completion process of their questionnaires, this assistance would be provided through face-to-face meetings, as all participants are local and live near the researcher. As mentioned, these interviews are aimed towards students involved with social media and its usage. Conferences such as these also allow both the interviewer and interviewees to get to know one another in an informal, relaxed setting; this could be advantageous when forming an outcome. However, informal communication means that questions do not necessarily need to be rehearsed beforehand, as the answers provide additional information. Formal interviews involve more specific questions, which may require a large quantity of data that would need to be noted. The questionnaires would provide specific, formal answers, whilst the informal interviews would also allow the participants to expand orally on these answers, allowing the researcher two opportunities to ensure validity.

Also, as stated above in the thesis, an agreement was made with the examined participants, stating that each individual would only use one specific device to browse social media within the recorded week. Due to this, the data gathering would provide higher validity, meaning that all information can be relied upon.

4.7 Ethics

‘Ethics is the science of Conduct. It considers the actions of human beings with reference to their rightness or wrongness, their tendency to good or to evil (Mackenzie, 2005: P1).

The quotation above states that ethics are moral principles that administrate the conducting of an activity, such as how information within data collection is kept isolated and safeguarded. Due to this, the partakers involved within the gathering of data may find it more comforting when knowing that all information is kept anonymous, helping the researcher to gain the maximum amount of material and allowing complete confidentiality on the participants’ behalf. ‘Allowing respondents to be anonymous may
be important if you want honest answers to highly personal questions’ (Mitchell and Jolley, 2013: P263). The principles of ethics within research involve minimising the risk of harm, obtaining informed consent, protecting anonymity and confidentiality, avoiding deceptive practices and providing the right to withdraw. These five values must always be referred to when researched is collected. During the primary research assembling for both the questionnaire and the informal interviews, the contributors were fully assured that all information, including names, would be kept completely anonymous. At the bottom of each questionnaire, a clear note was provided, confirming that all content would be approached in a secure and unidentified manner, ensuring that the Code of Confidentiality was adhered to.

4.8 Limitations

Limitations for both research methods have associated drawbacks, which can range from feedback delays to the late submission of appropriate data. As there was a set date provided for the dissertation submission, it meant that the collection of data needed to be established promptly yet proficiently.

The reasoning behind having a relatively small focal group in the research collection was primarily because the partakers needed to download specific software that recorded the amount of time they spent on social media. Due to this, only a small target group, known to the researcher, would be able to take part, as online users would not download an unknown software application. Trust levels between the researcher and the participants were high, as they were familiar with each other. Efficient, trustworthy responses produce constructive results, which defines the importance of ensuring all data is kept incognito. ‘To collect trustworthy data, the researcher must have a meaningful relationship with the participants, which may require time to develop’ (Macnee and McCabe, 2008: P170).

The possible drawbacks relating to the informal interviews, which could lead to a lack of data, or a reluctance to provide full and honest answers, involve the participants declining or ignoring contact with the researcher. This would be more likely to occur if the participants were unknown or unfamiliar with the researcher. This would be easily avoided by ensuring that the interviewees were local and known associates. Also, having other partakers in reserve would benefit the researcher, in case of a change in circumstances. It is crucial to reassure each partaker that all information will be maintained securely, avoiding any data leakage. Finally, as these interviews will not contain a large amount of data collection, there will be no need for any voice recordings, which could enhance the participants’ confidence, and gain further information.

4.9 Summary

The research methodology displays a strong demonstration of the different types of research that will be carried out within the data collection, and the techniques used by the participants when providing their personal feedback. Both research methods will contain qualitative and quantitative data, and these will help to evaluate and conclude specific observations, with subsequent evidence. The above also presents how the research methods are conducted, and how the avoidance of data leakage will be managed to secure all information gained. Reliability and validity highlight the
importance of how the collection of data can assist with the completion of both research methods. Alongside this, the above limitations display the aspects of avoidance, which will guide the researcher in the correct direction when planning the conclusions of the software readings.
5.0 Results, Analysis & Discussion

So far, this thesis has provided an analytical review of literature concerning the amount of time spent on social networking sites, and the various impacts social media has had on students has been examined, as has the discussion of research methodology. Furthermore, a clear guidance has been displayed, involving the research methods that were applied. Within this segment, a presentation of all data collection will be exposed, evaluating the period of time each student spent on social media during the examination week. A comparison will be delivered, comparing the amount of time the specific students estimated they had spent on social media (questionnaire results), with the actual amount of time they had spent on social media during the recorded week (RescueTime data collection). Also, an explanation will be delivered in relation to the gathered data for each participant, analysing and discussing the results with precise figures.

Please note; some results include specific applications that have not been used for social networking, which may show a variance from the collected results, and the results noted. The time spent on non-social networking applications have been deducted from each partaker. All results have been rounded to the nearest 30 minutes.
5.1 Partaker 1

From the results provided above, this specific student spent a total calculation of slightly under 20 hours on social media during the examined week period. However, from the questionnaire results, partaker 1 estimated that he/she spends a total of only 7 hours per week on social media. The result shows that this partaker spent an additional 13-hours more than they had anticipated on social networking sites. These outcomes were recorded via the participant’s mobile phone, indicating clearly that an average of almost 3 hours per day was spent on social media alone during the recorded week.

*This Partaker stated that all 12 hours of Firefox Android was spent on Facebook, as he does not have the Facebook application*
5.2 Partaker 2

These results display a total of 35 hours spent on social media in the inspected week, which is an average of 5 hours per day. This participant admits that he/she is a very heavy user of social networking sites. From the questionnaire data collection, the particular student estimated that they spent 20 hours a week on social media, but the actual result shows a 15-hour increase compared to their estimate. Again, these results were recorded by a mobile phone, and the outcomes show us that this partaker has spent a much longer period of time on social networking sites than all other examined partakers.

*This Partaker stated that all 9 hours of Entertainment was spent on YouTube*
5.3 Partaker 3
During the recorded week, the results clearly show that Partaker 3 spent an actual total of just under 11 hours on social media, including the websites Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. However, from Partaker 3’s questionnaire results, an estimation of 8 hours was provided. This result differs by an increase of almost 3 hours from Partaker 3’s estimation. These outcomes were measured on a laptop, which was the primary device chosen by the selected participant. The results displayed also present the specific amount of time that has been spent on each social networking site. The average amount of time spent by this particular participant per day was 94 minutes, which totals 1 hour and 34 minutes per average day.

5.4 Partaker 4
From the above results, again taken from a laptop, a total amount of slightly under 14 hours and 30 minutes was spent on social media by this selected participant, which averages to just over 2 hours each day. From the provided questionnaire results, partaker 4 provided an estimation of 10 hours a week, which he/she thought, was spent on social media. This delivers an actual increase of just over 4 hours more than anticipated, meaning that the figures stated in the questionnaire are far lower than what was actually gathered. As demonstrated, the figures above show that Facebook and YouTube were the two primary sites used within the gathering of this participant’s data collection, as the other websites involved are not classified as social networking sites.

5.5 Partaker 5

This result differs slightly from the above partakers’ results due to a decrease from the data collection compared to the questionnaire results. As shown above, a total of slightly less than 3 hours was spent on social media in the examined week. However, from the questionnaire results provided, partaker 5 estimated that he/she would usually spend 5 hours on social media per week, delivering a reduction of 2 hours. Also, from the logged outcomes, this partaker spent numerous hours on a variety of other sites, however; these sites are not classed as social networking websites. On an average
day, this partaker spent a total of just under 25 minutes on social media, which is a much lesser figure than the other partakers' averages.

5.6 Partaker 6

Listed above is partaker 6’s result, with a total amount of slightly less than 3 hours spent on social media. This again converts to an average of slightly under 25 minutes per day for this online user. From the questionnaire delivered by this partaker, a total estimation of 4 hours was noted per average week. This shows an actual decrease of exactly 1 hour compared with their estimation. As stated in partaker 5’s summary, the user has spent numerous hours on websites that are not associated with social media. Although he/she has spent over 17 hours online, the actual time spent on social networking sites is relatively low.
5.7 Estimation vs. Reality

The above table and line chart displays both the estimated amount of hours spent, and the actual amount of hours spent by each participant in the examined week of data collection. From the results, we can see that 4/6 partakers (66.67%) used social media more than they had anticipated. We can also see that 2/6 (33.33%) of the partakers used social media less than anticipated. At the bottom of the table, a total estimation and the actual amount of hours spent of social media are presented, with a total estimation of 54 hours and the actual figure of 86 hours. From this, we can accept that an additional 32 hours a week in total was spent on social networking sites by the six participants in comparison to the lower estimated time that was provided.

As stated above, the ‘estimated hours spent’ figures were provided by each partaker within the questionnaire gathering, and the ‘actual hours spent’ figures were gathered results from the RescueTime software, used as primary data collection to compare these statistics. Although these results display very diverse outcomes, each participant 6/6 (100%) listed in the questionnaire that they think they spend approximately the same amount of time on social networking sites as their known peers. The chart above shows the diverse amounts of time each participant actually spends on social media, ranging from the least amount, 3 hours per week, to the most amount of time, 35 hours per
week. From these figures, an actual average time can be calculated by dividing the 86 actual hours spent on social media during the observed week by the 6 participants, providing a weekly average of 14 hours and 20 minutes each, which translates to slightly more than 2 hours per average day each.

A report finding from 2015 exposed that ‘the average person has five social media accounts and spends around 1 hour and 40 minutes browsing these networks every day, accounting for 28% of the total time spent on the Internet’ (Davidson, 2015). In relation to the primary results collected, this figure is very accurate. The primary research shows a slightly higher usage of an additional 20 minutes more than the 2015 report, and this figure is continuing to rise.

‘Astonishingly, the average person will spend nearly two hours (approximately 116 minutes) on social media every day, which translates to a total of 5 years and 4 months spent over a lifetime’ (Asano, 2017).

Figure 5: Time Spent on Social in a Lifetime (Asano, 2017)

Figure 5 provides up-to-date information that demonstrates the average time spent on social media in a lifetime by a typical online user. The image above states that a total of 5 years and 4 months in total is spent on social networking sites such as these over an average lifetime period. Although these statistics are precise, particular online users use social media as part of their job, or for students, as part of academic learning and/or contacting others about certain school, college or university work. Figure 5 relates to global online users of all ages, and not students in particular. However, this is a
guidance fact, and because the majority of online users nowadays are the youth, this figure seems highly relevant.

5.8 Primary Research (Questionnaires)

The questionnaire feedback on this question provided an interesting result from the selected participants. As seen above, a basic pie chart demonstrates that 2/6 (33.33%) of the partakers feel as if the amount of time spent on social media does not need to be spent more wisely, meaning that they are happy with the current amount of time they are spending on these sites. However, 4/6 (66.67%) of the partakers believe that the amount of time spent on social media could be used more wisely in their general day to day lives. The next question, leading from this question, will specify how the 4/6 (66.67%) of the partakers believe they could be spending their time more productively.
For all four partakers that answered ‘Yes’ in the above question, the chart provides evidence stating that 100% of these participants stated that their browsing time on social media could be spent more productively by allocating this time towards university work. “Researchers found a negative relationship between hours of social media use and students’ grades. Because the students do not spend time studying, and during lectures they are focusing on Facebook, their grades are lower” (Paliszkiewicz and Koohang, 2016: P44). (Sullivan, 2016) has also stated that ‘Social Media is a tool and you have to use it to your advantage. Don’t let it suck you in – you can be in control and use it to your advantage’. This reference could be influential towards these four partakers, as all four admitted they could be spending more time studying and improving their university grades rather than browsing social media sites. A simple way of achieving this would be to limit the amount of daily time they spend on social media sites. E.g. between 10-11pm once their studies have been completed.
In relation to social media affecting students’ education, the questionnaire requested information by asking the partakers if they thought social networking sites are useful for their learning/studies or not. The results were as follows:

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses to the question: Do you feel as if social networking technology is useful for your learning/study?]

The above results present several outcomes in relation to the requested question. From this, we can deduce that one person, 1/6 (16.67%), said that they do not find technology useful for their learning. Another 1/6 (16.67%) suggested that they find social networking only slightly useful for the same reason. However, on the other hand, 1/6 (16.67%) partaker implied that he/she feels as if social media is and is not useful towards their education, and the reasoning behind this was, ‘we can learn a lot from each other, making this platform a valuable learning tool. On the other hand, social networking offers an enticing distraction from work’. Finally, 3/6 (50%) of the participants mentioned that they feel as if social networking is a very useful tool towards their learning/studies, which shows us that the time period spent by those users is regarded by themselves as beneficial to their learning.

A published article from 2012 states that ‘the students become victims of social networks more often than anyone else. This is because of the reason that when they are studying or searching their course material online, they get attracted to these sites to kill the boredom in their study time, diverting their attention from their work’ (Negative Effects Of Social Networking Sites For Students – Performancing, 2012). Although social media in education is a contradictive topic, and is exposed above to be a useful element for leaning/studying, it also has disadvantages regarding students’ performance within the classroom. (Gazzaley and Rosen, 2016) believe that ‘in-class technology use including email, texting, laptop, social media and more, decrease classroom performance, regardless of how that performance is measured (grades, work productivity, etc.), and across all grade levels ranging from elementary school to college’.
Figure 6 presents a list that was published in 2010 involving the media consumption of students aged 8-18 years old and their connection to poor grades. From the statistics, it is shown that the heavier users of social networking are provided with lower grades in regard to education compared to the light users. A trend occurs demonstrating the fact that the more social networking is used, the lower grades each student will achieve. Light social networking users are more likely to achieve the highest grades, which suggests that social networking sites are not providing intellectual information in regards to academic qualities within the classroom. Although Figure 6 provides outdated information, social networking has increased since the date of study, meaning that these statistics will have risen from the published date, and as mentioned above, grades are still affected by social networking in current years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partaker 1</th>
<th>To stay in contact with friends.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 2</td>
<td>Entertainment (YouTube) &amp; browsing Reddit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 3</td>
<td>To keep up-to-date with sports news.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 4</td>
<td>Contacting family &amp; friends, and entertainment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 5</td>
<td>News, social trends and helps to keep in touch with friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 6</td>
<td>Socialise, contact friends and helps education on the course to communicate through group emails.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table demonstrates the exact purpose why the selected participants use social networking sites. The participants’ primary aspect for using social media is to keep in contact with others, such as friends and family. Entertainment, such as YouTube, plays a big role, as stated in the table. This can also be seen within the software data collection results.
Figure 7 relates to the usage of Facebook by continent, demonstrating the main reasons for using social media. The study above was approached through sampling over 900 students from all around the world. Figure 7 clearly states that the main reason for Facebook’s usage is ‘to keep up to date’; this is revealed by 4/5 of the selected regions. The second most common reason within social media’s usage was because ‘it’s interesting’ and the fact that it’s ‘useful for connections’. The final region, Latin America, actually states that the main reason for Facebook’s usage is because ‘it’s interesting’, followed by ‘to keep up to date’. Although this region differs from the other four, both of the main elements attract students to use social media; however, they are prioritised differently with 50% of Latin America choosing ‘it’s interesting’.

The primary collection shows that 5/6 (83.33%) of the examined partakers find social networking sites important nowadays. However, 1/6 (16.67%) of the participants said that they do not find social networking sites important. Partaker 3 announced that he/she did not find social networking sites important within the questionnaire.
However, this partaker spent just under 11 hours of his/her week on social media, which shows that it is used much more than they anticipated. Also, having discussed the time period spent on social media with Partaker 3 in the informal interview, it was mentioned that he/she was extremely surprised with the outcome. This user thought that far less time had been spent on social networking sites. This proves that users frequently spend more time than they think on specific social sites.

(Tella, 2015: P198) believes that ‘it can also be concluded that social networking sites are as important as Internet use’. However, this statement is controversial as the Internet provides a tool for the expansion of learning and finding factual information to aid studies e.g. Google, Yahoo. Social networking, however, although it does not provide a tool for learning, does enable users to communicate with colleagues and friends, sharing information that may also provide useful material towards learning e.g. articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you feel as if online networking affects your social life? If so, why and how?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partaker 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table, the results are displayed for each partaker, having asked them if they feel as though social networking sites affect their social life. Partaker 3 was the only participant that stated social networking does not affect his/her social life; however; the other 5 partakers feel as if these sites have had an influence on their social life, and stating the main reasons above. All six partakers have responded positively when stating that social networking does/does not affect their social life. Again, this question was repeated to Partaker 3 during the informal interview, asking for a reason why he believed that social media does not affect his/her social life. The partaker stated that the total amount of hours spent on social media by him/her was spent viewing online sporting news only. They did not state that they used social media to contact friends, and therefore felt their social life did not revolve around social media usage.
Figure 8: What Are the Effects of Social Media on Youth (McGillivray, 2015).

Figure 8 displays both the social benefits and social detriments involved within social media’s youth nowadays. These diverse effects show the exact factors that are currently happening, with figures increasing even higher from the 2015 published date. Comparing the primary research to the secondary, it is clear that social networking sites have had, and currently are having, an enormous influence on the social lives of students/youth. Figure 8’s social detriments outweigh the social benefits above, with a higher amount of negative factors stated than positives. Although the stated reasons within the primary research are positive, negative elements such as those stated in Figure 8 may not have been disclosed, as negative personal information may necessitate confidentiality. E.g. cyber bullying, friendship loss, personal disorders and the feeling of depression etc.
Out of the following, which social media site do you mostly use?

![Pie chart showing social media usage percentages]

The final question that was enquired within my questionnaire was the above. These results show that 1/6 (16.67%) had each chosen one of the options between Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. However, two partakers selected the Reddit option, meaning that this was the most common social media site selected by the participants within my primary research data collection. Although Reddit was stated as the most popular here, these results could easily alter depending on the audience scope of the data collection e.g. 6 other participants may have chosen Facebook or another as their primary choice.

![Bar chart showing top 15 social networking sites]

Figure 9: Top 15 Most Popular Social Networking Sites (Kallas).

Figure 9 above presents the 15 most popular currently trending social networking sites in the year 2017, with figures shown in millions. As shown above, the five most popular sites are the five chosen by the examined participants. Facebook is by far the most
popular social media website in this study; however, it was not the most popular choice within the selected partakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>Monthly Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>1,860,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>1,000,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>600,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>313,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reddit</td>
<td>234,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Top 15 Most Popular Social Networking Sites (Kallas)

Table 1 is linked to Figure 9, displaying numerous social networking sites in order of popularity. The five most popular visited websites involve the main sites that were collected in the primary data collection within my research. This proves that the trend is continually occurring for these specific sites, meaning that the popularity of these websites are continuously increasing by online users annually. Although the sites from the primary research do not match the highest to lowest popularity order within the secondary research, the primary research data collection would change depending on the amount and type of participants that were examined. E.g. if a total of 10 participants were examined, the primary collection would change accordingly.

From the above figures, we can conclude that the use of social media worldwide is continuing to increase rapidly, particularly amongst the younger generation. The following table shows actual readings for the general public as far as 2016, and the predicted growth in billions as far as 2020.

![Figure 10: (Number Of Social Media Users Worldwide 2010-2020 | Statista)](image-url)
Figure 10 displays a projection of statistics from the year 2010 to 2020. From these statistics, a worldwide reading is displayed with the number of online users stated in billions. The readings are accurate up to the year 2016; however, future projections are predicted from that date onwards. Although Figure 10 is not focusing on the target demographic within the thesis, the data is relevant to express the current trend that is occurring, along with the future trend that has been projected as a continual increase. From this chart, an estimation climb is occurring, providing an analytic rise in the number of users from under a billion in 2010, to nearly two and a half billion at the halfway point of 2015, and just short of 3 billion in 2020, providing a predicted increase of almost 2 billion online operators in just ten years.
6.0 Conclusion

This dissertation has undertaken research that has analysed and discussed the current amount of time spent on social networking sites by a selected group of current students through the operation of electronic time management. Alongside this, a literature review was produced displaying numerous occurring impacts that have influenced students due to the total amount of time spent on these sites. Both positive and negative aspects have been discussed, along with a detailed discussion in relation to the proceeding real world impacts that have, and still are, happening. The research has improved our knowledge in regards to the effect social media has had on the younger generation. It also delivers awareness for future years, due to the continuous mass population growth, with the number of online users increasing annually. The research results provide constructive information to both the younger and older generation, allowing them to review and possibly reduce the amount of time they spend on social media. Findings such as the above can also allow the older generation to observe the growth that is occurring, and possibly monitor the younger generations, influencing them to spend an appropriately measured amount of time on these social networking sites.

It is proven that social media’s trend is continuously developing, and from the data collected within the research gathering, figures show that all the examined students are currently signed up to social networking sites, spending various amounts of hours per individual on them each day. Although there are a number of proven benefits and downfalls associated with social media, I believe that the advancement of technology is developing positively, allowing the younger generation to engage with the online environment, as long as they ensure they approach it in a safe and appropriately time-managed manner.

The creation of this dissertation has been extremely stimulating in areas, yet challenging in other areas. However, continuous data collection throughout this project has helped produce valid, up-to-date information, which has provided accurate outcomes. As the years progress, further examination will possibly be needed to assess the targeted users, and to see if the trend increase is still occurring. Although the research has proven to be a success, I believe that a wider target audience would provide enhanced figures and a wider range of results, as a limited study can only provide a somewhat restricted evaluation due to data collection limitations.

In future, over an extended period of time, I would be very interested in continuing this research study, analysing a wider target audience over a longer period of time in order to collect and deliver a more comprehensive range of results. Provided an extended period of time were possible i.e. six months, and the target group were larger and more diverse i.e. 60 participants, the results would be more informative and the evaluation would show a possible contrast to the original research. Additionally, any future research might stipulate that all participants use the same device throughout the research period. The reasoning behind this is that specific applications such as Snapchat and WhatsApp are not available on laptops/PCs, but are available to mobile phone users.

The main aim of this research project has been successfully met, examining and
displaying current results along with identifying both the major and minor, positive and negative impacts that are influencing all current and future students, including the selected participants.
Appendix

Partaker 1

Questionnaire

1. Are you a current student? Yes

2. What social media sites are you signed up to? Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram

3. On a weekly basis, roughly how many hours would you say that you spend on social media (this includes both laptops and mobile phones)? 7 hours

4. From the above answer, how many of these hours are spent on social media regarding to important essentials (e.g. University work, work Facebook groups/chats etc.)? 1 hour

5. From your answer in question 3, do you feel as if this amount of time spent on social media could be used more wisely? If so, please state how: could be avoided late at night for better sleep, hours could be more wisely spent doing more important things i.e. uni work

6. Comparing to your close student friends/housemates, do you think you spend ‘less’ time, ‘more’ time or ‘roughly the same’ amount of time on social media as them? Same

7. How long have you been using social networking sites (months or years)? Years

8. What is the main purpose of you using a social networking site? Staying in contact with friends

9. Do you feel as if online networking affects your social life? If so, why and how? Yes it does. It allows contact with friends I would otherwise not be able to stay in contact with.

10. Do you think social networking sites are important? Yes

11. Do you feel as if social networking technology is useful for your learning/study? A little

12. Out of the following, which social media site do you most use?
Submission of a completed questionnaire is taken as informed consent.
Partaker 2

Questionnaire

1. Are you a current student? Yes

2. What social media sites are you signed up to? Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Reddit

3. On a weekly basis, roughly how many hours would you say that you spend on social media (this includes both laptops and mobile phones)? 20 hours

4. From the above answer, how many of these hours are spent on social media regarding to important essentials (e.g. University work, work Facebook groups/chats etc.)? 4-5 hours

5. From your answer in question 3, do you feel as if this amount of time spent on social media could be used more wisely? If so, please state how: No, I believe 20 hours a week on social media is pretty average

6. Comparing to your close student friends/housemates, do you think you spend ‘less’ time, ‘more’ time or ‘roughly the same’ amount of time on social media as them? Roughly the same time

7. How long have you been using social networking sites (months or years)? 8+ years

8. What is the main purpose of you using a social networking site? Entertainment (YouTube) & browsing Reddit

9. Do you feel as if online networking affects your social life? If so, why and how? Yes, because it’s helpful for staying in contact with friends.

10. Do you think social networking sites are important? Yes

11. Do you feel as if social networking technology is useful for your learning/study? Yes, it helps when you are in University

12. Out of the following, which social media site do you most use? Facebook( ) Twitter( ) YouTube( ) Instagram( ) Flickr( ) MySpace( ) Tumblr( ) Reddit(X)

Submission of a completed questionnaire is taken as informed consent.
Partaker 3

Questionnaire

1. Are you a current student?

Yes

2. What social media sites are you signed up to?

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Youtube?

3. On a weekly basis, roughly how many hours would you say that you spend on social media (this includes both laptops and mobile phones)?

8 hours

4. From the above answer, how many of these hours are spent on social media regarding to important essentials (e.g. University work, work Facebook groups/chats etc.)?

2 hours

5. From your answer in question 3, do you feel as if this amount of time spent on social media could be used more wisely? If so, please state how:

Yes, could be using the time I’m on social media to do work instead

6. Comparing to your close student friends/housemates, do you think you spend ‘less’ time, ‘more’ time or ‘roughly the same’ amount of time on social media as them?

Roughly the same

7. How long have you been using social networking sites (months or years)?

8-10 years

8. What is the main purpose of you using a social networking site?

Sports news (Twitter)

9. Do you feel as if online networking affects your social life? If so, why and how?
No, it does not affect my social life.

10. Do you think social networking sites are important?

No

11. Do you feel as if social networking technology is useful for your learning/study?

No, not really

12. Out of the following, which social media site do you most use?

Facebook ( ) Twitter (X) YouTube ( ) Instagram ( ) Flikr ( ) MySpace ( ) Tumblr ( ) Reddit ( )

Submission of a completed questionnaire is taken as informed consent.
Partaker 4
Questionnaire

1. Are you a current student?
Yes

2. What social media sites are you signed up to?
Facebook
Youtube
Gmail
Instagram

3. On a weekly basis, roughly how many hours would you say that you spend on social media (this includes both laptops and mobile phones)?
10

4. From the above answer, how many of these hours are spent on social media regarding to important essentials (e.g. University work, work Facebook groups/chats etc.)?
6

5. From your answer in question 3, do you feel as if this amount of time spent on social media could be used more wisely? If so, please state how:
Only use social media to contact others through messenger and to check newsfeed and articles. However, could spend the browsing time completing uni work

6. Comparing to your close student friends/housemates, do you think you spend ‘less’ time, ‘more’ time or ‘roughly the same’ amount of time on social media as them?
Roughly the same

7. How long have you been using social networking sites (months or years)?
8 years

8. What is the main purpose of you using a social networking site?
Contacting others and entertainment
9. Do you feel as if online networking affects your social life? If so, why and how?
Yes, easier to make arrangements and to contact colleagues.

10. Do you think social networking sites are important?
Yes

11. Do you feel as if social networking technology is useful for your learning/study?
Yes

12. Out of the following, which social media site do you most use?

Facebook( ) Twitter( ) YouTube( ) Instagram( ) Flip( ) MySpace( ) Tumblr( )
Reddit( )

Submission of a completed questionnaire is taken as informed consent.
Questionnaire

1. Are you a current student? Yes

2. What social media sites are you signed up to? Facebook, twitter, IG, LinkedIn, reddit, YouTube

3. On a weekly basis, roughly how many hours would you say that you spend on social media (this includes both laptops and mobile phones)? 5 hours

4. From the above answer, how many of these hours are spent on social media regarding to important essentials (e.g. University work, work Facebook groups/chats etc.)? 4 hours

5. From your answer in question 3, do you feel as if this amount of time spent on social media could be used more wisely? If so, please state how: Yes definitely, the time could be spent doing university work and applying for jobs for once I graduate.

6. Comparing to your close student friends/housemates, do you think you spend ‘less’ time, ‘more’ time or ‘roughly the same’ amount of time on social media as them? Roughly the same amount of time

7. How long have you been using social networking sites (months or years)? Years

8. What is the main purpose of you using a social networking site? News, social trends, keep in touch with friends

9. Do you feel as if online networking affects your social life? If so, why and how? Yes, I believe it adds positively to my social life. In this day in age socialising is more than just face to face interaction. Social media helps me keep up to date with trends and people I wouldn’t be able to communicate with otherwise.

10. Do you think social networking sites are important? Yes, I think that social networking has become a fully integrated part of society in the 21st
century. No only are we more informed due to social media but we are also more entertained by its contents.

11. Do you feel as if social networking technology is useful for your learning/study? **Yes and no, we can learn a lot from each other making this platform a valuable learning tool. On the other hand social networking offers an enticing distraction from work.**

12. Out of the following, which social media site do you most use?

Facebook( ) Twitter( ) YouTube( ) Instagram( ) Flickr( ) MySpace( ) Tumblr( ) Reddit( x)

*Submission of a completed questionnaire is taken as informed consent.*
Partaker 6

Questionnaire

1. Are you a current student? **Yes**

2. What social media sites are you signed up to? **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.**

3. On a weekly basis, roughly how many hours would you say that you spend on social media (this includes both laptops and mobile phones)? **4 hours**

4. From the above answer, how many of these hours are spent on social media regarding to important essentials (e.g. University work, work Facebook groups/chats etc.)? **1 hour**

5. From your answer in question 3, do you feel as if this amount of time spent on social media could be used more wisely? If so, please state how: **No, it is less than one hour a day allowing me to concentrate on work if needed.**

6. Comparing to your close student friends/housemates, do you think you spend ‘less’ time, ‘more’ time or ‘roughly the same’ amount of time on social media as them? **Same amount.**

7. How long have you been using social networking sites (months or years)? **7 years+**

8. What is the main purpose of you using a social networking site? **Socialise and contact friends. However, it helps with my education on my course to communicate across group emails.**

9. Do you feel as if online networking affects your social life? If so, why and how? **Yes, it acts as a de-stress and saves time when contacting people.**

10. Do you think social networking sites are important? **Yes, informative data that can be sent out to the public quickly and clearly.**

11. Do you feel as if social networking technology is useful for your learning/study? **Yes, I am able to ask friends if I need help or need to know something about my course.**
12. Out of the following, which social media site do you most use? **Instagram** and **Twitter**.

Facebook( ) Twitter( ) YouTube( ) Instagram( X ) Flickr( ) MySpace( ) Tumblr( ) Reddit( )

*Submission of a completed questionnaire is taken as informed consent.*
Ethics Number: 2016D0337

DEVOLVED ETHICS APPROVAL APPLICATION SUMMARY

Student Name: Rhodri Young
Student Number: ST20061469
Module Name: Dissertation
Module Number: BCO6022
Programme Name: Computing
Supervisor Name: Stuart McNeil

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To be completed by student and supervisor before submission to Ethics Approval Panel</th>
<th>Student Signature;</th>
<th>Supervisor Signature;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application for ethics approval</td>
<td>[X]</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant information sheet</td>
<td>[X]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant consent form</td>
<td>[X]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot interview/s</td>
<td>[X]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter/s to participating organisation/s</td>
<td>[X]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group questions</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[X]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>[X]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First Submission [X] Resubmission [ ]

Date: _____

For use by the devolved ethics approval panel:

Panel Members _____ Name ___________ Signature _______

Module leader: ___________________________ ____________________
Supervisor: ___________________________ ____________________
CSM Ethics Committee Representative: ___________________________

Date: _______________ Date of Reassessment: _______________

Outcome:
Project Approved [ ] Reference number:
Project Approved in Principle [ ]
Application not ready/ incomplete [ ] (Decision deferred)

Comments for projects not fully approved:

The original to be retained by the module leader and a copy given to the student
When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency (e.g., NHS), you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your ethics letter(s) of approval in order that your School has a record of the project.

The document **Ethics application guidance notes** will help you complete this form. It is available from the [Cardiff Met website](#). The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

**PLEASE NOTE:**
Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

### PART ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Rhodri Ellis Young</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Stuart McNeil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School / Unit:</td>
<td>Cardiff School of Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>ST20061469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>Computing BSc (Hons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>An analysis discussing the impact of time spent on social media by current students through the operation of electronic time management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected start date of data collection:</td>
<td>21/11/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate duration of data collection:</td>
<td>3-4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve human samples and/or human cell lines?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human samples</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice based not involving human</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>participants (eg curatorial, practice audit)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education)</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A project for which external approval has been obtained (e.g., NHS)</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.

If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form.

In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project

In this project, an analysis will take place discussing the amount of time spent on social media by current students through collecting data using software called ‘RescueTime’. During the analysis, I will be asking a specific group of students to download the free software that I will assign them with, which will record and collect data that will be useful as my primary research. The data collection will provide me with constant, valid information, which will allow me to divert into different aspects regarding the time spent on social media. Pros and cons will also be discussed in relation to the result outcomes, and how time management can be balanced or used efficiently which may involve achieving different tasks.

**DECLARATION:**
I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework

I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

STUDENTS: I confirm that I will not disclose any information about this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of the applicant:</th>
<th>Date: 18/12/16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R E Young</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of supervisor:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of supervisor:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Research Ethics Committee use only**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision reached:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project approved in principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision deferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project not approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project reference number: Click here to enter text.
PART TWO

A RESEARCH DESIGN

A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project?  
No

A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used¹  
N/A

A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project

Primary research will be the main focal point throughout this dissertation as I will be examining and recording the amount of time a group of current students spent on social media. This data collection will be gathered with a recording software called 'RescueTime'. Questionnaires will also be created as primary research along with face-to-face communication (short interviews) to seek any additional information that may be helpful.

Informal short interviews (face-to-face communication) will be conducted by travelling to student housing as this will limit low attendance levels, which will avoid any cancellations. Adjacent to this, close connections with the students involved in the primary research will allow strong communication building up to the study, meaning the probability of attendance levels dropping will be minimised. The participants will be approached regularly (possibly once a week), which means data collection will be gathered efficiently and frequently. Purposive sampling will be used, meaning the researcher (myself) will select participants according to the criteria that is set. There will be 6 participants taking part within my project research; this number will help gather enough information to proceed with the literature review.

‘Interviews are practical research tools for incorporating first-hand perspectives on a topic or gaining primary information from knowledgeable sources. In some cases, the interviewee’s responses provide data that can help you expand your research questions’. (Gaillet and Eble, 2015)

Questionnaires is a great starting point to get feedback with the thoughts of each participant, this will increase the validity of the project. These will be given to a specific amount of students prior to the creation of the research. Each questionnaire will be simply distributed as the location of each student is nearby, this will help the time management for the questionnaire completion. The questionnaires will be sent to each participant either online through email, or by hand, depending on their preference. The same amount of participants will be given the questionnaires, which will be involve 6 people. Purposive sampling will also be used within the questionnaires; this is because the participants that have been selected by the researcher (myself) are handpicked

¹ An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website here
individuals from the population based on the researcher's knowledge and judgement. ‘A questionnaire consists of a set of questions presented to respondents for their answers. The questionnaire is very flexible in that there are a number of ways to ask questions’. (Glimmann, Julia, 2003)

Secondary research will include online research along with spending time in libraries studying books and articles. This will be beneficial, as it will enhance the speed of data collection for the secondary research that is needed for this project. ‘Secondary research is the gathering and analysing of information and data that have already been published in some manner or reside in personal “libraries”’ (Michaelson and Stacks, 2014). ‘University libraries tend to carry academically relevant materials’ (Stewart and Kamins, 1993).

All of the above primary research will remain confidential and will be safely secured in a password protected computer system, which will prevent any output to the public. Names will be anonymous throughout the project creation, and any data provided will not be traceable back to specific people.

Interpretive approach will be used within the project as this leans towards the collection of qualitative data and uses methods such as unstructured interviews and participant observation that provides this type of data. Inductive approach will also be used, this means the researcher begins by collecting data that is relevant to the topic; once a substantial amount of data has been collected, the researcher will then step back to view the data. Having collected the data, it will then be reviewed and theory will be developed explaining the different patterns within it. These patterns can then be discussed, comparing and contrasting the qualitative data with previous research studies. This leads to the thematic data analysis technique that is one of the most common forms of analysis in qualitative research. It emphasized pinpointing, examining and recording patterns within data, which will be used throughout the construction of this project.

Research methods:

Primary research – Face-to-face communications (short interviews), questionnaires.
Secondary research – Online, books, articles, library.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6 Will the project have security sensitive implications?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7 If yes, please explain what they are and the measures that are proposed to address them</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

**B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?**

Previous experience has been achieved throughout my time at secondary school, which included both interviews and the distribution of questionnaires. Also, secondary research has also been assigned throughout my A Level subjects including Applied Business and Travel & Tourism.

**B2 Student project only**

What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?

+16 years of student supervision

### C POTENTIAL RISKS

**C1 What potential risks do you foresee?**

1. Consensual research is vital for this project to avoid breaking the rules and obligations of the ethics form.
2. Questionnaires are the main primary research that will be carrying out beforehand; therefore, little or no responses could result in lack of validity and reliability of the mission.
3. Time management for both primary and secondary research is vital as the risk of running out of time may result in the project being a failure.

**C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?**

1. Ensuring each participant is willing to take part within the project prior to the creation.
2. Conducting questionnaires in the early stages of the project and obeying the rules of the ethics form will enable the project to avoid the risks with minimal damage.
3. Researching both primary and secondary research in the early stages of the project creation will also be beneficial along with time management, as this will help gain a variety of different research sources beforehand.

When submitting your application you **MUST** attach a copy of the following:

- All information sheets
- Consent/assent form(s)

An exemplar information sheet and participant consent form are available from the Research section of the Cardiff Met website.
An analysis discussing the time period spent on social media by current students through the operation of electronic time management.

**Project overview**
The purpose of this study is to analyse and discuss the time period spent on social media by current students, reviewing both positive and negative impacts that are associated within and surrounding this topic.

**Why you have been asked to take part**
You have been asked to participate in this project as a part of a research study to analyse the amount of time you are spending on social media through the operation of electronic time management. The data collection will be accumulated via a free software application called 'RescueTime'. The interviews will be continuous, short, face-to-face conversations regarding the results that have been examined throughout the recording process. There will not be any set questions asked, only general communication regarding the result outputs.

**Are there any risks and will I be mentioned?**
There are no risks in taking part in these occasional interviews. However, if the applicant feels uncomfortable answering any of the questions asked, they have full permission to refuse answering. All information and data collected will be kept confidential, along with the names of each applicant.

A COPY OF THIS PAGE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO KEEP AND LOOK OVER AT ANY POINT.

If you require any further information about this project please contact:

Rhodri Young, Cardiff Metropolitan University

*smcneil@cardiffmet.ac.uk* Stuart McNeil BA(Hons), PgC(ASR), MBCS, FRSA, FHEA
*st20061469@cardiffmet.ac.uk* Rhodri Young, Computing BSc (Hons)
INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University

Student Number: ST20061469

Title of Project
An analysis discussing the time period spent on social media by current students through the operation of electronic time management.
Name of Researcher: Rhodri Young

Participant MUST complete this section: Please tick each box.

1. I can approve that I have read and agreed to the information on the study and to answer questions regarding the topic to support the project.

2. As a volunteer to the study, I have full control to refuse to answer questions at any time if I feel uncomfortable.

3. I am 18+.

4. I can confirm that any recordings and quotes are available to be used to help the study, as long as it is confidential and identities are not revealed.

5. I would like to take part in this study.

Participant Signature __________________________ Date __________________________

Name of Participant __________________________ Date __________________________

Signature of Researcher __________________________
Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a current student in Cardiff Metropolitan University looking for completion of my dissertation in year 3 (final year). I am required to take on a research project and provide new relevant data in relation to my course. In order to do this, I am looking for some primary research to maximise my opportunity to reach my target grade.

The research question I have decided to further evaluate is ‘An analysis discussing the time period spent on social media by current students through the operation of electronic time management’. The purpose of this is to gain valid primary research, collecting specific data to enable analysis and discussion throughout this project. Therefore the study will allow a variety of discussions and conclusions to be made, involving numerous aspects around the chosen topic. Once the study is completed then the results can be provided to yourself, if this is of any interests to you.

Finally, I would like to state that any data would be kept confidential to both the university and myself, and your name will not be distributed at all throughout this project.

I am looking forward to hearing back from you. Thank you for any support and guidance you can provide me with.

Yours faithfully,

Rhodri Young
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Email: ST20061469@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk
PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET - QUESTIONNAIRE/OPEN QUESTIONNAIRE

An analysis discussing the time period spent on social media by current students through the operation of electronic time management.

**Project overview**
The purpose of this study is to analyse and discuss the time period spent on social media by current students, reviewing both positive and negative impacts that are associated within and surrounding this topic.

**Why you have been asked to take part**
You have been asked to participate in this project as a part of a research study to analyse the amount of time you are spending on social media through the operation of electronic time management. The data collection will be accumulated via a free software application called ‘RescueTime’. The questionnaire will consist of numerous questions that will need to be filled in prior to the data collection. This will allow data comparison and detailed evaluation to be carried out, bringing valid results to the specific topic.

**Are there any risks and will I be mentioned?**
There are no risks involved when filling out this questionnaire. However, if the applicant feels uncomfortable answering any of the questions asked, they have full permission to refuse answering. All information and data collected will be kept confidential, along with the names of each applicant.

A COPY OF THIS PAGE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO KEEP AND LOOK OVER AT ANY POINT.

If you require any further information about this project please contact:

Rhodri Young, Cardiff Metropolitan University.

smcneill@cardiffmet.ac.uk Stuart McNeil BA(Hons), PgC(ASR), MBCS, FRSA, FHEA
st20061469@cardiffmet.ac.uk Rhodri Young, Computing BSc (Hons)
OPEN QUESTIONNAIRE/QUESTIONNAIRE PARTICIPANT
CONSENT FORM

Cardiff Metropolitan University

Student Number: ST20061469

Title of Project
An analysis discussing the time period spent on social media by current students through the operation of electronic time management.
Name of Researcher: Rhodri Young

Participant MUST complete this section:

Please tick each box.

6. I can approve that I have read and agreed to the information on the study and to answer questions regarding the topic to support the project.

7. As a volunteer to the study, I have full control to refuse to answer questions at any time if I feel uncomfortable.

8. I am 18+.

9. I can confirm that any recordings and quotes are available to be used to help the study, as long as it is confidential and identities are not revealed.

10. I would like to take part in this study.

_______________________________________________________________________________
Participant Signature Date

_______________________________________________________________________________
Name of Participant Date

_______________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Researcher
Letter to student regarding participation in this study

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a current student in Cardiff Metropolitan University looking for completion of my dissertation in year 3 (final year). I am required to take on a research project and provide new relevant data in relation to my course. In order to do this, I am looking for some primary research to maximise my opportunity to reach my target grade.

The research question I have decided to further evaluate is ‘An analysis discussing the time period spent on social media by current students through the operation of electronic time management’. The purpose of this is to gain valid primary research, collecting specific data to enable analysis and discussion throughout this project. Therefore the study will allow a variety of discussions and conclusions to be made, involving numerous aspects around the chosen topic. Once the study is completed then the results can be provided to yourself, if this is of any interests to you.

Finally, I would like to state that any data would be kept confidential to both the university and myself, and your name will not be distributed at all throughout this project.

I am looking forward to hearing back from you. Thank you for any support and guidance you can provide me with.

Yours faithfully,

Rhodri Young
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Email: ST20061469@outlook.cardiffmet.ac.uk
Questionnaire
1. Are you a current student?
2. What social media sites are you signed up to?
3. On a weekly basis, roughly how many hours would you say that you spend on social media (this includes both laptops and mobile phones)?
4. From the above answer, how many of these hours are spent on social media regarding to important essentials (e.g. University work, work Facebook groups/chats etc.)?
5. From your answer in question 3, do you feel as if this amount of time spent on social media could be used more wisely? If so, please state how:
6. Comparing to your close student friends/housemates, do you think you spend 'less' time, 'more' time or 'roughly the same' amount of time on social media as them?
7. How long have you been using social networking sites (months or years)?
8. What is the main purpose of you using a social networking site?
9. Do you feel as if online networking affects your social life? If so, why and how?
10. Do you think social networking sites are important?
11. Do you feel as if social networking technology is useful for your learning/study?
12. Out of the following, which social media site do you most use?
   Facebook( ) Twitter( ) YouTube( ) Instagram( ) Flikr( ) MySpace( )
   Tumblr( ) Reddit( )

Submission of a completed questionnaire is taken as informed consent.
**Participant Agreement 1**

Hi Rhodri,

I am very interested to take part in your dissertation, and your title sounds very captivating! I am more than happy to meet for regular interviews regarding the results of the data collection. If you need any more help/information that you think I will be able to provide you with, then I will try my best to provide you with that.

Thank you, and see you very soon!

Kind regards,
Joshua.

---

**Participant Agreement 2**

Hi Rhodri,

Your dissertation sounds very interesting! I am willing to take part within your oncoming project to help you gather the data that you need. Let me know when you would like to meet for the interviews and we can meet asap!

See you soon.

Daniel.
Ethics References


References


