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How Should We Regard Social Website Such as Facebook?

Websites develop rapidly

Social Website is an internet community for sharing common interest and experiences between members. After simple registration, users can put up their photos, video clips, daily blogs, sign or write messages and play interactive games with other members on these websites.

In recent years, some social websites such as Facebook, MySpace, Xanga, Twitter and schools websites are deeply welcomed by young people. Among these websites, the highest commonplace rate is Facebook which has been developed to be the most favourite social website for adolescents in Macao. According to the data of internet statistical organization, Facebook is the second highest in average numbers visited daily by Macao people. The rate of clicking is only after (Yahoo!). Facebook is also the highest in numbers visited daily by Macao young people under the age of 24. The average online browsing time on Facebook by adolescents is half an hour which is the longest time among all websites. According to the announcement of 《Statistical Survey Report on the Internet Development in China》 in January 2009, the internet penetration rates were 94% and 99% for Macao adolescents at the age of 18 and 18-24 respectively. In the meantime, the report pointed out that most of the adolescents believed that using internet could strengthen chances and time on interpersonal relationship and social contact. They spent less time on using other media like newspaper, magazines and radio etc. From these we can see that social website such as Facebook have become gradually part of living for adolescents and have changed their attitude of living and module of making friends with others.

Seeing that adolescents are affected deeper and deeper by social websites such as Facebook, many educational workers begin to be concerned about its positive and negative effects on adolescents' family living and learning. This article tries to conclude the research result from surveys which aim at social website in recent days and explore with readers how parents should regard the effects of social websites on adolescents.

To build up interpersonal relationship gradually depends on common living

Social websites such as Facebook allows adolescents, schoolmates and friends to share their common experiences through photos, video clips and daily blogs. Also it helps old schoolmates and relatives who are living in different places to keep on contact. But, recently most of the researches agreed coincidentally that social websites do not help adolescents and others to keep on a long and steady relationship. The schoolmates and friends need to have a common goal and build up friendship gradually through learning and living in order to keep on a deep friendship which is not built up in one day through the connection of websites.

Therefore, the specialists suggest that social websites should not occupy or substitute the time for normal social activities between schoolmates and friends. The adolescents should fully utilize internet platform to contact schoolmates or friends together to carry out extracurricular activities which are good for body and mind or share the good time of having activities together on websites.

To protect personal safety and privacy

The researches revealed that there was hidden problem to be worried about on personal safety and privacy protection for using social websites to make new friends blindly. The specialists suggested that adolescents should use social websites to keep on contact and share information with schoolmates or friends who were known to them. They should make new friends through the introduction of schoolmates or friends who were familiar to them, and also to pay attention on personal safety and protect their own privacy when they communicated with strangers.

To distinguish entertainment and pleasure

Interactive game is the main reason that internet users stay for a long time on social websites.

The difference between conservative computer game and interactive game is that interactive game allows internet users to play interactively with friends and other members on the platform. Facebook provides an open platform for software developers. For that, it attracts thousands of game designers from all over the world to design thousands of games for Facebook. Among these games, there was no lack of wholesome games which are both educational and entertaining such as Times Spelling Bee, a game on joining words and Geo Challenge for testing geographic knowledge etc. But some of the most favourite interactive games in Facebook platform are controversial.



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Texas Hold'Em, Mafia Wars and Pet Society are the three most popular games in Facebook platform. Two of them are criticized for being unsuitable for young people. Texas Hold'Em is a mock gambling game. In Mafia Wars you need to join the gangs to carry out different kinds of criminal conducts to earn bonus point. In comparison to Mafia Wars and Hold'Em, the unhealthy consciousness in Pet Society is not such clear.

Specialists suggest that parents should not completely prohibit their children from joining the social websites for the reason that some of them are unhealthy in consciousness. Instead parents should take this opportunity to educate their children to distinguish between truth and falsehood and lead them to carry out leisure entertainments which are good for body and mind.

Study Results

The result of an American survey revealed that students who spent more time on social website such as Facebook after class than learning had a comparatively poor academic results.

But the educators do not have a unified view on the causal relationship between academic results and other different activities (e.g. watching television, surfing on internet etc.) which are not related to learning. Is it because the students do not intend to learn or their self control ability is weak so they spend much of their time on watching television and surfing on internet or because watching television and surfing on internet easily get students to be indulged in, causing their study results to be not good enough? Until now, the scholars cannot find out the causal relationship which is recognized by all.

The specialists believe that if parents forbid children to surf on internet completely, the effect is easily the opposite. In this way, it will bring out the rebellious emotion of adolescents and cannot cultivate children's ability to judge right from wrong and to develop good living habits. The more effective way is to allocate time reasonably to learn and play with their children together. In this way it can maintain a basic learning time and allow their children to adjust learning pressure through entertainments.

Things that parents should do and should not do

Things that parents should do

1. To understand initially the positive effects and negative effects on the grow-up of their children from social websites such as Facebook
2. To explain clearly to their children the problems on safety and privacy on joining social websites such as Facebook
3. To guide their children to distinguish between entertainments which are suitable for their adolescent development and those games of unhealthy consciousness
4. To negotiate with children on setting a time schedule to allocate time for learning and entertainment reasonably.
5. To encourage and arrange children and family members to participate in activities which are good for body and mind with schoolmates and friends and to share photos and video clips through social websites such as Facebook
6. To open accounts on social websites such as Facebook for enhancing communication with children through these websites



“教育暨青年局2010年虎年利是封”換領辦法：

市民只需集齊於2009年11月至2010年1月期間出版的4本刊物《百分百家長》、《教師雜誌》、《教育文摘》及《語言聊天室》內刊載的其中兩種顏色的印花，便可於2010年2月1日至2月12日在辦公時間內前往下列地點換領虎年利是封2包，數量有限，換完即止。

Formas de troca dos “Envelopes de Laisi do Ano do Tigre de 2010 da DSEJ”:

Os cidadãos que consigam reunir os selos de duas das quatro cores, que constam nas quatro publicações (a saber: Pais 100%, Revista dos Professores, Educação e Nós, Dialogando...) editadas entre Novembro de 2009 e Janeiro de 2010, poderão entre 1 e 12 de Fevereiro de 2010, dentro do horário de expediente, nos locais abaixo mencionados, trocar dois pacotes de envelopes de laisi do ano do Tigre. A quantidade de pacotes para troca é limitada e esta termina quando estes se esgotarem.

Exchanged method of the “DSEJ red envelopes for the Year of the Tiger 2010”:

Residents who collect any two colours of the stamps from the 4 periodicals of DSEJ – “100% Parents”, “Teacher Magazine”, “Education Digest” and “Talking” published between November 2009 and January 2010, can exchange the stamps for 2 packets of red envelopes of the Year of the Tiger during the office hours at the following locations from 1st to 12th February 2010. The number of red envelopes is limited, it will be provided at first come first serve basis.

換領地點資料如下：

教育暨青年局 (DSEJ) —地點：澳門約翰四世大馬路7-9號一樓；辦公時間：星期一至四上午9時至中午1時，下午2時30分至5時45分；

星期五上午9時至中午1時，下午2時30分至5時30分；聯絡電話：2855 5533

教育資源中心 (CRE) —地點：澳門南灣大馬路926號；辦公時間：星期一至五上午10時30分至晚上7時；聯絡電話：8395 9200

氹仔教育活動中心 (CAET) —地點：氹仔濠景花園24至26座地下；辦公時間：星期一至日上午10時至晚上9時30分；聯絡電話：2884 1284

德育中心 (CEM) —地點：澳門台山新街利達新邨三樓；辦公時間：星期一至星期六上午10時至晚上10時；聯絡電話：2840 3200

駿菁活動中心 (CJH) —地點：澳門順景廣場近馬場東大馬路；辦公時間：星期一至星期日上午9時至晚上10時30分；聯絡電話：2842 5110/2842 5112



Things that parents should not do

1. To be blind to social websites such as Facebook
2. To allow children to make friends at their pleasure on internet
3. To prohibit children to play interactive games on social websites
4. To scold children for using too much time on social websites such as Facebook
5. To unconsciously allow children to use time for surfing on internet instead of developing their own interest, gathering with schoolmates and family members.
6. To prohibit children from joining social websites such as Facebook

Conclusion

It has become part of the living of adolescents to carry out pleasure entertainment and to build up interpersonal relationship by using social contact websites such as Facebook. These websites are like swords with two sides: it makes the living of adolescents colorful and it may bring some unhealthy living and learning habits. As responsible parents of today, we should first understand the possible effects that may have on the living and learning of our children. Then we have to know clearly and objectively the advantages and disadvantages of these burgeoning things. We should analyse the positive and negative effects on the living and learning of our children and encourage our children to use positive functions on social websites and avoid unhealthy effects as much as possible.

After all, social websites such as Facebook is only a communication platform and channel. If parents can use it correctly, they can change it into a bridge for developing communication between parents and children.

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Locais para a troca dos pacotes de envelopes de laisi:

Direcção dos Serviços de Educação e Juventude (DSEJ) – Avenida de D. João IV, nos 7-9, 1º andar, Macau; Horário de expediente: de segunda a quinta, das 9:00 às 13:00 horas e das 14:30 às 17:45 horas; sexta-feira, das 9:00 às 13:00 horas e das 14:30 às 17:30 horas; Telefone 2855 5533.

Centro de Recursos Educativos (CRE) – Avenida da Praia Grande, n.º 926, Macau; Horário de expediente: de segunda a sexta, das 10:30 às 19:00 horas; Telefone 8395 9200.

Centro de Actividades Educativas da Taipá (CAET) – Rua de Bragança, Lotes 24-26, Nova Taipá Garden, Taipá; Horário de expediente: de segunda a domingo, das 10:00 às 21:30 horas; Telefone 2884 1284.

Centro de Educação Moral (CEM) – Rua Nova de Toi San, Edifício Litoral, 2º andar, Macau; Horário de expediente: de segunda a sábado, das 10:00 às 22:00 horas; Telefone 2840 3200.

Centro de Juventude do Bairro do Hipódromo (CJH) – Praceta da Serenidade junto da Avenida Leste do Hipódromo, Macau; Horário de expediente: de segunda a domingo, das 9:00 às 22:30 horas; Telefones 2842 5110 e 2842 5112.

Locations for the exchange of the red envelopes are as follows:

Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) – Location: Avenida de D. João IV, No. 7-9, 1st Floor, Macau; Office hours: 9:00 to 13:00, 14:30 to 17:45 (Monday to Thursday); 9:00 to 13:00, 14:30 to 17:30 (Friday); Telephone: 2855 5533

Centre of Educational Resources (CRE) – Location: Av. da Praia Grande, No. 926, Macau; Office hours: 10:30 to 19:00 (Monday to Friday); Telephone: 8395 9200

Centre of Educational Activities of Taipá (CAET) – Location: Rua de Bragança, Nova Taipá Garden, Block 24-26, Ground Floor, Taipá; Office Hours: 10:00 to 21:30 (Monday to Sunday); Telephone: 2884 1284

Centre of Moral Education (CEM) – Location: Rua Nova de Toi San, Edifício Litoral, 2nd Floor, Macau; Office hours: 10:00 to 22:00 (Monday to Saturday); Telephone: 2840 3200

Youth Activity Centre of Bairro do Hipódromo (CJH) – Location: Praceta da Serenidade near the Avenida Leste do Hipódromo, Macau; Office hours: 9:00 to 22:30 (Monday to Sunday); Telephone: 2842 5110 / 2842 5112