Social Harm



EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

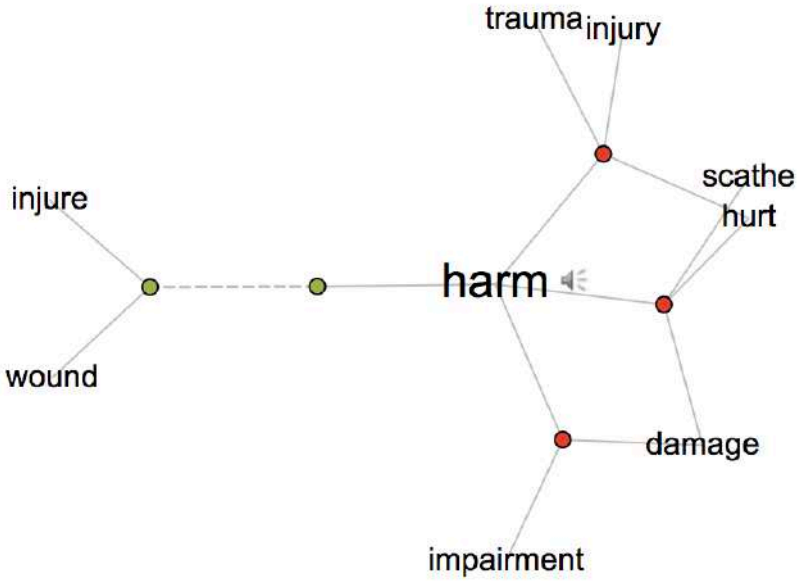
Discuss Current Affairs, give your opinion, learn and practice phrasal verbs and idiomatic vocabulary.

Activity One: Discuss

1. Are you aware that social media can damage society or individuals?
2. What harm do you think that social media has done to our society?
3. Is social media a threat to democracy? If so in what way?
4. What harm does social media do to our children in your opinion?
5. Do you think that our governments should take action to prevent such harm?

Activity Two: Synonyms

Look at this diagram from the visual thesaurus. Try to use each of the synonyms of harm in a sentence related to social media.



Activity Three : Phrasals...

Re-write the information below from The Guardian and the New York Times using as many phrasal verbs as you can think of. Try thinking of them before you look them up. Test yourself in this way about how easy it is for you to find phrasal verbs and use them naturally.

(Four groups this is a timed team challenge).

There are allegations of widespread social media interference by the Russians during the Brexit referendum. University of Edinburgh research shows more than 400 Russian-run Twitter accounts that had been active in the US election had also been actively posting about Brexit.



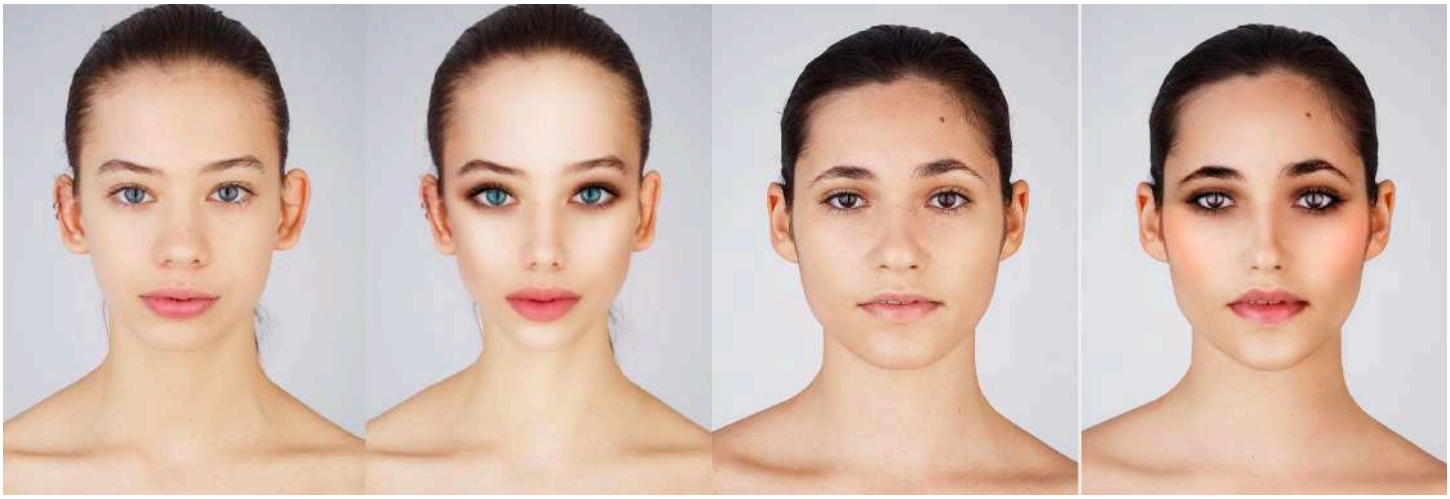
In addition research conducted by a joint team of experts from the University of California at Berkeley and Swansea University reportedly identified 150,000 Twitter accounts with various Russian ties that disseminated messages about Brexit.

These social media accounts were used to post divisive messages about Brexit, both before and after the vote. Most of the messages sought to inflame fears about Muslims and immigrants to help drive the vote, suggesting parallels to the strategy that Russian propagandists employed in the United States in the 2016 election to try to intensify the polarization of the electorate.

This is all evidence of a Russian attempt to use social media to manipulate British politics in the same way they have done in the United States, France and elsewhere.

Activity Four : Selfie Harm…

What do you think these photos say about their subjects? Check out the article online, describe what you see….
https://news.artnet.com/art-world/rankin-selfie-harm-1457959



Activity Five : Comprehension Activity

Will big data and social media destroy democracy?

One of the most sensational news stories of 2018 has been the revelation that Cambridge Analytica harvested the data of millions of Facebook users. According to the social media company, data from up to 87 million people was accessed improperly for the purposes of targeting voters in political campaigns. (Cambridge Analytica has denied any wrongdoing.)

While the the infringement of privacy is in itself a cause for concern, this story isn't a hypothetical moral debate – there are real world consequences. Your Facebook likes, combined with data from other sources, can tell someone a lot about you. And if someone knows a lot about you, they can influence what you do.

While advertising is a big driver, getting you to part with your cash is only part of the story. People want to influence how you vote in an election.

Michal Kosinski, who describes himself as a computational psychologist and big data scientist, demonstrated an algorithm he created to Jamie Bartlett. Taking seemingly innocuous information about his cultural tastes from Facebook, like his fondness for The Sopranos and Kate Bush, it was able to accurately predict Bartlett's job and religious background.

In his new book The People Vs Tech Bartlett writes: "I left Michal's office with the sensation that this sort of insight was very exciting but also a new source of power that we barely understand, let alone control."

What your 'likes' reveal/
Michal Kosinski developed computer software that can analyse your personality from your Facebook likes. In 2017 Jamie Bartlett interviewed him for Secrets of Silicon Valley on BBC Two. Michal applied his software to Jamie's account, with scarily accurate results.

It might feel creepy and unsettling that an algorithm can work out that a man is a journalist, interested in history and raised as a Catholic. But is it really a threat to democracy?
Campaigns can now target a specific set of voters, each with specific promises and pledges

Bartlett argues that politicians being able to use big data in this way fundamentally changes the electoral process.

Instead of trying to persuade millions of people with the same advert, "***campaigns can now target a specific set of voters, each with specific promises and pledges, based on what they already care about***".



1. What have Cambridge Analytica been accused of doing with millions of Facebook user's data?
2. According to paragraph 2, what can someone do when they have access to our Facebook likes and personal data?
3. As well as being targeted by advertising campaigns trying to get us to spend our money, how else is our personal data being exploited through social media?
4. What was Michal Kosinski's algorithm able to do with the personal information taken from Jamie Bartlett's Facebook account?
5. What did Bartlett write in his book after learning from Michal Kosinski about social media's potential to be politically influential.

6. What do you think about this last statement? "***campaigns can now target a specific set of voters, each with specific promises and pledges, based on what they already care about***".

   Does social media really pose a real threat to our democracy or is its emergence in the political scene just a natural evolution in its ever increasing popularity and importance in our lives?

https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2WyPqhdbcpHDN9z0KdBt5Tp/will-big-data-and-social-media-destroy-democracy

Activity Six : Phrasal Verbs Gap Fill

Insert the following phrasal verbs into the sentences below in the correct order.

- Hang out
- Scroll up / scroll down
- Get rid of
- Shut down and turn off your devices for the day
- Come across something
- Log in/on
- Come back
- Keep up (with)

1. ..... = To do whatever is necessary to stay level or equal with someone or something
2. ..... = To find something by chance
3. ..... = The action of gaining access to a computer or a network by entering a username and password
4. ..... = Describes up-and-down movement on the screen

5. ..... = If you think that the Internet is full of too many advertisements, and your email is nothing but spam
6. Most social media sites allow you to deactivate your account rather than delete it completely in case you want to .....
7. You may find it easier to stop using social media if you deactivate or ..... your accounts altogether.
8. You can use a site like meet-up.com to make new friends who like to ..... in person.

Activity Seven : Social Media Slang!

Read the following expressions and examples. Then with a partner create your own expression and example.

Facebook stalk

Meaning: Facebooking stalking someone goes beyond looking them up on Facebook. This phrase also includes looking them up on Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Google.
Example: "I Facebook stalked the new girl at school and found out she has a pet dog, a blue bike, four siblings, and a job at the movie theater."

Going viral

Meaning: To gain sudden popularity on a social media platform.
Example: "If you don't stop crying I'm going to post this video online and you'll go viral."

Bye Felicia

Meaning: Something said to someone you don't care about. By calling them 'Felicia' and not their real name it further emphasizes you don't care.
Example: "He tried to ask me on a date after he stood me up last Friday, all I could say was, 'bye Felicia!'

Hashtag

Meaning: A cheeky way to express how you're feeling in a given moment. (in spoken English, you would literally say, "hashtag".)
Example: "This vacation has been so amazing, hashtag summer!"

Swipe left

Meaning: Another way of saying you don't find someone appealing or attractive.
Example: "Eh, he seemed sweet enough but I'm going to swipe left on him."

Slide into their DM's

Meaning: DM stands for 'direct message'. This is saying you are cunning enough to get a person talking to you on a casual basis.

Example: "I only ever see her in the hallway, but I'm going to slide into her DM's and see if she'll go to prom with me."

Throwback Thursday

Meaning: A picture or memory from the past you post online, usually on a Thursday.
Example: "Throwback Thursday to when I spilt milk all over my jeans at your birthday party."

I can't even

Meaning: Something is so ridiculous you don't even want to acknowledge it
Example: "My sister just posted 89 photos of herself online. I can't even."

FOMO

Meaning: Fear of missing out.
Example: A young person sees lot's of pictures of their friends having fun at a party they were not invited to or didn't go to an they experience strong feelings of exclusion and stress caused by a fear of missing out.

Activity Eight : Rôle Plays.

I. You live in Macedonia and you have just had a great idea for making money. You are going to buy a domain name for a website called www.bbc-editorial.com This will look like it's the BBC. Then you can publish lots of pro- Trump sensationalist fake news and be sure that his followers will share your articles. With google ads you will become an overnight milionaire! The thing is right now you are dirt poor! So you need to pitch your idea to an investor. (This is a true story… act out that meeting with the investor).

II. You are a thirteen year old girl living in a small village in the south of England. You spend most of your time on your telephone. You love to follow celebrities on instagram and you use snapchat also with your friends. You see that one of your friends has posed some pictures taken with other friends of yours. You feel sad, left out and frankly jealous and you decide to post some fake stories of your own.. You want to show that you are interesting too. You inspire yourself with Kim Kardashians instagram page and then get to work. You enlist the help of your best friend. (Act out the discussion between the two best friends).

III. An influencial group of Democrat lobbyists, industrialists and intellectuals have got together to plan some strong action to prevent GAFA from intervening in the next US elections. The idea is that they will use proof showing how Google, Twitter and Facebook benefitted financially from the spread of fake news during the 2016 elections to show how these companies were responsible for the failure of the democratic process in these elections and therefore the ensuing damage to the American economy and worldwide reputation. They think they now have enough evidence to take legal action against GAFA. They meet with a lawyer to discuss this plan. (Act out that conversation with the lawyer. For inspiration - https://web.stanford.edu/~gentzkow/research/fakenews.pdf)

