

Infographics

2011 KSPA State Competition

Description

You are a staff member of Ad Astra High School's The Star. Your newspaper is a monthly with the next edition to come out May 20. Your editor has asked you to create an infographic for the attached story, using charts, graphs or other visual elements to tell the story presented by the data you gather.

School Info

Name: Ad Astra High School
Location: Aspera, Kansas
Mascot: Box Turtles
Enrollment: 850 (grades 9-12)
School Colors: Green & Gold
Yearbook: The Honeybee
Newspaper: The Star

Contest Info

This is a carry-in contest.

Please attach your assigned contest number in the upper right-hand corner on the back of your photo.

Do not put your name on the entry. If you do, your entry will be disqualified.

Students are not to request help or advice from anyone other than the KSPA Executive Director. All work must be that of the contestant.

Assignment

Using the information provided in the attached story, design an infographic that is 5 inches wide by any depth. Entries should be computer-generated and may incorporate graphics to enhance the design. The graphic may be submitted in color or black and white, and should be printed on 8.5 x 11-inch paper.



Story

Come home, log onto the computer and browse Facebook: it's a familiar after-school routine for AAHS sophomore Brittney Stearns.

"Everybody has a Facebook," Stearns said. "I think I was going to Indiana the year I got one and that way pictures could be shared."

Stearns is just one of many Millennials who is connected to the world's largest social network. Last year, Experian Hitwise reported that Facebook outstripped Google as the most visited site of the year.

Mass media teacher Angela Merkel attributed Facebook's overtaking of Google to the personal aspect of the social network.

"Who can you trust more than your friends?" Merkel said. "When you type in 'vacation hotels,' into Google, you can get 200,000 hits. You don't know where they're coming from; you don't know if they're credible. But you can put a Facebook status up that says, 'Does anybody have a good hotel suggestion for...' any location, and any of your friends...can respond to that."

Facebook cited that its users spend over 700 billion minutes per month on the site. Stearns said she uses Facebook three hours a day.

"Facebook is addicting now; I kind of like everything about it," she said. "I like the fact that you can keep in touch with people. Like you can text them, and you can call them, but Facebook is just a new form of communication."

Merkel also acknowledged the growth of other social media sites.

"Social media is the way of the future," she said. "It's here; it's not going anywhere."

Facebook, inflating heads?

Although Facebook's addictive nature does not bother Stearns nor Merkel, two psychologists, Jean M. Twenge, PhD and W. Keith Campbell, PhD, wrote an influential book in 2009 titled "The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement." They claim social networking sites allow people to escape real friendships and simply collect "Facebook friends" or "Twitter followers," making them more self-centered.

In spite of such concerns, psychology teacher Paul Wellstone said Facebook is simply an outlet for emotions no different from e-mail or telephone. According to him, some people will always try to compensate for low self-esteem by acting confident

and extroverted, whether on Facebook, on e-mail or on the phone. However, he said, the impersonal, accessible Internet is where narcissists may feel the most comfortable engaging in this behavior.

"You can sit in the comfort of your bedroom and put something out on Facebook that you would never do if all of your friends were watching you," Wellstone said.

He said the same conversations or experiences are sometimes more difficult but also more enjoyable in real life than online.

In agreement, Stearns said she is cautious of letting Facebook take over her social life because her friends' profile pages do not match up to her friends in person.

"If you take Facebook (too) seriously, then you have an issue to begin with," Stearns said. "Some people sit there on their laptop and just take pictures of themselves for no reason. I think that's a little stupid, but not many people are like that."

Watch what you click

Merkel said concerns also include security issues. According to the Huffington Post, Facebook experiences an increased amount of spam activity.

"My guess is that scammers have gotten smart, and they're realizing that people are using Facebook very predominately. The scammers are going where they need to go to get the targets," Merkel said.

One study by Newsweek magazine revealed that while 75 percent of Internet users aged 18-27 are concerned about identity theft online, only 43 percent have taken any steps to prevent it.

One AAHS student knows how it easy it is to click on the wrong button.

"Someone posted on my wall, and I accidentally clicked on it," junior Roger Clemens, a victim of a Facebook scam, said. "I'm not really sure how it happened, but I clicked on a video that was posted on my wall from someone who got hacked, and then it hacked my account, and it posted on a whole bunch of people's walls that they should go lose weight on this new diet system. But I think most people will realize that I got scammed."

According to Merkel, media literacy is important in remaining safe while living in the new social era.

"I think the first line of defense is understanding the technology," she said. "If you

are not a media literate person, then you don't have any business being on Facebook, because it is dangerous if you don't know how to use the tool. Until everybody is properly educated on...how to be smart online, then we need to be very cautious about how it is disseminated."

Friending the parents

To say that Stearns was against her parents becoming members of Facebook would not be true. In fact, as soon as her parents did join Facebook, Stearns added them as friends.

"They just started to learn how to use it," she said, "so there is not much I have to worry about."

According to a study by Kaplan Test Prep, nearly two-thirds of American teenagers, like Stearns, are friends with their parents on Facebook.

The Pew Research Center released data in March that indicate that the number of Internet users ages 50 and older who say they use Facebook increased from 22 percent to 42 percent between 2009 and 2010. Nearly half of those users, 44 percent, had been on Facebook the day before they took the survey.

According to Merkel, social-networking sites such as Facebook, they play a different role in the lives of students and their parents.

"I think teens use it more for keeping up with what's current and staying in touch with their friends where I think their parents use it to keep an eye on their kids and to catch up with people they haven't seen in 20 years," Merkel said.

These statistics can be misleading, however. According to the same Kaplan study, 16 percent of those who said they are friends with their parents on Facebook had to become friends with their parents as a precondition for having a Facebook. As for Stearns, however, this was not the case. "My parents did not make me friend them," she said, "but I made sure that everything was set up before I did."

Though she is friends with her parents, Stearns said she did take some precautions to limit what information they could see. She said, "I put them in a separate group because, no matter what, we are teens and no matter what, we are going to be different."