



Children and Social Media: Challenges and Opportunities

Session report 27 January 2020

ABSTRACT

This interim report has been drawn up following the workshop on Children and Social Media that was held at LORIC on January 27 2020. This workshop, which was held thanks to the Research England Strategic Priorities Fund, brought together academics and practitioners from the third sector in order to explore challenges to children on social media, as well as challenges to those who try to support families in Lincolnshire with the usage of social media.

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Introduction

The Lincolnshire Open Research and Innovation Centre (LORIC) at Bishop Grosseteste University held its Children and Social Media Workshops on the 27th January 2020. The event, which is the first of three, aimed to bring together representatives from academia, industry, the third sector, and policy, in order to share best practices and foster collaborations. This interim report is the first of three, which will build on one another after each workshop.

Disclaimer: This report is on the views and experiences of the attendees of this particular workshop. As such, it does not purport to report on anything other than the views of the participants in the event, unless explicitly stated otherwise. To misrepresent this report as empirical evidence or statement of fact would be against the spirit of the event and the spirit of the report itself.

The aims of this report are as follows:

- To provide a true and accurate record of the event
- To summarise and explain some of the work that was done on the day
- To provide a foundation for the final report
- To set the agenda for the coming meetings
- To offer a starting point in the exploration and discussion of issues relating to children and social media in Greater Lincolnshire

Key facts about Lincolnshire that are relevant to this report include:

- Geographical distance and dispersal¹: Lincolnshire is a county with a predominately elderly population, spread across large distances². This is further exacerbated by the conditions of those roads, with only 11.7% classified as A roads and 0.7% classified as Trunk Roads. 4845 miles in Lincolnshire (as of April 2012) are below the standards, making any sort of mobility between villages and cities fraught³.
- Variable access to public transport⁴: Although steps have been taken to expand and support the public transport system, there is still much to be desired. The lack of reliable public transport, combined with unsafe roads to walk or cycle on, results in children and young people relying on their parents to drive them to places, making social media a better, cheaper option to connect with friends.
- Isolation and loneliness in rural communities⁵.
- Funding shortfall around children's services and family services over the past ten years are only now starting to be addressed by central government⁶.
- Lack of local dedicated services for taking on online risks and safety training for children, families, and the individuals supporting children and families.

¹ <https://www.plumplot.co.uk/Lincolnshire-population.html>

² <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/17813.pdf>

³ <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/17813.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/resources/assets/attachment/full/0/17813.pdf>

⁵ <https://germinate.net/mission/rural-isolation-and-loneliness-toolkit/>

⁶ <https://www.communitycare.co.uk/2019/09/04/javid-unveils-short-term-social-care-funding-boost-spending-review/>

Being a rural county means Lincolnshire faces challenges that are unique to its own geography. However, there are also challenges that overlap with those seen in large, urban areas, as demonstrated by some of the research cited in the “Further Reading” section. As such, it is worth noting that while some challenges and solutions will only apply to rural communities, others will likely be applicable across urban areas as well.

Organisations represented

developmentplus™



All participants worked with children in their respective entities in some capacity or another. Although not every organisation represented focused specifically on social media alone, all participants felt that social media played some part in their work with children, and thus felt like they needed to have a clear understanding of it.

The following organisations were represented on the day:

- **Children's Links:** A Horncastle-based charity that supports multiple family- and child-friendly activities, including nurseries, after-school clubs, and toy libraries.
- **Retina Project Consultants:** A start-up that offers mental health and resilience training to both adults and children.
- **Bishop Grosseteste University:** Bishop Grosseteste University is a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity. Former teacher training college that achieved University status in 2012, the university is uniquely placed because of its access to schools and teachers, as well as education researchers.
- **Just Lincolnshire:** Equality organisation that aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination, advance education and raising awareness, and promote activities that foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds.
- **Lincolnshire Action Trust:** Local charity that reconnects individuals involved in the criminal justice system with their communities. Their work is focused on care, resettlement and rehavilitation of those in the criminal justice system as well as those who are at risk of offending. The charity also supports the welfare of their beneficiaries' families and dependents.
- **developmentplus:** A community development organisation which works to empower people within their communities, and improve their lives socially, environmentally, and economically. They do so through various learning initiatives.

Goals of the day as stated by participants

While the workshop itself had a set structure and aims, the participants were also asked to suggest some goals they were hoping to achieve by attending the workshop. This included talking about the role of social media in their own practice and how it related to their work with children, and discussing some of the things they considered to be challenging in their practices toward social media. From that discussion, the following goals were put forward:

- Inform policy and practice – participants were looking for information and advice that they could implement in their own organisations.
- How to use social media safely – participants were looking for information and advice on safe social media usage that they could also use in their own organisations.
- How to keep it child-centric – understanding the role social media plays in the lives of children and how the disparate understandings between adults and children might contribute to poor online safety practices.
- Safeguarding tips – the exchange or generation of safeguarding ideas that the participants could implement in their organisations.
- Understanding better how social media works
- How practice and policy links together

It is worth noting that while not all the goals were met by the end of the first workshop, it is an important step in identifying what practitioners in academia and the third sector consider to be major challenges to their work in supporting families and children on social media. From the suggested goals, it appears that there are two encompassing themes to the work: understanding the technical aspects of social media (how it works, how security works, where are the weak spots) and the sociological aspects of social media (how people behave online, how safeguarding works, how are risks perpetuated.) Both themes were covered in the workshop to some extent or another, and will be further developed in the next ones.

Structure

The workshop followed several steps – firstly, participants were asked to identify some of the things they considered as challenges or risks to children on social media. They were then asked to think about the organisations they would usually signpost to, if they were faced with a specific type of challenge. The goal was to generate a list of potential resources that different workshop members could refer to as they went.

With that part of the workshop completed, participants were asked to engage in a series of activities that aimed to put them in place of some of their potential beneficiaries. The goals of those activities were to get participants to think about factors that made them trust in someone on social media, the factors that made them mistrustful, and what swayed them in cases where a new acquaintance was ambiguous or even potentially dangerous.

With these discussions in mind, the participants were then asked to consider the challenges they had identified and think about what is needed to take on every one of them. The workshop ended with participants talking about some of the next steps they could take.

Overarching Themes

Event attendees appeared in agreement that parental empowerment and child empowerment lay at the heart of better practices. They were also in agreement that funding is needed across the board. Attendees overwhelmingly agreed that a piecemeal approach to teaching children about boundaries on social media was not sufficient, and that the messaging had to be the same across all levels – policy, local, and individual – in order for it to have an impact.

Challenges as seen by the attendees



The challenges attendees identified can broadly be split into three categories: platform-to-child risks, adult-to-child risks, and child-to-child risks. The first category refers to risks and dangers that arise from the design of the social media technologies (how is data stored, how is privacy maintained, what processes are there to protect users against mistreatment, and more.) The second category refers to risks and dangers that arise from adult to child interactions online (including sexual grooming and radicalisation.) The third category refers to risks and dangers that arise from child-to-child interactions (such as bullying, cyberbullying, peer pressure, and more.)

Platform-to-child

- **Lack of transparency:** attendees felt that social media companies were not as clear as they could be with regards to the risks involved in using them, how data is collected and stored, where does the data go, and how it is used. There is a special lack of transparency with regards to how children's data is used. Attempts by companies to address such problems in the past were seen as little more than lip service.
- **Lack of safeguards and security settings:** attendees remarked that the safeguards and privacy-setting tools on existing social media platforms were insufficient and placed too much of the onus on the individual user to protect their own personal information, rather than existing as "privacy by default".
- **Poor responses to incident reporting:** attendees considered the ways in which social media companies responded to incidents left a lot to be desired. Reporting systems were seen as either burying complaints or actively discouraging users from making those complaints in the first place (example: Instagram putting a lot of legalese in their forms).
- **Platforms making it difficult for users to go off-line:** attendees remarked that the design of social media platforms (especially with apps, in-app messaging, push notifications, and cross-buying of apps) discouraged users and children in particular to go offline. This design feature was seen as increasing the amount of time spent online and further exacerbating other risks.
- **Adverts:** attendees noted that the types of adverts that were being pushed on children represented a very specific risk, particularly when those adverts were placed in the context of an influencer video (for example, as a disclosed or even undisclosed sponsorship). Attendees agreed that the kind of critical thinking that is encouraged towards TV and movie ads is not nearly as prevalent when applied towards social media content.
- **Algorithms recommending age-inappropriate content:** attendees felt that a lot of content being recommended algorithmically to children was not nearly as appropriate as the social media companies insisted. Further exacerbating the problem was, in the opinion of attendees, how content consumption was almost automated into the user experience. Particularly for small children, this resulted in more consumption of potentially problematic content.
- **Gambling habits introduced and reinforced:** attendees raised concerns regarding the ways in which gambling habits were introduced and normalised, for example through lootboxes, in-app purchases, and other design features in the social media-based entertainment.

Adult-to-child risks

- **Lack of social media alternatives for entertainment:** attendees felt that for both parents and children social media had become a cheaper alternative to other forms of entertainment. This is tied to the geographic characteristics of Lincolnshire, but also to

the attitudes of some adults that it is better to have the child on the computer indoors, rather than outside.

- **Outside influence to danger:** attendees considered children and young people to be particularly vulnerable to outside risks.
- **Understanding the language used by young people:** because social media encourages the usage of in-group language, in-jokes and specific group references, attendees noted that it was very difficult to tell when the individuals were at genuine risk or not.
- **Child sexual exploitation and grooming online:** attendees agreed overwhelmingly that this was a serious threat to the families and children they worked with.
- **Radicalisation:** likewise, attendees felt radicalisation was a threat to the families and children they worked with.

Child-to-child risks

- **Influence on self-esteem:** attendees agreed that they remarked that social media had a negative impact on the self-esteem of the children and young people they worked with. This was sometimes caused by external factors (such as cyberbullying or grooming tactics) but it was also sometimes caused by internal factors as well (such as the child or teenager using validation on social media as a coping mechanism for other struggles they faced in their life.)
- **Pressure to be online 24/7 and be available constantly:** connected to the design flaws in social media, attendees felt that the pressure to be online was further exacerbated by social circles that demanded availability from all friends at all times. This, they thought, sometimes resulted in more reluctant social media users staying engaged for longer than they wanted.
- **Peer pressure:** this theme encompasses several ones raised by the participants, including, but not limited to – having a social media presence, staying on social media, accepting friend requests from strangers, tolerating unpleasant behaviour (up to and including bullying), sharing images of yourself that you wouldn't ordinarily, and also coveting certain material items as a type of group status signifier.
- **Online purchases:** also ties to some of the design flaws in social media, the facilitated in-app or in-game purchase features were considered as a risk by the event attendees, particularly as regards families where parents did not exercise oversight over how their accounts were being used.
- **Bullying and cyberbullying:** attendees agreed overwhelmingly that this was a problem for the stakeholders they worked with.
- **Deprived of social skills and interactions:** attendees felt that while children's centres being on the decline, and the lack of after-school activities were a significant contribution to this problem, they also remarked that by choosing social media first, children and young people were likely missing out on learning important social skills and interactions.
- **Bringing online issues to the classroom:** attendees noted that the notion of "what happens online stays online" has not been true for a while. A significant problem has been that many children and young people carry over arguments from the classroom to

the chatroom and back, with little to no opportunity for intervention on the part of teachers.

- **Private info made public:** the ways in which social media is designed makes sharing private information in public quite easy. Indeed, participants expressed concerns that many children who shared information in confidence were having their trust betrayed.

Cross-cutting themes

In addition to the main themes discussed in the challenges and risk sections, there were some cross-cutting ones that either applied to all of the potential categories or applied across multiple ones.

- **Limited resources for parents:** attendees remarked that many parents lacked the necessary resources to understand social media themselves, let alone teach safe usage to their children.
- **Sexing made easier:** regardless of whether both participants were children or not, the facilitation of sexting (and wider dissemination of images and messages relating to sexting) was seen by attendees as a major concern.
- **Conformity and fear of missing out:** attendees remarked that conformity and fear of missing out were exacerbating many of the problems discussed in previous sections.
- **Losing grasp on reality, equating self-worth with likes and numbers of “friends”:** attendees also pointed out that in some cases, children began use social media as an unhealthy coping mechanism, using the validation of “likes” and numbers of “friends” as a substitute for a healthy self-esteem or personal growth. While it was agreed that the underlying reasons for such behaviour are numerous and complex, it was largely accepted by participants that social media added to the problem.
- **Difficulty in confirming identity:** because of social media’s design, many attendees felt that the risk of identity theft or impersonation was greater than average, and considered children to be particularly at risk because they lack experience and discernment to exercise caution the way an adult might.
- **Issues exacerbated for children with multiple and complex needs:** though not the main theme of the event, attendees noted that the risks raised were especially pertinent for children (and adults as well) who live with multiple and complex needs.
- **Issues exacerbated for the children of parents with multiple and complex needs:** on a similar note, attendees remarked that the issues discussed were likely even more pertinent for children of parents with multiple and complex needs.
- **Issues with the assignment of safeguarding responsibility:** finally, attendees expressed concern that the risks and challenges raised were exacerbated by the fact that it is unclear whose responsibility it is to take them on. Attendees noted, for example, that teachers in schools were often afraid of intervening in a situation where online bullying was involved for fear of litigation or because they did not understand their place in preventing that. Other attendees raised the concern that teachers might not feel empowered to teach their students about social media without sufficient support from Ofsted or their Head of School. As such, understanding whose role it is to safeguard children is crucial before an intervention is properly designed.

Who do we signpost to?

Attendees suggested a number of resources that they would signpost to in various situations. They did, however, remark that a lot of these resources were not nearly local enough to provide the kind of support some of their beneficiaries needed.

- **Stop Hate UK:** for reporting hate crime and supporting the victims of hate crime, including for those with learning disabilities or those belonging to the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Police:** in cases of grooming or where bullying/cyberbullying threats had escalated to the point where there was a strong likelihood of harm coming to the individual. Participants stressed that they would not signpost to the police if both individuals involved in the bullying incident were children.
- **Internal mediation:** suggested as an alternative to the police in cases where everyone involved was underage and/or the risk had not escalated to the point of real and immediate threat.
- **Teachers:** attendees stressed that they would only signpost if they felt the teachers had the necessary skills and learning. They acknowledged that not every school has the necessary tools to mediate effectively, or the training necessary to mediate effectively.
- **NEL council children and safeguarding partnership:** for local safeguarding and social care.
- **YGAM:** for tools and training to build digital resilience, skills, knowledge, and safeguarding against problematic gambling and gaming.
- **NSPCC:** for resources, school visits, and one-to-one support.
- **Think U Know:** for supporting vulnerable children, including victims of grooming and CSE.
- **Barnado's:** for supporting vulnerable children, including victims of grooming and CSE.
- **Young Minds:** for mental health support.
- **GP:** for referral and frontline support.
- **Kooth:** for online support.
- **Online support portals (Childline, Parentline, Samaritans, etc):** depending on the age of the person.
- **CAMHS (if possible):** attendees acknowledged that waiting lists were very long and that not all children would be able to access it. However, they still encouraged individuals to seek out a referral where possible, even while pursuing other types of support.
- **Think2Speak:** Community Interest Company based in Gainsborough. Signposting particularly for children coping with questions of gender, sexuality, body image and more.
- **Healthy Minds:** for mental health support.
- **Early help:** attendees agreed that early intervention is better than a late one, and as such encouraged people where possible to seek one out.

- **Restorative Justice:** for restorative practice
- **BEAT:** for eating disorders
- **Prevent:** for cases of radicalisation
- **LCC:** for local services
- **Harmless CIC:** for support for individuals self-harming
- **NWCH:** a local community interest company based in Lincoln, covering Lincolnshire. Where there is access to funded counselling. NWCH has a special project called Acorn which supports children 4-18yrs old who have suffered sexual abuse. They provide therapy with fully qualified therapists to clients aged 4yrs-80yrs+ including pet therapy, with therapy dogs.

Research

While this was not a lecture or a public seminar, participants were provided with a list of further reading (also included in this document) and were also presented with a few pertinent points from research that emerged from the last decade as a point of discussion on the day. These points included, but were not limited to:

- There is no such thing as digital natives (Eynon and Helsper, 2010): big survey studies from ten years ago have demonstrated that there are different factors that influence how people experience risk and trust on social media and how enthusiastically they approach social media. Generation alone was not one of those facts, but rather existed as one of multiple interconnected factors.
- Children don't struggle with stranger danger or encounter online predators as often as we are led to believe (boyd, 2014).
- Children do struggle with the loss of access to public spaces (boyd, 2014).
- Children experience the internet in different ways depending on background, education, gender, family environment and many other factors (boyd, 2014; Eynon and Helsper, 2010; Eynon and Helsper; 2015).

Attendees were also invited to reflect on the aspects of social media technologies that they personally felt comfortable with, as research has shown that adults and children are not too dissimilar in how they perceive risk and trust online. Among these aspects were:

- Older, established platforms: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- Using social media for specific business needs
- Cheap connection with friends
- Nothing (participant did not use social media because they were not comfortable with any aspect of it)
- Using closed Facebook groups of networking
- Using closed Facebook groups for specialist peer to peer support

What is interesting about those statements is that they express, in their own different ways, the same basic sentiment: social media is useful and sometimes fun if the individual engages with it on their own terms and with a clear understanding of what that entails. Social media stops being useful and fun when an individual can no longer consent to how their information is being used and how it is repurposed or recontextualised. Indeed, boundaries and consent will

have a significant role to play in the next section, where the result of the trust-based activity are discussed.

How do we trust?



As part of the workshop, all attendees participated in an activity which aimed to simulate a social media interaction. The results were sometimes interesting, sometimes sad, sometimes... not unusual... but they allowed participants to think about social media from a user's perspective, and consider risk and risk assessment from a different angle: that of a person with limited information who is asked to decide in a short amount of time.

The attendees were also invited to consider how social media might look like from the point of view of a young person, how that young person might respond to a situation, and whether the things an adult might consider a red flag might appear perfectly reasonable to a child or a teenager. Some examples among the latter include, but are not limited to: communications that might come from teachers, communications from strangers that the child has no reason to contact, and communications from parents-of-friends.

After the activity was over, participants were invited to consider:

...What makes us say yes to a connection?

- Knowing the person
- Previous interactions
- Remembering the promise to connect
- Trust/optimist/naïve/wanting to be the bigger person
- Shared interest
- A truthful-sounding story
- Age
- Peer pressure
- Excess compliments
- Positive or negative reinforcement that resonates with person

What was particularly pertinent about this question was that the attendees noted a lot of the same things for both yes, no, and maybe situations – indicating that a lot depended on the existing connections they had with the person who might be contacting them, their own personal histories, and how they responded to compliments. One comment from an attendee included the consideration that they, as adults, would see a red flag in certain situations; but a child might experience the same situation as a positive one, depending on their own background and situation.

Another interesting conversation that emerged as a result of this particular question as whether trust was inherently good or bad. Some attendees were of the opinion that trusting a “friend” who wanted to “apologize” was inherently naïve; others viewed this kind of trust as healthy and necessary for the development of an individual. This further raises the question of whether a one-size-fits-all approach to advice on social media is possible.

...What makes us say maybe?

- Positive?
 - Plausibility
 - Loose connection
 - Bits of truth
 - Type of platform
 - Shared interest
 - Mutual friends
 - Being of the same age
 - Uneasy about boundaries
- Negative?
 - Too many variables

- Dodgy profile picture
- Very old pictures
- Big gaps in posting
- Age disparity
- Uneasy about boundaries

Boundaries played an important part in how individuals perceived risk. The attendees were all adults and confident in saying exactly when they would accept certain behaviours or apologies, and when they would not. However, even adults with a good sense of boundaries were not able to completely predict when a scenario was dangerous or not, which led to a discussion of how much realistically can be expected of children. Further, situations where peer pressure was involved meant that the attendees had an incentive to consider the wider implications of their decision to refuse or deny a connection, making them more likely to accept it with caution rather than outright block a person.

...What makes us say no?

- Gut instinct
- Stranger
- Someone pretending to be a teacher
- Blatant lie or blatant spam/phishing
- Too many personal questions from a person you don't know very well
- Outlandish context
- Platform dependent
- Age disparity
- Excess compliments
- Positive or negative reinforcement that does not gel with the person.

As seen from the section on what makes us say yes to an online connection, some of the things participants felt were a red flag were, in their minds, also things that other people might consider to be perfectly acceptable bases for a relationship. Further muddying the waters were the varying expectations towards others on different social media platforms. Adults interacting with each other on LinkedIn were not concerned so much about age disparity. Adults interacting on Facebook in a social capacity might be. These social expectations were, as some participants pointed out, sometimes exploited by bad actors online; however, they were also the basis for trust and happy accidents.

With regards to what was an immediate “no” in the case of the workshop attendees, obvious lies and disparity were a clear indication that this was not a trustworthy connection. They were also reluctant to accept friend requests from strangers if those requests did not come with a compelling reason.

Attendees who were up to date with current safeguarding practices were quick to spot scenarios where inappropriate contact was being made (for example, a teacher reaching out to a child they taught on social media). However, the participants did discuss the implications of how school-wide adoptions of emails and other technological solutions might muddy the

waters somehow – a child, for example, who is used to school email as a means to contact a teacher might not think much of adding them on social media. This in turn raised concerns about the normalisation of deviance and how schools might accidentally normalise harmful behaviours to their students.

How can we address?

Finally, all participants were asked to discuss how they might address the risks they raised earlier in the workshop. Ideas included:

...platform-to-child risks?

- Boundaries workshops
- Healthy v unhealthy activities to cope
- More information on influencers and how sponsorships work
- Working with the gambling commission
- Being creative
- More funding
- Developing resilience and emotional intelligence
- Working with national advertising watchdog
- Working with gaming companies
- Working to close loopholes in games that allow young people to be exploited

...adult-to-child risks?

- Consultations with young people
- Building trust in the counter-narrative (radicalization) and the sources of that counter-narrative
- Helping parents teach boundary setting
- Giving parents the tools to support their children
- Saying no to Nanny iPad
- Multi-agency collaboration
- Encouraging the setting and maintenance of family rules
- Better careers advice
- Learning from other countries
- Positive activities
- Helping parents teach children to cope with boredom
- Additional support for vulnerable adults and children

...child-to-child risks?

- Understanding social media
- Reviving children's activities and centres
- Better parenting skills
- More emotional resilience and intelligence
- Supporting communication and difficult conversations
- Not talking down on children
- Working with Ofsted to make schools take social media seriously

- Removing the fear of litigation (schools) and encouraging dialogue with parents
- Working with headteachers to give social media a dedicated space on the curriculum
- More uniformity across the policy
- Empowering bystanders (cyberbullying) to empower the victim
- Encouraging self-actualization from within, not from external validation
- Improving career services

Outcomes

The outcomes of the workshop will take time to disseminate and introduce. However, two main outcomes that relate to the types of goals attendees raised in the beginning were:

- Reinforcing the importance of learning about social media
- Reinforcing the importance of learning about boundaries and about enforcing them

Next steps?

This report will be disseminated to attendees first and then more widely, with the view of being built upon in the next workshops. These will take place as follows:

February workshop – [Monday, 24th](#)

March workshop – [Monday, 23rd](#)

Further Reading

Policy and Campaigns

- Department for Education (2018) Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741314/Keeping_Children_Safe_in_Education__3_September_2018_14.09.18.pdf (Accessed: 6 March 2019).
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Books aimed at young adults and children

Title	Author	Genre	Role of social media	Space of risk?	Space of trust?	Neutral space?
All about Mia	Lisa Williamson	YA Contemporary	Some - Instagram and selfies are mentioned	No	No	Yes
Contagion	Teri Terry	YA Sci-fi	Blogs used	No	Yes	No
Ice Cream for breakfast	Laura Jane Williams	Non-fiction	Mentioned in passing	No	No	Yes
One of us is lying	Karen McManus	YA Contemporary	Murder mystery, bullying	Yes	No	No
Accidental Superstar	Marianne Levy	YA/MG contemporary	YouTube used to propel me into fame	Yes	Yes	No
Becoming	Laura Jane Williams	Non-fiction	Mentioned in passing	No	Yes	Yes
Book of Lies	Teri Terry	YA fantasy	Some - mentioned in passing	No	No	Yes
More of me	Kathryn Evans	YA Sci-fi	Facebook and blogs used a lot by heroine to research medical condition and to connect with people; some of which very bad	Yes	Yes	No
This Savage Song / Our Dark Duet	V. E. Schwab	YA Horror / Fantasy	Social media used by students to check on each other/ stay in contact	Yes	Yes	No
Asking for it	Louise O'Neill	YA Contemporary	Bullying and sex abuse	Yes	No	No
Binge	Tyler Oakley	YA non-fiction	Blogger memoir	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hello Life	Marcus Butler	YA non-fiction	Blogger memoir	Yes	Yes	Yes
I Hate Myselfie	Shane Dawson	YA non-fiction	Blogger memoir / short stories	Yes	Yes	Yes
I, Justine	Justine Ezarik	YA non-fiction	Blogger memoir	Yes	Yes	Yes
Illuminae	Amie Kaufman and Jay Kristoff	YA Sci-fi	Novel told in chat snippets, email snippets, and transcripts of surveillance cameras	Yes	Yes	No
In Real Life	Joey Garceffa	YA non-fiction	Blogger memoir	Yes	Yes	Yes

Life with a Sprinkle of Glitter	Louise Pentland	YA non-fiction	Sort of used - blogger book	No	Yes	Yes
Love, Tanya	Tanya Burr	YA non-fiction	Blogger memoir	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mind Games	Teri Terry	YA Sci-fi	Matrix-like social media and virtual reality	Yes	Yes	No
Simon vs the Homo Sapiens Agenda	Becky Albertalli	YA Contemporary	Social media used to bully mc but also for comms	Yes	Yes	No
The epic adventures of Lydia Bennet	Kate Rorick, Rachel Kiley	YA fiction	Book based on popular YouTube show	Yes	Yes	No
Girl Online	Zoe Sugg / Siobham Curram	YA Contemporary	Used loads; blogger book	Yes	Yes	No
Messenger of Fear	Michael Grant	YA Horror / Fantasy	Social media used for bullying	Yes	No	No
Pointless Book	Alfie Deyes	YA non-fiction	Blogger.... Thing	No	No	No
The secret diary of Lizzie Bennet	Bernie Su	YA fiction	Book based on popular YouTube show	Yes	Yes	No
Fangirl	Rainbow Rowell	YA Contemporary	Main character writes fanfic	Yes	Yes	No
Ink	Amanda Sun	YA fantasy	Google	No	No	Yes
More than this	Patrick Ness	YA sci-fi	The whole world disappears into virtual reality to save resources	Yes	No	No
Quicksilver	R J Anderson	YA Sci-fi	Used Some	No	Yes	No
Adorkable	Sara Manning	YA Contemporary	Main character uses her blog and other social media as business / Social media personality	Yes	Yes	No
Circle of silence	Carol M. Tanzman	YA thriller / contemporary	About a highschool news crew	No	No	Yes
Close encounters of the girl kind	Andy Robb	MG contemporary	Websites and Internet mentioned	No	No	Yes
Dying to Know you	Aidan Chambers	YA Contemporary	Email and IM	Yes	Yes	No

Every Day	David Levithan	YA magical realism	Email used some	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gone, gone, gone	Hannah Moskowitz	YA Contemporary	Used some	Yes	Yes	No
Speechless	Hannah Harrington	YA Contemporary	Blogs and internet used in passing	Yes	Yes	No
The long Earth	Terry Pratchett and Steve Baxter	Sci-Fi	The instructions for creating main plot device are distributed on the Internet; blogs used	Yes	Yes	Yes
All those things I've done	Gabrielle Zevin	YA sci-fi	Mentioned in passing. The internet is restricted and paid for	No	No	Yes
Bumped / Thumped	Megan McCafferty	YA sci-fi	Huge. Social media celebrities etc.	Yes	Yes	No
The Fault in our Stars	John Green	YA Contemporary	Mentioned in passing	Yes	No	No
The Lunar Chronicles	Marissa Meyer	YA Sci-fi	Social media and other technology used a lot - newscasting and information interception	No	Yes	No
Dear Dylan	Siobhan Curram	YA Contemporary	Starts with a newsletter	Yes	Yes	No
Mercy	Rebecca Lim	YA fantasy	Email used some	No	Yes	No
Paranormalcy	Kirsten White	YA fantasy	mentioned in passing	No	No	Yes
The Ghost and the Goth	Stacy Kade	YA fantasy	Blogs used	Yes	No	No
Will Grayson	John Green	YA Contemporary	Used a lot	Yes	No	No
Hush, Hush	Becca Fitzpatrick	YA fantasy	Google	No	No	Yes
Shiver	Maggie Stiefvater	YA fantasy	Google	No	No	Yes
Wings	Aprilynne Pike	YA fantasy	Google	No	No	Yes
Wintergirls	Laurie Halse Anderson	YA Contemporary	Pro-aorexia websites mentioned	Yes	No	No
Paper Towns	John Green	YA Contemporary	Mentioned in passing	Yes	No	No

Twilight	Stephanie Meyer	YA fantasy	Google	No	No	Yes
Unwind	Neal Shusterman	YA Sci-fi	Used in passing.	No	Yes	Yes
Mortal Engines books	Philip Reeve	YA post-apocalyptic	Mentioned in passing as a relic from another time	No	No	yes
The Boyfriend List + sequels	E. Lockhart	YA Contemporary	Mentioned in passing	No	No	Yes
Exodus	Julie Bertagna	YA Sci-fi	Used by main character and floating cities hedonists	No	Yes	No
Sloppy Firsts (+sequels)	Megan McCafferty	YA Contemporary	Used at times, derided loads	Yes	No	No
Ender's Game	Orson Scott Card	YA Sci-fi	Blogs used to take over the world	Yes	Yes	No