



Social Media and its Impact on our Privacy

Sundus Munir¹ and Hafsa Tariq²

Lahore Garrison University, Lahore, Pakistan

sundusmunir@lgu.edu.pk¹, hafsatariq573@gmail.com²

Abstract:

Social media is one of the advance technologies which is very common now some days. Social media means open source contents for all over the world. It is on the peak and extremely popular from recent years. Millions of users use the social media on daily basis and share their personal information on the media through the internet. That encourages the attackers to attack on someone's personal data by using different methods like Botnet, Phishing scams, Malware attack, Malicious attack etc. Due to this, both the administrator and the users suffer a lot. It happens because the users are not familiar with the security and privacy terms and conditions. They don't even bother to secure their personal data before sharing it on social media. In this research paper we present the consequences, side effects, usages and its impact on our private lives. It also presents how users can secure their data from attackers and the techniques they can adopt to protect their content.

Keywords: Cyber bullying, Phishing scam, Backlash, Malware, Spyware.

1. Introduction

Social media plays an important role in our daily lives.

[1]. Social media is basically a source that connects the people to the whole world through internet. Social media is commonly used throughout the world in the form of Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Email, Google, Skype, Instagram etc. These are the few applications through which people connect with each other. Social media give useful information to the users related to the whole world and helps out the users to stay connected with the world. [2] No doubt social media

makes the life of the people much easier. That's why with the advanced technology we have an increasing number of applications that are making people's lives much easier. They forget that every useful thing may also have lots of side effects. In case of social media there are also some serious issues regarding to the privacy and security of the personal content of the users which may cause several problems. The primary thing that comes as an issue is account hacking of the user. Attacker can easily attack the users through websites. The users click on different links without knowing those websites, later on their system is infected and they have to suffer a lot. Attackers are interested in that type of users which are social media lovers and continuously using the social

media content and technologies. This kind of users are an easy target for attackers. Another problem is stalking and harassment. These threats do come from the attackers or any strangers. Mostly stalking and harassment is done by the family members, friends and people around us in our surroundings. Same like the pokes and bully criteria. Another serious problem is being compelled by the organization to turn over the password. This is mostly done when the person is going to start a new job. Another issue is of location-based services. [3] Nowadays a number of users use smart phones and all their activities are usually done by the smart phones. Hacker can easily attack the people through their smart

phones by accessing their location-based services. Lots of the apps which are downloaded on daily basis ask for location information and their numbers are increasing day by day. Hackers can also attack the users through these apps. Last but not the least problem is phishing attack. This attack is done by giving fake policies and sending fake friend requests through Emails, Facebook and other sources. Now the question is how to protect ourselves from these attacks? Simply by creating a policy of social media. It can be done by creating different policies, training the users for using the social media in a secure way or by giving limited access to the social media. Through these solutions users can protect themselves from the hackers and other problems. These are the few problems which impacts on the user's privacy. The detailed problems and solutions emerging because of social media including the definition of the term is discussed below.

2. Social Media

“Social” in social media means “conversation”. The difference between social

media and TV is that viewers are engaged with the makers of the shows which they are watching. In a brief timeframe TV program are supplanted by the web based life world. [4] In online communication and conversation users share their opinion and build relationships. Users share their posts, videos, audios and photographs. It involves a combination of technology, telecommunication and social interaction. It is the different form of communication as compared to film, television and newspaper.

3. Privacy

Privacy means the information or data that a user does not want to disclose and share with others. [5] It is basically that kind of information that has potential to be misused. It can be the info of a group or individual. If we talk about an individual's privacy, it depends upon the user whether to share his personal information with others or not and in which manner to share that information. It is basically an ability of an individual or a group to share information about themselves. The limitations and materials of the privacy differ among individuals.

4. Purpose of Social Media

Social media is not only used for communication but it can also be used for business connections and promotions. [6] By using it user cannot only find the other users but also the organization in which they are working. The purpose of social media is to provide a platform to the users and business industry to come and interact with each other directly. A business can be well promoted through social media.

5. Attack on our Privacy through Social Media

5.1 Human Error

Human error is involved when somebody makes a slip that causes an accident or causes something dangerous to happen. By clicking on any unknown website accidentally which is not safe can harm the privacy of user.

5.2 Malicious Attack

This attack is due to malware and spyware that causes the disaster. [7] According to a research report, about 4,000 attacks happen on daily basis through malicious attackers. It can spread through emailing, or visiting different unknown websites.

5.3 Phishing Scams

It is a kind of attack on social media which attacks the user's personal information like banking details and passwords. Hackers get access to the personal stuff using that specific information and harm to the people.

6. Privacy Issues in Social Media

Privacy attacks are when unauthorized user tries to enter in your account and get some private data. Anyone which is closer to you in family can access your account details by just simply watching your password. [8][9] The main issue of the privacy is that large amount of information processes each day without any limitation.

6.1 Challenges to Social Media

There are many challenges social media is facing today, few of them are

- Cookies
- Bugs
- Spyware

7. Impact on Social Media and Invasion of Privacy

One of the very positive impacts of social media is that it provides a platform to geographically distributed users to come on single platform and share their views. Every user has freedom to express their views. The information can be easily spread by one medium to another without using any other source. Usually users don't pay much attention to the privacy and secrecy issues to the websites. [10] [11] Government Agencies has rights prior to the knowledge of the user to access the personal information of the user. FBI and NWC3 are the agencies that work for cybercrimes and arrest the cybercriminals. People who hack private details of the user and misuse that information for their personal benefits are criminals. There is strict punishment for the criminal of almost 5-20 years of jail with heavy fine that is unable for a common man to pay.

8. Negative Effect of Social Media on Society

Social media build a false sense of connection according to the Cornell University Steven Strogatz.

[12] Report States that it becomes more difficult for user to find a real relationship in the world. Users focus more on fake relationships on social media without knowing each other. By focusing on such websites most of energy is wasted and most importantly the connection between the families becomes weak. Cyber bullying is spreading rapidly nowadays in our youth. According to the CBS News report in 2010 [13] 42% of the children are harassed online and become victim.

Another negative impact of social media is that seller companies show somethings and sell different things. There is obviously decrease in productivity in doing so. That makes sense of fraud to the customers.

9. Risk for Youth using Social Media

There are many categories of risk. Following are few of them that are very common for adolescents.

9.1 Online Harassment and Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is one of the common ways of communication in which offline harassment is done. [14] Which can cause depression, anxiety or may even lead to suicide, etc. whereas online harassment is that where cyber bullying is done openly in front of whole world.

9.2 Sexting

It means sending and receiving the sexual messages, photographs and posts online on the social media that disturbs the other users. This phenomenon is very much popular in the teenage population. According to a research [15] [16] 20% of the users who are in their teenage share the sexist videos and text messages online.

9.3 Face book Depression

Researchers nowadays call Facebook with a new name that is face book depression. Most of the teenagers spend almost half of the day on social media using Facebook, different websites are engaged on other false activities. Which later turn into aggression, depression, anxiety and sometimes suicide. Sometimes social media become risky for the users especially if they are novice.

10. Reduce the Impact of Social Media in Life

According to recent research of APS (Australian psychology society) teenagers are highly involved in the social media life, their ages are from 14-19 years and one of the half adults involve in the social media through their mobile phones. They usually use social media 5 days in a week for long hours. [17] Using too much social media can affect the self-esteem of the users /youth and put a very bad impact on their lives. Researchers says that 42% of the users use social media on bed before sleeping. It badly affects the health e.g. back bone problem, sleep disorder etc. [18] Most of the complaints registered by the teenagers are of harassing and being black mailed by the strangers. The reason is that the 60% of the parents don't give time to their children or don't monitor their child activities on social media. Due to this reason their children get caught by some strangers on social media who harass them by hacking their accounts and get their personal life information. Adolescents don't have idea how to protect themselves and how to use the social media in secure way. For this purpose, parents need to monitor their child on online world. For this purpose, parents may follow few tips:

- Parents must connect with their child through Facebook, Twitter and other accounts on social media. So that they check, what their child is posting online and which YouTube channel they are following. Due to these kinds of clues, parents can save their child from driving in the wrong direction.
- Parents should trust Children specially in teenage and behave like a friend to them. They must feel free to share their favorite things. In this way children also trusts them

and share their personal things easily.

- They can play games, watch movies with their teenagers in free time so they build a strong bond with them.
- Guide them about the difficulties and consequences they may face while using social media. Suggest them to read different blogs or posts on these issues.

11. Manage the Social Media Privacy

The social media lovers share their personal life details in the form of selfies, photos of attending parties etc. to express their joys and enjoyments to the whole world. [19] But these lovers forget to save their personal data from the hacker that loves these types of people. They share their content without hesitation on the social media. Cyber attacker's attacks on the social media account by different websites. The user clicks on that particular website without knowing the impact. Then all data goes to the attackers and hackers, they easily steal personal information, identity and on the basis of this information, hacker blackmails the user. Now the question is how the novice users protect themselves from such hackers. Let discuss some social media apps and their privacy:

11.1 Facebook

Facebook is one of the most common and oldest social media networks that gives the facility of uploading photos, status updates, check in, tag the friend, send messages, calling etc. The users can access the Facebook through mobile phones also. [20] It takes the personal information of the user like name, birth, gender etc. and this information is publicly available for everyone. In order to secure the personal data, there are four privacy setting

like public, friends, and custom, only me etc. To keep ourselves secure from the hackers the users always select the option of only me in the setting.

11.2 Twitter

Twitter is second most important network on the social media through which people interact with the real world and share their information. Twitter posts are public and in order to make the twitter account private, we have to follow some precaution and steps:

- Only those people access you, who have twitter account.
- Tweets no longer remain on twitter.
- Previous tweet will be hidden after some specific time.

12. Safety for Every Device

Nowadays security is no longer saving only one machine but saving lots of machines that can easily be attacked by the hackers. [21] Users share data on daily basis, sometimes the quantity or quality of the information shared attracts the hackers and they tend to hack the particular accounts. Nowadays in the 21st century information has become a new currency. Mostly after downloading, every app asks to access the information on your device and users allow that without any hesitation but they are unaware of the consequences. The information can include a lot of things they don't really want to share. Users should try to avoid posting the speaking photos as it increases the chance of attacks According to the researcher by Marketo [22], Facebook is the top social media network because of the fact that over one billion of users have active account with Facebook and almost 13 million of users never ever touch privacy settings of

the account. 28% of people reveals their posts, pictures on social media and 11% of people complain that some other person uses their account and share inappropriate or irrelevant material.

Here are some advices to protect the privacy:

- User must say no to auto login whenever they login from other devices because it gives the front door to the hackers to visit the user profile and get useful data from that. So, it's essential for the user to always mention "NO" whenever the system asks "remember me".
- User should understand and make the use of the privacy setting for safety features.
- Before user enters the detail on social media, spend time to check privacy settings. Never announce on social media that where are you going and when will you come back.
- If the user gets some suspicious activity on the account, immediately take an action and report to the expert to sort out the issue and resolve the problem.

13. Advantages of Social Media

- Social media gives the world-wide connectivity and give the users a single platform where people can search their older friends or even jobs through Facebook, Twitter etc.
- Social media also give users the commonality of interest where they get their desired information and desired area of work like painting, cooking, handicrafts, ideas, tips, political information etc.
- It gives the facility to share real time

information that is very much beneficial for teachers and students. [23] [24] It also provides information about the celebrities. They share their personal experiences so to become more popular and large number of audiences attract toward that particular information.

- It offers the facility of advertisement. Business owners advertise their products for free. Social media is the best approach to attract variety of users.
- It provides the facility of new cyclic speed through which the people can view the news on the social media sites. And day by day cyclic speed increases.

14. Disadvantages of Social Media

- Backlash is one of the most common things on social media.
- Cyber bulling and crime against the children are one of the most important crimes happening around the world recently.
- Data is not secure and anyone can steal it. Personal data can be misused for the alternative purposes.
- There are also many chances of fraud because most of the websites are not secure.
- It is time waster because according to the research [25] 89% people spend their time on the social media instead of their work.
- Its corporate invasion of privacy and sell the user personal detail to the hackers.

15. Conclusion

Everything has a positive or negative impact it depends on us how we practice it. Things are good if we use them in a positive way. The misuse of the social media is on the top because of the irresponsible behavior of the parents towards their child. The parents play an important role in the society and in the life of their child. The children go towards the wrong track just because they don't get love and attention from their parents. Mostly youngsters involve in the cybercrime activities because of the ignorance from their parents. Parents should be treating their child well. They must be living a life like a friend with them. They should trust them by giving little attention through this they can save the lives of innocent ones.

16. References

- [1] Jump up to: ^{a b c} Harris, Wil. June 2006. Retrieved
- [2] from "Archived copy". Archived from the original on 2012-09-23. Retrieved 2012-09-15.
- [3] **Jump up**[^] Tracy Mitrano. (2006, November, December). A Wider World: Youth, Privacy, and Social Networking Technologies. Retrieved
- [4] **Jump up**[^] Boyd, Danah (2014). *It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens*. Yale University Press. pp. 56, 60.
- [5] [^] Jump up to: ^{a b} Luo, W., Xie, Q., & Hengartner,
- [6] U. "FaceCloak: An Architecture for User Privacy on Social Networking Sites". *IEEE Xplore*. IEEE. Retrieved 2009. Check date values in: `|access-date=` (help)
- [7] [^] Jump up to: ^{a b} "How to Stop Facebook from Sharing Your Information With Third Parties"
- [8] **Jump up**[^] "Facebook Secretly Sold Your Identity to Advertisers".
- [9] **Jump up**[^] "About Twitter's suggestions for who to follow".
- [10] **Jump up**[^] "tracking our online trackers".
- [11] 9. **Jump up**[^] Ciment, J (2013). "Social Media". *Culture Wars in America: An*
- [12] *Encyclopedia of Issues, Viewpoints, and Voices – via ONESEARCH*.
- [13] [^] Jump up to: ^{a b} "Social Networking Privacy: How to be Safe, Secure and Social - Privacy Rights Clearinghouse". *privacyrights.org*.
- [14] Boyd, Danah M.; Nicole B. Ellison; "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and
- [15] Scholarship," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, vol. 13, p. 210-230, 2008
- [16] Dwyer, Catherine; Starr Roxanne Hiltz; Katia Passerini; *Trust and Privacy Concern With Social Networking Sites: A Comparison of Facebook and*
- [17] MySpace, Proceedings of 13th Americas Conference on Information Systems (AMCIS), USA, August, 2007
- [18] <http://smallbusiness.chron.com> negative effect of social media on society and individuals by Brain Jung
- [19] Gifford NV Sexting in the USA, Washington, dc:family online safety institute report; 2009,availbat : www.fosi.org/cms/downloads/resource/sexting.pdf.accessed July 16,2010

- [20] <http://socialmediabeez.com/author/boey/>
- [21] http://socialnetworking.loveknow.com/advantages_and_disadvantages_of_social_networking
- [22] www.thenationalcampaign.org/SEXTECH/PDF.SEXTech_summart.PDF. Accessed July 16,2010
- [23] Pew Internet and American Life Project research survey, "Why Americans Use Social Media,"
- [24] November
- [25] 2011, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/2131/social-media-facebook-twitter-myspace-linkedin>
- [26] Dinerman, Brad; "Social Networking and Security
- [27] Risks,"whitepaper,GFIsoftware,
- [28] 2011, www.gfi.com/whitepapers/Social_Networking_and_Security_Risks.pdf
- [29] Common Sense Media. *Is Technology Networking Changing Childhood? A National Poll*. San Francisco, CA: Common Sense Media; 2009.Available
- [30] at:www.common sense media.org/sites/default/files/CSM_teen_social_media_080609_FINAL.pdf.
- [31] Accessed July 16, 2010
- [32] 21. Lenhart A. *Teens and Sexting*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center; 2009. Available
- [33] at:<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Teens-and-Sexting.aspx>. Accessed August 4, 2010
- [34] 22. *Social Media and Young Adults*.
- [35] DC: Pew Research Center; 2010. Available
- [36] at: <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>. Accessed July 16, 2010
- [37] 23.Berkshire District Attorney. *Sexting*. Pittsfield, MA: Commonwealth of Massachusetts; 2010.Available
- [38] at: www.mass.gov/?pageID=berterminal&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Crime+Awareness+%26+Prevention&L2=Parents+%26+Youth&sid=Dber&b=terminalcontent&f=parents_youth_sexting&csid=Dber. Accessed September 7, 2010
- [39] 24.Excessive chatting on Facebook can lead to
- [40] Depression in teenage girls. *Daily Telegraph*.January31, 2010. Available
- [41] at: www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/facebook/4405741/Excessive-chatting-on-Facebook-can-lead-to-depression-in-teenage-girls.html. Accessed September 7, 2010
- [42] Sturm Social networking psych studies: research shows teen Facebook users prone to depression. *TrendHunter*. Available
- [43] at: www.trendhunter.com/trends/depression-from-facebook.Accessed September 7, 2010