# C3 and C4 – 190820

**Video Conference - Friends**

* C3
* C4
* Researcher

### Researcher

Here's just a general question. If somebody talks to you about social media what do you say to them, how would do you describe it?

### C3

Well, the thing which is a means to connect with people that you wouldn't otherwise be able to connect with, in specific ways, that are best defined on the media; by which I mean the app or whatever you are using to contact other people. So, a way of talking to people, meeting people or otherwise generally socialising; that is new and through technology rather than through older means like letters or talking to people face to face.

### Researcher

That's a pretty good start. C4 do you want to change that or refine that?

### C4

It's kind of the same, but, I’d prove it a little differently because obviously we're different people. It's just a new way to be social with people; that may be too far away for you to meet or that you never thought you’d meet because your interests collide but you both live in completely different areas. Something like that.

### Researcher

If we talk about the sorts of things you can do on social media, are there are the things you can do on social media that are about it being social media? If that makes sense!

### C3

You can spread awareness and like the idea or a movement more quickly on social media. Like, an example is what happened on TikTok where people in America decided that they were going to… those young people decided that they were gonna reserve seats at a Trump rally, and then none of them went. And that was, I think a really interesting use of social media that couldn't have happened as….couldn't have had as much of an impact if it was only just a group of people who met more naturally.

### Researcher

So what was it about social media that meant that those people could disrupt the Trump rally?

### C3

Everyone had access to it. It was on an account that was public (I think all of TikTok’s public, I haven't got an account). It was on a public account so anyone had access to it, you could share it with anyone you wanted to. So it could spread more wild … had a wider range or wider reach rather than if you're talking about something in your local community, if I have an idea that “oh like I want to disrupt a Tory conference” or something, I then have to talk to my friends, not only … I wouldn't just have to convince them to do it, I would also have to find a way to spread the idea, which is much harder to do without the influence of social media.

### C4

Yeah

### Researcher

C4 do you think there's, any I'm going to use the word functions, are there any things you can do on social media that make it social media? We've talked about the general communication things, is there anything else?

### C4

Well I think there's …I don’t know, I think it's another thing of how, with social media, I think the distance is a big part of it because before social media and all of that kind of thing, if you send a letter or maybe even just an email it will take a while to get to someone and you'd have to wait for a reply and things like that, from what I've gathered, so with social media it's instant replies if the other person is also active.

### Researcher

Yup. That's good. Before we go any further, C3 what social media accounts, if any, do you have?

### C3

I have Instagram and Snapchat. I also have Pinterest, which is … is that a social media?

### C4

It is, yes.

### C3

I think of Whattpad, which it is essentially books … independent creators …

### Researcher

…Say that again what pad?

### C3

Whattpad, W A T T P A D, I think. It's you get… everyone who has the app you can write a book or a story and then people on the app can also read it. So… check my phone because I have no memory… yeah Pinterest, Instagram, Snapchat and Wattpad are my four.

### Researcher

That floats your boat. What about you C4?

### C4

I have tonnes. Probably not the best. I have Instagram, I have Snapchat, I have a thing called Discord which is like every other chat kind of thing, I have Pinterest, I have I also have Wattpad, I have Reddit, R E D D I T, and I have accounts on things but then I don't use them that much. Things like Tumblr and etc.

### C3

Oh yeah, I deleted it for some reason. I never found out what happened.

### Researcher

That's really interesting. I'm interested in Wattpad which I've never come across but I'll go and have a look at that later. That that's useful, so and would you both call yourselves fairly active users of social media?

### C4 and C3

Yes

### Researcher

Daily?

### C3

Oh yes

### C4

Multiple times a day

### Researcher

So my second question is, and this may focusing in on the platforms you're currently using and therefore the answers may be different, what are the things that you do on social media that you find really good? What are the things you can do with social media that the for you, is it's the good stuff? We've talked to generalities you might want to be more specific based on the platforms that you use. C4 do you want to go first?

### C4

Well I mean there's always like talking people that you haven't spoken to in a while. And as like we're all in lockdown right now you can just speak to everyone as though we were in person…

### Researcher

Can I pause you? When you say “speak to” and “talk”, do you mean speak and talk or do you mean write …?

### C4

It more text messaging. C3 and I FaceTime all the time

### C3

Yeah!

### Researcher

Sorry, keep going I interrupted, my apologies

### C4

That's alright. And then other things like, when I'm on Instagram there's a search page which gives you recommendations on things you might like, based on what who you follow and what you press ‘like’ on, and things like. So, it's not necessarily people you actually follow but is like related accounts etc, things like that and …it's fun to browse on there and see what other things people do. Like art. I really like art accounts on Instagram and it's really interesting seeing all the different styles of art when I'm on the search page.

### C3

Pretty satisfying to watch the paint smushing videos … alright there's like really weird abstract ones with dollops of paint on this canvas and you see it turn into something and it's like ‘I didn't expect that’ and ‘how did you do that without a plan’.

### Researcher

So C3 what would you say to that, what were the things that you really appreciate that you personally can do on Instagram, Snapchat?

### C3

I really like that I can rekindle friendships that I … do you remember the [Name] family like …

### Researcher

Oh yes

### C3

Yeah, so you know he moved to Germany about five, six years ago. My friend [name of daughter] their daughter, we were really really close and she found my Instagram account last year. And we've become friends and that's something that I really value cuz she was like my first friend. Because we were born five days apart. Her birthday is 6th [month] and mine is the 11th. So we were friends since we were really really young. And then obviously she moved to Germany and that's something I really really valued.

I really, like but specifically only, I only got Snapchat fairly recently so I'm I haven't really seen as much of this on there. I say recently but I mean since the beginning of lockdown. I really like on Instagram all of the movements that have been happening like, the Black Lives Matter movement, that's been something that’s really, from what I've seen picked up on Instagram. And like it's, you can’t I say escape, but you can't really escape the fact that there is so much information. And what happened with the Belarus explosion, I first learned about that on Instagram because people were sharing it and I really like that its started movements and helped keep movements there that the will have a proper effect, like will have a really big effect on the world if people actually listen and I like the spreading awareness and learning things.

I also really like on Wattpad the fact that you can be really individual, and you can read and you can read whatever you want and you can comment on peoples writing. Say, “I really like your story but you made this small mistake”, and then the person who wrote the book will generally be, “oh all thank you so much, I will correct my grammar” or “I'll correct the wording”. Or, if they say something that they don't realise could be offensive, someone could point that out, they’re like “I'm so sorry let me change that”. I think it's just in such … it does depend on the environment and the specificity of the situation but, I generally find that a lot of environments on social media are fairly nurturing and specifically Wattpad on this, is generally a place for people who want to be authors and they can get almost instant feedback if they gain a following. And like there are books that I've been following since they start like the first few chapters because I really like these stories. And there are books on Wattpad that I would pay, like I'd pay for this book, like and I think it's really … yeah sorry I'm going on a tangent on that!

### Researcher

Don’t worry it’s not a tangent, it’s answering the question. Do you author yourself on Wattpad or do you just critique other peoples?

### C3

I've had a Wattpad account since year 7.

### C4

I’m the same

### C3

I got it because of C4.

### C4

Yeah

### C3

So I used to, and they were awful … so a few months ago I deleted the account and then made a different one because it was just my library had over 1000 books and a whole load of the stuff I wasn't interested in anymore. And I kept getting these notifications of books that I haven't read in years, so I deleted the account just to start all over again. So, I used to write stuff, but I’m more interested in the analysis of what's already been written because that's like, I'm doing English I like the analysis and Classics, so I'm not very good at writing fantasy and actual stories. Like academic writing, I like and I can do, but that's not that's not the idea of Wattpad. Wattpad is stories, even though the app has gotten a lot worse recently. Yeah. I've never, I did write, but never again.

### Researcher

C4, are you happy in your own mind that Wattpad is social media?

### C4

Yeah, I mean cos you can message people on it, and you can share books between people. And … you can share your own thoughts and opinions and comments and things like that. And you can be like “that was that was really funny, I really like actually found that like that was a really good way of writing something” or something like that. Or you can just find your own… like when I first got Wattpad, years ago I was still figuring out what kind of writing I liked, like the writing styles... because I write a little myself and I have a couple things on Wattpad but none of them are like books are like tiny little like thousand-word stories. It's just really interesting because like they're not very they're not very widespread like they've maybe got like 20 hits or something like, that but like it's just interesting coz I'm like a small person like me, I don't have any … like I've about 4 followers, but something I've written still being looked at. Kind of if a person had more followers more people would become exposed to that kind of thing. And it's just is this is a general idea of exposure, in the world.

### C3

There are accounts that I follow that have thousands of people follow them because they write so well. And they have these ongoing stories. And if you follow them, then you get to see kind of their community updates or recent chats I think it's called, and they can post on their own profile and about “oh I'm taking a break at the moment because of this”, or “sorry I've been to long like I'm in the middle of writing the next chapter”. I think it definitely creates a community kind of thing if you're following this one author. But I'm not sure how much I regard it, like it is it is social media but it's not social media in the same sense that Instagram and Snapchat are because those kind of things … you're more like ‘ohh this is what people in my local area are doing’, like this is what my friends are doing, whereas on Wattpad like these are books that authors in Scandinavia are writing and you're reading this thing like of course you can comment and there are chats but … it's like

### Researcher

If you were arranging to meet with C4 to go shopping, my guess is you wouldn't do it on Wattpad?

### C3

Yeah you’d do it on Snapchat or Instagram.

### Researcher

I need to leave Wattpad but just want one final question for either of you, just to help my understanding. Are the people you're communicating with a Wattpad presenting themselves as they really are? In other words do you appear as C3 age 16….

### C3

[Laughs] No!

### Researcher

…do you think anybody does that?

### C3

No, no one does that.

### C4

Some people might, but…

### C3

Yeah

### Researcher

…you would never tell who they were from anybody else coz that is like…

### C4

You can write anonymous?

### Researcher

Is that part of the attraction?

### C3

I think so, yeah. Because you can write books and if your writing is awful and you're just learning, then if you do become an author then your name is never attached to that. But I've seen some of the bigger accounts that I follow they have attached their names to it now. I don't know whether or not they did that when they first started. But with a person with like 1.5 thousand followers, like these are fairly big accounts. I think these people who will probably be publishing but they then attached their names or whatever pseudonym they’re going to be writing under so that then people could buy and read their books. And there are authors whose books I have read in entirety on Wattpad and now they've gone “Oh, by the way, I've published this book so I'm making half of this thing on Wattpad private so you can't finish the story”. And Wattpad itself is doing that a lot which is really annoying.

### C4

It's annoying but it's good for the people who are the making…

### C3

…yeah they’re making paid stories but I'm not sure how much the authors are actually getting. It used to be that you could read whatever you wanted offline, like the entire thing was offline and now what you can have two books offline that you choose one time, which is more an evolution of society than a…social media.

### Researcher

Yeah a bit more about the research I've done. Just after Christmas, before lockdown, I went to a local secondary school in [name of place] and I have access to years 7 & 8, just a bit younger than you. And we got about 400 youngsters to fill in the survey, all about social media. And one of the questions said, “list your three favourite social media”. So, C3 could probably have listed her three and C4 would have to have chosen her favourite three or the three she uses most. And this slide here…this is for that school in [name of place], their top 20 social media sites. OK? It was a free call they just wrote down in the box the names. I think my first question here is, any observations on that lot?

### C3

I'm surprised Facebook was so high up, but then again it's years 7 & 8, so I'm kind of not.

### C4

Yeah

### Researcher

Why are you surprised?

### C3

Oh because I generally associate Facebook with my parents. Like my parents my grandparents, but I've never had an account just because it's never… I mean I was fairly late to the social media scene like in a sense. I only got Instagram fairly recently, just because I've had problems with anxiety, so I didn't want to subject myself to that. Then one of my friends were “could you please get it so that then we can talk to you more easily”, because there are group chats on Instagram and if I don't have Instagram now, I have no idea what's going on. So I did get it.

### Researcher

That's good. So I'm going to alternate just so that I hear from both voices. So, C3 said “I'm surprised Facebook is so popular at number 3”. C4 do you want to pick up an observation?

### C4

I'm surprised, well, no I'm not. I would say I'm surprised YouTube’s so low, but then it's not really a social media site, it's more just a media site. Yeah I'm surprised the Mail is on the list…

### C3

Yeah.

### C4

…at number 16.

### Researcher

Can I just backtrack you on both those? I’d just like you to give me some ‘why’s’. You said you're surprised that YouTube so low and then you said but it's not really a social media so, what why would you not, in your head, put YouTube [as a] social media. Please I'm not … there's no right or wrong answer on this. I'm just interested in your thinking.

### C4

I don't know. The main thing about social media is that it’s ‘social’. You're talking to loads of people or like seeing loads of people and things like that. And I guess on YouTube there is that type of thing, like there in the comments and things like that and then some people are bloggers so they'll upload like a daily blog or like a weekly blog or something like that about their lives. But it's a little less personal. It's more of just media. Like blogging is a very small part of what YouTube has. So, like it's more about just the videos and you can ‘like’ it if you want, you can comment if you want, but with social media I feel like the main basis is talking and interacting with people.

### Researcher

And can I go onto Mail? Why are you surprised mails there?

### C4

Well while Mail is definitely a social app, is about talking to people, it doesn't feel like a social media…

### C3

Yeah

### C4

…it's like Mail is almost like at text level of personal I guess you could say. Like you have to have someone’s email address in order to email them, and usually that's just like close friends, family and maybe like school or something like that…

### C3

…or like work…

### C4

…yeah something like that. And this is a young group of kids, years 7 to 8, I don't feel like they'd be fully onto emails yet …

### C3

Yeah

### C4

…emails to me feel quite like a grown-up thing because when you're younger you have like texting and then like TikTok's there too and stuff like that.

### C3

I just realised Snapchat is….am I'm being blind or Snapchat not on there?

### Researcher

It’s not on there

### C3

I'm surprised because, my cousin first introduced me to Snapchat when we were in year 6…

### C4

…although, I’ll cut in, I feel like Snapchat was very… year groups. Like two or three year groups around us. Like the year groups we're in now 10, 11 or 12. Was a big Snapchat time. We all still use it quite consistently so I don't feel like it's continued down…

### C3

… I think TikTok’s taken over. Cos TikTok’s everywhere.

### C4

I know.

### Researcher

But neither of you Tik or Tok do you?

### C4

No

### C3

I have friends that I say addicted yeah are addicted…

### C4

…I have friends who are addicted to it…

### C3

…yeah I have friends who are addicted to TikTok, but I know there's some cool stuff for math, but it's kind of…I have so much stuff on my phone already I can't really be bothered.

### Researcher

OK C3, go back to that list, do you have any other observations, something new?

### C3

I didn't think Google was a social media.

### Researcher

How would you classify Google then?

### C3

A search engine.

### Researcher

Do you agree C4?

### C4

Yeah, no I agree.

### Researcher

Is anything else, either of you, so anything else on that list you think, no that's not a social media?

### C4

I mean Minecraft is a game.

### C3

Yeah

### C4

You can talk on them but that's like a feature in game. Also like the Xbox and the PlayStation that's a game console

### C3

Yeah it's like a phone, and they've got phone on there as well that's not really a social media site.

### C4

That’s like the same as like mail. I can’t image years 7 & 8 are calling each other!

### Researcher

I'm wondering, and I've not had a chance to unpick their thinking. I'm wondering that those who put Xbox and PlayStation and maybe some of the other games down there are that sort who are thinking, Oh well I'm on my Xbox I've got my headset on I'm playing a shoot em up or a football game and I'm talking to my mates, therefore it's a social activity. It is a social activity, but is it social media?

### C3

I wouldn't pass it as social media because I feel like it's such a narrow kind of definition or it was narrow expectation of sharing, liking, generally photos. Like on Snapchat you can have stories, Instagram its posts, like TikTok it's videos. I generally, or I associate social media with photos or comments talking like always more like a ongoing conversation. I'm not sure I would associate PlayStation with an ongoing conversation of… I will text my friend, like if I'm talking to C4, I’ll message C4 then if she doesn't respond then that's just because she's busy the conversation is still ongoing but you can take part whenever you're free. Whereas on PlayStation and Xbox its like, that that's not really how it's not how it works, You’ve got to be there…

### C4

…you’ve got to be on at the same time in order for a conversation to start and finish.

### C3

I think that's why our generation don't call people as much because it's like, I've texted this person or messaged this person so I'm going to wait for their response in case they're busy.

### C4

Yeah

### Researcher

I gonna come back to the screen in a second, just a side comment which is just picking up from where you've got to. How important do you think for the social media platforms, whichever ones you use, is to have a sense of presence? A sense that the person who you wanted to communicate is online now. So, for example if you were on Facebook one of the functions of Facebook is I’ve got my list of friends, and there will be a little dot next to their name which says they’re actually on Facebook this minute.

### C3

That came from Instagram I think. That's active now on Instagram and then its also a thing on Snapchat as well. Is it on Snapchat? Yeah?

### C4

No it doesn’t. Snapchat doesn’t really…

### C3

…no, but it tells you when they received or open the message… but I guess that's kind of…

### Researcher

But you would just you were waxing lyrical C3 a second ago about, if you’re on a phone it's an immediate conversation, if you're playing a PlayStation it's here and now…

### C3

Yeah

### Researcher

…if they're there and we are communicating now. But actually one of the benefits of things like Messenger is you can send a text and know that the person will read it, when in good time, when they're ready, when they've got space and they will reply, and whether you're not there or not doesn't matter the communication will continue. Well I’m just wondering whether you think it's beneficial on something like Instagram that you know that the other persons online now. Is that is that it's a good feature?

### C3

I think it's a good feature because, if you know that they're active now, you don't have to worry about interrupting something by texting them. Like I'll text C4 anywhere if I want to share a post, but if I know that she's active at the moment then I can know that I can get a direct response or a response fairly soon. Whereas C4 goes to bed stupidly early and I get up stupidly early and so there's like…

### C4

Early in the morning kind of time.

### C3

Yeah I get up at 7:00am.

### C4

I’ve been up at 7:00am - still.

[Laughter]

I’ve messaged her and she’s like, “oh, your awake” and I’m like, “I haven’t slept yet”!

### C3

[indistinct] hours when one of us isn’t awake. I open my phone in the morning and had messages from 3, 4 , 5am and then C4 wakes up and I’m sure she has messages from like 7, 8, 9 that she hasn't read. But if I know that she's active then I’m less worried about waking her up. If she hasn't turned it off her…

### C4

…its always off, don’t worry.

### C3

I'm less worried about interrupting and I know that we could have an immediate conversation even though I know that that's not a necessity. Like if I was thinking something then, I can know that I can share it then and be in the same mindset when we talk about whatever the conversation was directed towards. Whereas, yeah, sorry I'll stop.

### Researcher

C4, do you have the same feeling about presence, the fact that it's useful to know somebody’s actually there or is that less important to you?

### C4

I mean it's slightly less important to me because I know that with my group of friends, 90% of them will have their ringer off and it will just be on vibrate so I know that if I do text them at an ungodly hour in the morning it won't disturb anything. But when I am texting someone it's not like sharing something, I'm like starting up a conversation or I'm telling them something. It helps but I know that once I start it, like it could come through as a notification on their phone or whatever they're using. But on Instagram there's a feature where it's like they were active 5 minutes ago or they were active an hour ago, you know, like it tells you when they were last on and sometimes when it's like they're active 8 minutes ago I'm like oh there’s a potential that they're still near their device and could pick it up. Whereas when it's like an hour ago it's like they might have gone out or doing something else.

### C3

They might have gone to bed.

### Researcher

Just something from that list which interested me which I think you both use, is Pinterest, don't you? Are you satisfied that it is a social media?

### C4

Yeah

### C3

I think so. It's got photos and it's got … we send each other stuff through Pinterest

### C4

You can chat and stuff…there’s a solo site

### C3

[indistinct] are all reference photos but I do think that it is still a social media because you can post your own stuff on there if you choose to which I don’t.

### Researcher

Is it social?

### C3

I think so

### C4

Yeah, coz if you see something you like and you're like ‘oh they find this funny’ or ‘they find this like or pretty’ like that you can just send it to them and you can like send a little message and you’re like ‘oh I saw this’ and like ‘it like made me think of you because you do this all the time’ or something like that.

### C3

I feel targeted at this point C4! It’s not fair I know, I apologise.

### Researcher

Have we got enough out of this screen do you think? Is there anything else which you just want to say?

### C3 and C4

No. No.

### Researcher

I think we’ve given it a good run around the block, that's very helpful thank you.

Now one of the other questions I asked the youngsters was to say what they don't like about social media, what they think the downside of social media might be. I'm going to show you three of their answers in a second. What would you say, before we go to them?

### C3

I think it can be quite restrictive; and you need to look like this, you need to be like this, or need to think like this, without often considering the other opinions or the other facts. It can almost drown out other influences if you get so caught up in one mindset and one group. It could be quite easy to forget there are other groups, other influences and other people thinking, feeling different things. But if you don't expose yourself to that, then you can get washed up in unfollowing this person and this is their opinion of this thing that happened and then this is the only thing that matters. When forgetting everything else.

Like, oh I'm following this exercise person and she says that I should be looking like, this so I will and I will do all of her workouts and only buy her exercise equipment and her exercise clothes because I am following this person and they said that their stuff is so good. I thought that's quite common on social media, that kind of closemindedness because of what you're surrounding yourself like online. Sorry I keep going on.

### Researcher

That's fine, C4 what would you say is a downside of social media?

### C4

First off, everything that C3 said are some of the obvious downsides and things, but something I will also want to say is I feel like recently, well over the last year or so, from what I've notice is actually gotten a lot better, in terms of you should look like this. I follow a lot of socially aware accounts and all of them are saying the same kind of things. And I follow four or five and they are “you don’t have to look like this”…

### C3

…but if you don't follow those accounts, then you’re not getting that message….

### C4

… yeah you'll never get that kind of exposure, which is the negative side.

### Researcher

Now have you found those sorts of accounts ,because they define alternative points of view, or have those sorts of accounts convinced you that you ought to be the sort of person with different points of view. I am trying to sort out chicken and egg here, if there is one.

### C3

I think I've always … so I’ve been exercising since I was young since I was 9 started going to the gym, because of my mental health issues, so I have been quite prone to the kind of; ‘you need to look like this’, then ‘watch this YouTube video, do this workout because then it'll give you abs in two weeks’, or ‘lose that lower belly fat’ or that kind of thing. And I think I'm not going to … I think I've always there are certain things that through these accounts will things on Pinterest or posts that have been reposted to Pinterest or things on Instagram that are like, well no you don't and you can do those workouts but you're not gonna get those results because this is clickbait. Or … like, those accounts…

### C4

…[indistinct] your actual health overall…

### C3

Yeah. Those accounts I'm worried are, I said worried, I think you only get recommended those accounts because they have so much access to your other information these like apps. Like Instagram has so much access to the other things you do on the Internet, you're only going to get the accounts that we both follow that are really body positive, if you already are interested in that. So I can clearly see how if you're not, you're not gonna get that body positivity and you're not gonna get that healthy influence even though it has got better when it comes to ‘you need to look like this’. I do think it can still be suffocating for someone who is at the gym fairly a lot like exercises quite a lot and wants to buy equipment that will be useful. It can be quite like, oh I'm like Chloe Ting for example, she does YouTube videos, a lot of her kind of gimmick is; do this workout session, or follow my workout programme to do this, to get this. I tried to do one of them though quarantine because I've used her videos quite a lot it, just wasn't a healthy thing. At the end it I had to take … I couldn't even finish the 30 days, had to take a week doing nothing, because it was so suffocating and that's just that that's something about social media that I think is less … isn't good. Because the way that she talks about like “oh I I did another one of her videos this morning of ohh ‘like’ this so that more people who need it can get it. But it's like people don't need it. I'm using this video because I enjoy it and I want to exercise, no one needs to do this workout programme because your body is your body and that is fine. But if you don't get those positive reinforcements. And I think it's quite a bit of a problem on TikTok because she … her ‘two week shred’ programme went viral on TikTok during quarantine. It's another one of the reasons why I haven't got it, because it's she went so viral and it's not a healthy thing and if you're not seeing the people who are saying this isn't healthy because you are working so hard for two weeks then you're just gonna gain everything back … like if you're not watching those people then you’re not gonna get that, and that’s something annoyingly selective about social media; it only shows you what you want to see and if only shows you what you want to see, your mindset is going to shrink and you're not going to get the positive or different opinions that you would do if you weren’t on social media.

### Researcher

I think you've made that case very well, very eloquently. C4 is there anything that you well do I add either to C3’s argument or any other downsides of social media as you see it?

### C4

One thing I was thinking about. While YouTube isn't exactly a social media, it's a very negative platform in certain circumstances. Like on every video I've clicked on, there have been ‘dislikes’. And like the video that I've seen, there has been no like reason from what I can see, in from like trying to look in and like opted(?) like different perspectives that anyone would actively press the ‘dislike’ button. And so that kind of leads me to the thoughts people are just doing it..

### C3

..they are doing it because they are on the Internet, so they're not their real-life person…

### C4

…yes and they’re just spreading negativity like fruitlessly. And it's just it's really sad to see because they usually… it's a very small amount compared to the amount of ‘likes’ that people get. But the fact that it's still there, its a bit like I don't know it's a bit disheartening. I mean I know it's not me, but I consider myself quite an empathetic person. Like how would that person react even though it's a small amount, the smaller like negative things are what sticks with people. And it's just like you could be potentially damaging that persons like mental health and it feels like you're just doing it because you can.

### C3

On that specific topic, C4 knows this YouTube channel, they’re called ‘Only Sarcastic Productions’, they do a lot of live videos and there was one thing on that topic that I wrote down and its on the top of my desk because its a really good quote about that specific thing. So the channel does a lot of classical history and myths, and recently one of them did a more modern history video. And they had a lot of people saying … they had a whole load of people saying … ‘Oh well done, like you actually did modern history I'm surprised and proud’ like ‘Oh my gosh you did something modern’. It was the Cold War it wasn't modern, but for them when they’re used to classical history. But they also had people who’d say ‘ohh I can't believe you missed out this’, ‘I cant believe you missed out this’. And then one of them said, in their live stream when they were talking about this, they said “you can always try to be everyone's perfect cup of tea, but not everyone likes tea”. And I thought that was just … through a lot of social media the company’s desensitised to negative comments because of the amount that you can receive if you have a higher platform and if you are an influencer. But if you are not desensitised to those comments then like you can be so severely affected by it. Because they were talking about how when they were a smaller channel, they would get comments ‘oh you didn't involve this version of the myth, I can't believe you said that’ … when we were younger channel like that really affected us because, it was ‘ohh I need to make sure that I'm involving everyone in this tiny community that I have’ and I think everyone can get swept up in that. I need to be everyone's perfect cup of tea. I need to work so hard for everyone, and like C4 said, you can really focus on the negative things and with social media lies another thing that is not good, because everyone's hiding behind a screen and a persona and if you're not using your real name it is hard to trace it back to you. So, it’s like, ‘oh you can't blame me for the things that I'm saying because you don't know it’s me. I think that's something that can be really dangerous on social media.

### Researcher

I think what you're articulating is what’s ended up as being one of the top three things the youngster said. Bear in mind that there younger than you, these are 11, 12, 13-year olds, and they phrase it in a different way. But I think we're talking about the same thing. So, this is not in rank order these three I'm going to share all got roughly the same number of points. Now what I've done is I've taken a large number of comments and I've simplified it. I didn't offer them the word ‘bullying’ but what they ended up talking about was ‘we don't like social media because we bullied’. And I suppose you could argue that those ‘dislikes’ you've been talking about, is a form of bullying. Typically, if it's persistent and so on. They didn't like receiving comments from strangers. That came across in lots of different ways and they talked about being uncomfortable at not being able to trust … people, situations on social media. Do you understand those comments? Do you see where that's coming from?

### C3

Yes. Yes definitively.

### C4

I've got a story about the second one, comments from strangers. I follow my neighbour and she's in year eight I think and we used to be really good friends when we were both younger. We’d play out on the street all the time, we’d constantly go round each others, we’d play with dolls, everything like that. And then we kind of drifted apart as we got older because I went to school, more that's how it was more with like my school friend. But we did we do have like two or three years apart between us. So there is like when you're younger the age gap between friends is so important. If you're friends with someone from merely the year below, you’re weird. Like it's like a huge thing, so we drifted apart quite thoroughly, and like I haven't spoken to her in years I think it was. But I found her social media account and I was like ‘oh well we used to be friends, and I feel like we're still on good terms’ so I followed her and she accepted and it was all OK. And then she had a post and she was talking about some quite serious stuff and I commented and I was like “really proud of you for this kind of thing” and everything like that and one of her friends was like, “who are you?”

GAP IN RECORDING

…and I realised how I came off. Cos no-one in your friendship group knows who I am. We haven’t spoken in a while, but I feel like this kind of way, cos I feel we’re, on friendly terms, which we are. Cos when we see each other we say “hello” we smile and everything like that. But it was really interesting that her friends ... I found it really heart-warming that her friends were immediately about ‘who are you’?...

### C3

Like they would kill you! [Laughs]

### C4

… they were ready to defend her against any kind of stranger and I was like, that’s really interesting.

### Researcher

There’s a sort of Catch 22 to all this because you just said when we talked about Wattpad you said ‘No I'm not here as me’, the persona you have and pseudonym and so and so forth and that's in a sense part of the game. My suspicion, I've not properly unpicked it, I think a lot of these youngsters are on things like Snapchat or Instagram … may even have their own names up there…

### C3

I have my own name on my Instagram and on my Snapchat. It’s on Wattpad. If you have a pseudonym on Instagram or Snapchat that's generally either something that you did in year seven and you can't change it now, or…

### C4

…I made a new account on Snapchat because, this is like, this is not who I am anymore.

## C3

Yeah. Something that you can't change in Snapchat, one thing you can't change your username…[indistinct] which worked.

### Researcher

Am I right if I understand you correctly, Snapchat you're basically connecting with people least of whose phone numbers you know or connections of those people. Is that correct?

### C3

Snapchat its people its … what I can understand its people in your area, or people you know. So it starts off, you can add people from your contacts. But it's, it works from oh who do those people have in their contacts?

### Researcher

So its friends, and friends of friends

### C3

Yeah. So those are the people that you’re recommended. Although it doesn't tell you who the reason you're being recommended those friends. And then the more friends you get, its like ohh you have mutual friends so we will recommend you, add these people.

### Researcher

Is there a difference about whether you've got a private account or a public account?

### C3

Not on Snapchat…

### C4

…yeah on Snapchat, like is it depends whether you, add the friend as the person back as a friend. You don’t have to do that with anyone. But with Instagram, like I have a public account because I personally don't really have like any shame or like insecurities about what I'm posting or like…

### C3

…I have a private account!...

### C4

… yeah, which is anyone's decision really. It's interesting coz, like I'll get like a random person will follow me, for some reason okay like you decided to follow me for some reason. I'm not gonna like message them ever, because I don't know who it is, they have followed me and I’m like ‘okaaaay’…

### C3

You can remove followers ….

### C4

Yeah. But with…

### Researcher

Do you receive comments from some of these unknown followers that that make you uncomfortable?

### C4

Not really. I mean cos when I go on holiday I take like nice pictures of sunsets or like cool things. And like people will just reply with like emojis and things like that. People I don't know, but like it's just an emoji. And I'm like, that’s alright I guess, coz you’re not imposing…

### Researcher

I'm wondering whether there's a little habit in this particular school. We talked about communities being on the same software together. I think those people will have multiple Instagram accounts.

### C3

Not always.

### C4

No

### Researcher

This community has that…

### C3

I've had requests from journalists for some reason. I am 16, I don't know why they’re wanting to follow me. I swiftly deleted those people. I have like one journalist. I've had a whole load of student businesses, this one exercise business that was like ‘ohh message this person to become an affiliate’ with this company that was a message request. I didn’t do that…

### C4

But it's a little bit like … sorry…

### C3

I think businesses go off, oh you’re following this business or are you’re a student so we're gonna to request to follow you so that maybe will buy us stuff. All that kind of thing.

### Researcher

So it sounds to me as if you're getting odd stuff actually there's a reason behind it you could you can understand the logic that somebody people interested in fashion photography [indistinct], keep fit and that causes strangers come. C4 you were about to say something

### C4

Like having a private account on Instagram is a bit like Facebook when people like add you or follow you or like request to be a friend. You can just ignore it completely, as you can delete their request. You can like ignore messages you can delete conversations, things like that. I just realised the similarities though.

### C3

I've deleted multiple people, multiple times, and they just keep adding me back and it's like no, no you're not coming anywhere near me. I don't know you.

### Researcher

I’m just interested in the difference in age. I mean if you've been using social media over a number of years, the prevalence of bullying (is not necessarily a personal question) but you'll be aware of your friendship group, do you think bullying becomes more prevalent as you get older or does it become less prevalent? In other words do people become more sophisticated and they deal with it better, or do you think people get more wrapped up in things?

### C4

In my experience, I've been using social media for years now and I feel like, I mean when I first got social media I was still insecure as a person, with like people I was around in person. And I think I had a private account myself my first account, I mean I've had like 10 accounts over the time and I keep changing like things. I think my first like two accounts were both private and I only had like four friends, everything like that.

## Researcher

But then they are unlikely to bully are they? It is a safe…

### C4

…as I gone older, like I feel like I've matured as a person and I've taken on new mindsets and I've got all that kind of thing, I feel like even if someone were to like try and comment something, it wouldn't affect me and I'd be like whoa like what prompted you to say that kind of thing?

### C3

I just report them to be honest.

### C4

I try and have a conversation with them, if they did that, which they haven’t, but like if they did I'd be like well like ‘what made you feel like that was like an okay thing to say?’ that kind of thing I don't it's not personal to me I'm very good at disassociating from like negativity in my life right now. I'm I feel like as I've matured I've become better at that. Don’t know why, I just am!

### C3

I mean the only negative experience I've ever really had through social media wasn't even really through social media it was through eBay. And that was obviously an older person. I had a Samsung Galaxy tablet when I was younger, it was a Christmas present, and we put it on eBay because I never used It, and I've just having extra money getting rid of it then if someone else wants it. We measured the screen size wrong because we don't sell technology generally like, not like you C4 having an eBay empire. But there was this one person who was very very rude about us measuring the screen size incorrectly. And so we had to contact eBay about this one person and the they …they were so spiteful that they made a second account when that first account got blocked. Which is really sad. It's just I don't see … I from my opinion if someone's bullying someone through the Internet there's like one of two options. Either they are bullying them in a real life as well and this is like another way to attack that person like this is someone with a platform and they're just being rude and the fact that no one can stop them. They're doing things because they have a platform, they have people who will laugh at them…. they want attention so they gonna say stupid stuff or rude things for the sake of the attention, and have, like no there's just there's nothing behind it. There is just one person not being a nice person with no actual reasoning or personal attacks or it's just stupidity.

### Researcher

Well ladies we've broken the hour barrier. I think I've got two more quick questions one which I’d really appreciate some reflection on. If you were involved in talking to say year 7s or year 8s, those youngsters (I say who may be starting with social media), I understand that some may have been on it since they were five! But you know. The official age for signing up most of these platforms is 13, so it's about Year 8 is that sort of medium time. I just wondered what advice would you give? Not as a sophisticated 16 year old, not to somebody to who's a peer, but somebody who's setting up. What sort of advice would you give … top two or three tips for using social media …or not.

### C3

I'd say go on private if you're going to make an account make it private. Only add or allow people to see your account, or follow you, if you know them when you're starting out. Don't …you only want people you can be sure are safe until you're more confident on that device at whatever. And be careful, don't put any of your important information out there, why don't put your year group, your school. I mean I kind of get age, but don't put your school or the area you live in if you can avoid it, because there's no point in putting that data out when someone who is genuinely malicious, and those people do exist, could get it. But either have your account on private or don't put that information out there or both so that then you can make sure that you're filtering who is following you and the information that you're coming across. That would be my advice.

### Researcher

OK. C4 what would you say? Anything different?

### C4

No, but just an add on. When you get social media obviously it's mainly to talk to your friends from what I like from what I remember when I first got social media. It’s also so you could follow like celebrities you like and things like that. But I feel like when you go to follow all of your favourite celebrities you're; A) make sure it's actually the celebrity’s account, because they are always like fan accounts and fake accounts out there (that’s only a small part of) it but another one is; make sure that that celebrity is a good influence for you to constantly be seeing on your timeline. As I know that some celebrity are like just generally not good influences for like the younger generations [games] social media. The older generations who have like been through it now like realizing that but this like this shouldn't be like exposed to young kids, but it's on the platform that it is.

### Researcher

Name some names. Give me an example of who would count as…

### C3

Jake Paul. He’s a YouTuber he is very destructive and he's not really a decent human. Not a nice person.

### C4

Yeah, another one is, and like it's not from my personal thing but from like everything that's been going on recently, is Kim Kardashian. She released a selfie where she has quite a corset or something like that on and it super-clinches her waist and it looks a-typical, completely atypical for a human waist. And like young kids, like suitably young girls will be looking at that and ‘ohh I need to look like that because Kim Kardashian looks like that’.

### C3

Exercising yeah

### C4

She’s surgically altered herself and like it's just not … coz even if Kim Kardashian didn't mean it to be factor like young kids will see that and be like ‘oh I need to look like that’. It's still that exposure and if you don't …if you say something about it, like [in K]? had like a caption on the photo, I haven't seen the official vote to myself so I don't know. But for, I would say she would like would be a good advice to do would be to put ‘like this is me and you don't have to look like this’.

### C3

I wouldn’t follow accounts that normalise somethings like normalising violence, destruction or body negativity or changing your body. Because those accounts are not healthy for a young person with a developing mind to see. They’re not healthy and I know that when I… the problems in my mental health stem from me looking at the wrong things on social media and getting it into my head that that is me, that is who I am. And then all of my mental health problems have stemmed from, well not specifically, its not entirely social media's fault, but social media influenced the way that I thought…

### Researcher

That's a very good set of advice between the two of you. Anything else which just pops into it you head before we move on to the last bit?

### C3

Don’t be an idiot. If it feels uncomfortable and you're not happy with it, just report the account, delete your account if you don't like the social media, don't use it. Like it's not… don't feel pressured into doing something just because everyone else did it. I didn't have Instagram or Snapchat until years 9 or 10? I think... it was Year 9?

### C4

About that. It was a few days before lockdown because I wanted to talk to you like this…

### C3

I only got Snapchat a few days before lockdown because one of my friends was not…oh I swim, I used to swim every Friday and when my friends he's in the year above us at college, he's gonna stop because he can't spend time with his friends on the Friday. So, I got Snapchat so that then I could talk to him and just because I know that he doesn't use his Instagram account. So, if you do not feel comfortable on the account, or on the app, or whatever, delete it. Just delete your account and then if when you're older you’re ‘actually I feel comfortable I want to get, I want to have Snapchat’ for example. I had a Snapchat account in year six I deleted it. I'm going to try again. Then you can get it when you're older. But you don't want to let yourself be scarred or hurt when you're younger in a way that will affect you negatively when you are older when you could just cut out the negative influence.

### C4

Yeah okay

### Researcher

Okay now the last question I think is quite tricky one, and most people don't give me a question, which is fine. Is there anything that you wished you understood about social media. And that could be a technical question it could be a social question it could be about one particular platform.

### C3

I wish I understood the power it had. Because I know that it has power over me and it has power over pretty much everyone who has it, but I know some of the psychological reasons for it. But I wanna know the exact site(?) like why does this thing have so much power and why are they allowed to have so much power. Like why do we let things like Facebook have access to our like Internet history. Like why do they have so much power and why they should why should they be allowed to have so much power and why don't people question, how they have more often.

### C4

I think when I was younger I would have wished to know the extent that social media goes. Its like really worldwide and when I was young and naive I didn't know that. Like even when I'm just like browsing in the like search of Instagram or I'm just browsing through YouTube or something like that, it's everywhere. It's a worldwide thing and I wish when I was younger that I realised that. It didn't necessarily affect me, but it was a big shock factor when I was like Oh yeah. Like because you got so like into your own little world and like wherever you live you forget that there are other problems. Like with C3, all the raising awareness, like, you're like, Oh yeah like the world isn't my little friendship bubble and like my town. It's really easy to get caught up in that tiny little world that we live in and forget about the rest of the world, until we see something about it.

### Researcher

And when you think that Facebook counts its users in billions. There's about 7 billion on the planet and I think tools two point something billion have a Facebook account, I mean it's just phenomenal numbers if you ever try and look at what a billion easy it's huge. They're very deep good questions I mean I'm intrigued C3 that you've got yourself aware of the way social media hooks into all sorts of other bits of information about you.

### C3

So I had I look at my life allot because I want to improve myself…

### Researcher

…but where did you pick up those ideas?, that understanding that you put something on Instagram….

### C3

…honestly? Through social media! Its mostly through Pinterest because on Pinterest depending on how you use it, it can either show you, ah like these are some fantastic sceneries, or can have a whole lot of reposted things. So I tend to get a lot of text posted from Twitter from Tumblr from other things that are kind of more educational. Because that's what I look at. Those are the things I get, so those are the things I learn about, which is why I know how how…it's fairly … I think most people or at least most people who are media savvy know that it shows you what you wanted to see because it looks in other places. Like if you watched anything… I was sitting on a website for exercise clothes. I then go on to YouTube and then I have exercise like that same brand I have adverts for. So I know … it's not it's not hard to see the impact that it has, and how so widely ….

### Researcher

Do you do you guys log into Google ever?

### C3

I have a Google account.

### Researcher

Do you ever log in to Google?

### C3

No because I’m logged in automatically. I logged in once and I don’t need to sign out.

### Researcher

If you're interested in what the social media think about you, it is very interesting I can't I can't guide you through now cause I don't have information at my fingertips. But if you go into Google go into the set up about you somewhere within there it will tell you ‘this is what Google thinks about you’. And so Google will say, probably, female age range education and the sorts of things you're interested in. And I found it was about 80% accurate. You know. I never told people lots of things about me but Google is picked it up it it's both fascinating an alarming at the same time.