

[Friendship@Facebook.com](#) examines the impact of social media on social interaction and community. As social media giants such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter increasingly penetrate our everyday lives, will the effect be to expand our opportunities for learning, problem solving, decision making, and personal interaction and development? Or will we confuse 100's of Facebook and Twitter friends with meaningful companionship, and 1000's of tweets and wall posts with authentic communication? Is our newly emerging participatory Web 2.0 culture strengthening social networks and community, or leading to greater isolation and loneliness? This course of study examines the historical rise of the social media, the critical role of powerful gatekeepers in the control and flow of information, the roles of digital media in personal relationships, the extent to which social media represent a democratizing force or an amplification of existing inequities, and the impact of ICT's on the organization and meaning of work. The course will focus on issues and concerns such as online privacy, perils of a plugged-in childhood, cyber-bullying, the integrity of online communities, the effectiveness of media-driven social movements, the cultural significance of memes, voluntary surveillance, the phenomenon of online 'virality', and more.