Sharing on Social Media

Introduction
Assume that you have been appointed to a task force of 5 or 6 computing professionals within your organization. You have been asked to examine the current issue outlined in the article below. Your team has <u>not</u> been asked to make specific recommendations to solve the problem. Rather, you have been asked to make recommendations that will help the Government decide what next steps they should take.

Prompts
1. What is/are the problem/problems here? Is there an underlying fundamental problem?
2. Who are the major stakeholders and what are their perspectives?
3. What are the major ethical, legal, and security aspects associated with the problem?
4. What are the intended and unintended consequences of existing computing solutions? Consider the consequences on individuals, organizations and society within local and global contexts.
5. What recommendations do you propose that may lead to potential solutions?

In the UAE, a man was recently imprisoned for taking a 15 second video of his friend and family and posting it on a social networking site called Instagram without their consent. Although he removed it when his friend wasn't happy, the case still went to court. Under the law in the UAE, if videos or pictures are taken and published on social media without approval, then it is punishable by law as an invasion of privacy.

Smart phones make it very easy to take pictures or videos and upload them instantly. With the high percentage of smart phones with photo, video and sharing opportunities, more and more personal content is online. Nearly 75% of people with Internet access use social networking sites (Burnham, 2015). Every minute 100,000 tweets are sent, 684478 pieces of content are shared on Facebook, 3600 photos are shared on Instagram (socialskinny, 2014). A recent US study found 63% of mums use Facebook and 97% said they post pictures of their children, 46% post videos. This raises an interesting question as babies cannot give consent for their picture to be posted. The speed and ease of taking pictures of videos and uploading them means that users perhaps don't consider the issues and concerns. How many users get the consent of everyone in a picture before they upload ?

The Director of Oxford Internet Institute says there are two things to be careful about. One is consent, and the other is the amount of information users give away. People freely give up personal information to join social networks, and these sites offer different levels of privacy.

Facebook users usually use their real names and upload personal information such as birthdays, addresses, employers, telephone numbers, interests, location and relationships. 20.4 million users include their birthday, 39.3 million users identified family members, 4.8 million have said where they plan to go on a certain day, 7.7 liked a page related to religion. The need to share, and for attention is sometimes more than the need for privacy.

Research shows (Das and Sahoo, 2011) that users often instantly decide to share online, without pausing to think about it, and that content is often visible to wide range of people. Many users might think their postings are private between them and the recipient. However personal content might be instantly visible to parents, teachers, employers, family, marketing companies and more. Once shared online, content can be copied, saved, forwarded and shared by other users. So it might be very difficult to control it or remove it completely. Pictures can also give a false impression when seen out of context.

According to family Online Safety Institute, 76% of teenagers are concerned about privacy and their online presence. Around a fifth of employers use social networking sites to research job candidates, and more than half said they are influenced by the candidates digital identity. The increasing ability of information technology to collect, analyse and disseminate information means that the potential and power over user privacy is increased. Facebook has been criticized on a range of issues as it classifies certain data as public information. Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn have become global photo identification databases, with information about each person. Facebook introduced a facial recognition feature in 2011 which photo tags faces, but turned this off in the European Union after criticism about privacy. The feature is working in other parts of the world however.

At the moment the personal data is mainly used for advertisers, but this could change. Its difficult to imagine what social media will look like in 15 year time. This is why some people take their digital identity seriously. When online identity is damaging, Google CEO Eric Schmidt suggested people change their name to escape online shame and move on with their lives. On the other hand the UK group iRights suggests 5 principles to empower young adults, and the first is the right to remove content put up before the age of 18. "Young people experiment, they change and they mature." They should not have to live with a damaging online identity. The future may

hold an option to delete all unwanted content about yourself online at a certain age, much of which was perhaps posted without your consent.

It is clear we need to make an informed choice about participating in social networking and about what we share of our own lives and others. In 15 years time the younger generation may question why their parents posted pictures of them online, invading their early privacy.

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