

Introduction:

This assignment will investigate the connections that are made between criminal activity and social media platforms. Looking into the way that youth have directly had an impact into the way social media has dictated the way they are able to display their crimes.

Body:

Over many generations the way that people interact has had drastic changes; the largest impacts of social media are on the youth of today. Baby boomers had a different social media perspective to what youth have today. Social media is an integral part of the society that we all know, with things that an individual posts on social media lasting forever. There are many social networking platforms that individuals partaking in antisocial behaviours utilise to display their crimes, particularly youth. These include but not limited to Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok and Facebook. Statistics show that 86% of teenagers use YouTube, 75% use Snapchat, and 70% use Instagram (eSafety Commissioner, 2018).

Youths are the main core of social networking sites, when youth are boasting about their antisocial behaviour and depending on the extent of what they post depend on the type of damage it can cause to that individual (*Gupta, Yana. & Mangal, Ayush, 2021*). Exposure online to criminal related incidents may trigger the crime and aggression within any individual, particularly young people. A prime example of this was seen in 2014 when two young people, inspired by the meme "slander man", stabbed their friend. There have been many other incidents where crimes have been committed and posted to social media platforms by young people (*Gupta, Yana. & Mangal, Ayush, 2021*). Many studies indicate that

social media exposure is significantly related to antisocial behaviour in young people (*Gupta, Yana. & Mangal, Ayush, 2021*).

Many young people view platforms to be beneficial in allowing constant connections to their peers and allowing them to stay updated with their lives. The *Anderson & Jiang (2018)* study talks about ways young people can be instantly connected with each other and share their lives through photos, videos and status updates. Young people have described these social media platforms as a key tool for them to be connecting and maintaining relationships, having creativity, and learning about the community (*Anderson & Jiang, 2018*). In saying this, whilst youth are able to see these positive benefits to social networking online, they are also able to identify the negatives in what social media can do be used for. This includes drama, bullying and pressuring of peers to present themselves in a particular manner (*Anderson & Jiang, 2018*). *Anderson & Jiang (2018)* states that youth play a large role in controlling content that they see on their social media platforms and have methods for preventing authority figures from viewing what they do on social media platforms (*Anderson & Jiang, 2018*). There is a large proportion represented in the *Anderson & Jiang (2018)* study that suggest they organise their social media platforms to only display content that they want to see. Further studies suggest that only one third of youth restrict or delete what they share on social media because they have a fear of their authority figure or figures viewing the content because they are concerned for the ramifications later in life (*Anderson & Jiang, 2018*).

The content that youth post varies by the age of the individual. Research shows that common types of content youth post include their family, emotions, feelings, and successful accomplishments (*Anderson & Jiang, 2018*). Further research into youth's perceptions of

social networking shows many believe it helps to deepen friendships and relates to positive feelings and emotions (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). There are also the negative impacts that social media platforms can impact on a young person's life. Research on social networking indicated that a young person's mental health has proliferated in the past few years: many studies explored if more frequent use of social networking can be associated with various concerning mental health issues in young people. These mental health issues that had been investigated in the study conducted by Nesi, 2020 included a look into depression, externalising and body image issues within young people (Nesi, 2020).

Young people are using social networking platforms to display their crimes and brag about their brazen lifestyles through sharing footage of themselves committing various offences whilst taunting the police (Barron, 2020). A look into a recent incident in Brisbane a local 'youth gang' were allegedly committed for a string of Instagram posts that showed teenage boys joyriding in stolen cars, risking community lives by travelling over 200km/h (Barron, 2020). Pictures of illegal drug use, weapons and large sums of cash, as well as boasts about being gangsters was all shared on social networking platforms (Barron, 2020). The youth were also boasting online of their fast stolen cars, jewelry and designer brands such as Versace & the use of emojis to hide their identity on social media (Barron, 2020). On an Instagram account run by a youth, the description read that "account does not endorse crime & is ran for entertainment purposes only" (Barron, 2020). These youth thrive from the notoriety and online adoration that they receive for their petty crimes (Barron, 2020).

The measures that are put into place by the Queensland Government are the ability for Queensland Police to be able to get the resources that they need to start action against this

crime (Barnsley, 2020). Among some of the measures announced to cull the crime spree by youth are, ramping up opposition to bail when a youth offender poses a significant risk to the community & the establishment of an all-round the clock youth crime police “strike team” (Barnsley, 2020).

A representative for Sunrise, 2020 was able to interview a member of the ‘South-Side gang’ and ask about how the youth brazenly post their crimes of stealing cars, taunting police and speeding for example, to social media. The youth stated that “they pretty much just do it for fun & to gain attention from the community” another stated that “I can just go and do my time. My time in detention was pretty good because we were treated well” (Barnsley, 2020).

TikTok and other social media platforms are fuelling trends in which teenagers exhibit edited videos of their crimes including ramraiding stores and stealing goods, vandalising school bathrooms, and stealing vehicles (Burrell 2022). It is stated that due to the highly suggestible nature of youths these trends spread fast and are often copied by other youth. TikTok, one of the leading social media platforms in which these videos are posted state that between April to June 2021, less than 1% of all videos uploaded are removed for violating its Community Guidelines or Terms of Service and that many are removed before they are even watched. 1% may sound minor but in the above-mentioned period of April to June 2021, 1% totalled to 81,518,334 videos (Burrell 2022). It is to be noted, however that TikTok’s Community Guidelines and Terms of Service prohibit videos that feature many other types of content such as physical harm, drugs, gambling, and nudity (TikTok, 2022).

Whilst there are an overwhelming number of negatives there are positives that address the situation of youth crime and individuals of the community being able to use these platforms to their advantage. A real-life situation of youth offending, Lane posted CCTV footage taken by the security footage around his house, allegedly capturing the youth to his Instagram page, where Lane has more than nine thousand followers (Gramenz, 2021). In the days following the initial post, Lane continued to post more information on the alleged youth offenders that included private messages, photos and the youths' full names (Gramenz, 2021).

Although social networking has to protect the youth's identities who stole Lanes car due to the youth being underage, Lane stated. Lane also posted a video to Tiktok where he was dancing alongside a video of one of the alleged youth offenders & wrote their first names in the caption (Gramenz, 2021).

There are multiple situations where the use of social networking platforms has become a deterrent to youth offending such as In Queensland, social networking falls under the same as traditional media under Queensland Youth Justice Act and identifying information about a youth is covered under the Act.

Soon after Lane posted the exposing information on social networking sites, he was contacted by a youth offender who initially apologized. The youth offender stated that they were "unbelievably embarrassed" after being exposed for lying about their family circumstances to their peers and had been set straight from the exposure. Lane said that the youth apologized to their family, and Lane took the video down but warned the youth that the video would be posted back to social media if the youth was caught committing more

offences (Gramenz, 2021). Unfortunately, not long after was back to offending and posting their petty crimes on social networking sites.

Saint Lane interviewed a mother of a youth offender who agreed that social networking is a contributing factor to these youth acting out for attention online and within their community (Gramenz, 2021). Lane has said that social networking is the be all end for these youth offenders; it is bigger than the law. Lane stated that by him calling out the youth offenders that stole from him, it seemed like the only way that the youth could possibly have some remorse for the actions and consider stopping. He said that he holds the TikToks so that if the youth recommit, he will upload them back to social networking for the world to see, a way of revenge (Gramenz, 2021).

Furthermore, it is evident that the Australian government should consider funding programs that would educate youth workers in social media because some individuals that work alongside these youth are still thinking that social media is the same as it was back in 2000 and are representing them and guiding them in 2021 (Marsh, 2018). If a youth commits a crime, it is highly likely that the youth will post online to boast about it to their peers and the community or even a fight at high school; it is highly probable now due to social change that the video would end up on social networking sites (Marsh, 2018). Harding, a senior lecturer in criminology, noticed that youth gangs were using social networking many years ago, and the numbers have only doubled since then (Marsh, 2018). He stated that it is hard to prove this as no one has fully taken part in researching as most criminologists are stuck in the past and are not aware of the social change that has happened for youth today (Marsh, 2018).

Training and support would help workers understand that (Marsh, 2018).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, there are connections between offending and social media platforms but many ways in which this has been addressed. Youth offending is increasing & with social networking devolving by the day it is becoming easier for youth offenders to display the crimes they have committed without being held liable even with multiple laws. The online networking advancement has seen to create numerous positives for youth with social change but unfortunately, the negatives of social networking have also caused downsides to what it has done to the youth of today. Significant training should be provided to those that work alongside youth to better prepare for social changes caused by social networking.

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