

**AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:
PRIVACY POLICY AND FEATURES**

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**AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:
PRIVACY POLICY AND FEATURES**

**A project submitted to Dean of Awang Had Salleh Graduate School in partial
Fulfillment of the requirement for the degree
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ABSTRACT

Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are at the heart of many people lives, and the majority of both students and adults who use them to share information, keeping contact with old friends and meeting new acquaintances. However, the increasing number of action on online services also gives a raised to privacy concerns and issues. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is investigate the two SNSs i.e. Facebook and Friendster in terms of privacy policy and features, users' preferences and needs as well as producing a guideline for good SNSs from users design perspective. In an attempt to achieve the objectives of this study, however, two different approaches were employed; first literature has reviewed for two SNSs for the comparative analysis, and secondly quantitative approach technique was used. Online questionnaire was designed and published on the web and the respondents were able to access and sent back respectively. The survey was limited only to one hundred respondents within the Universiti Utara Malaysia. Findings from this study reveal that there are significant differences and similarities between Facebook and Friendster privacy policy and features. However, Friendster has hidden users' identity information by default to only friends, while Facebook has made it public to everyone. Results from survey in this study indicate that most of the respondents disclose information including personal and private information with public and friends, nevertheless, many respondents prefer to share their personal and private information with friends. Although, majority of respondents are aware of privacy setting changes, while they have notable attitude toward privacy protection as well as trust. This study usher a new era towards knowledge of social networking sites and the result can be use to the body of literature on information system with emphasis on privacy policy setting and features.

DEDICATION

*This project is lovingly dedicated to the memory of my father,
to my mother, brothers, and sisters*

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List of Abbreviations

SN: Social Network

SNS: Social Networking Site

UUM: University Utara Malaysia

SD: Standard Deviation

N: Sample of respondents

%: Percentage

Min: Minimum

Max: Maximum

Q: Question

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

“Social technologies never have predictable and absolute positive or negative effects, which is why social scientists dread questions like these. In considering the effects of social network sites, it is clear that there are many challenges to work through -- the increasing commercialization of this space, the need to construct strong privacy protections for users, and safety issues -- but I believe the benefits we receive as a society provided by these tools far outweigh the risks.”

(Ellison, 2008)

The evaluation of the Internet to its current phase commonly known as Web 2.0 has brought more opportunities as well as challenges for social application. One of the major opportunities is the wide availability of new online applications commonly described as Social Media and particular new online networking environments known as Social Networking Sites (SNSs) (Constantinides, et al., 2010). These Social Media have changed the way that keep people communicate, share information, publish, and create new knowledge, which can be done by promoting two ways communication between user and web content on the Internet. Apparently, it has enhanced the social aspect of creating content and sharing information through community-based websites. According to Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (2009), the example of Web 2.0 applications that are widely used today are:

- i. Facebook and MySpace (social networking services)
- ii. Friendster (social networking services and social gaming)
- iii. Wikis (collaborative content)
- iv. Flickr and YouTube (multimedia sharing)
- v. delicious (social tagging)
- vi. LinkedIn (professional networking)
- vii. Blogspot and Wordpress (blogging)

The contents of
the thesis is for
internal user
only

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