

Misery has More Company on Facebook

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News Editor

In the online community known as Facebook, there are one billion registered users. According to Morrison Foerster's Socially Aware blog, each user has an average of 130 friends and spends a monthly average of 6.9 hours on the site, mostly to keep in touch with old friends or maintain other offline relationships.

Furthermore, according to a joint study released in January by Humboldt University and Technical University in Germany, one in three users feels frustration and envy after using the social network. The researchers in the study cited "good news," such as vacation photos and the profiles of successful friends, as the source of their dissatisfaction.

"By and large, online social networks allow users unprecedented access to information

on relevant others—insights that would be much more difficult to obtain offline," project manager and Humboldt University researcher Dr. Hanna Krasnova said, according to NBC.

The researchers also found that people who peruse the website without contributing were most affected. Passive users who use Facebook for information, such as through friends' postings and photo browsing, but do not engage in interpersonal com-

munication have negative experiences after using the site.

"Seeing what people have and how they can hang out after school makes me feel depressed, lonely and poorer

than I really am because they have things or get to do things that I can't have or do," an AHS

I would be happier if I had a new iPad like Suzy.

student, who asked to have their name withheld, said.

To combat their negative feelings, some users feel compelled to embellish their own Facebook profiles, which only incites envy among other users. This paradox is a phenomenon that researchers have termed "envy spiral."

In addition, Facebook members try to avoid these feel-

ings by "unfriending" or avoiding adding people who cause the negative experiences, which may result in social tension.

Researchers also observed that some of these users will then leave Facebook or at least reduce their use of the site.

"From a provider's perspective, our findings signal that users frequently perceive Facebook as a stressful environment, which may, in the long-run, endanger platform sustainability," the report said, adding to speculation that Facebook could be reaching saturation point in some markets.

Nevertheless, students at AHS still see the merits of using this social networking site as a convenient mean of communication.

"I have a positive experience with Facebook," junior Diana Ly said. "I get to keep up [to date] with friends and my clubs."

MOOR graphic by SHARON XU

Speech and Debate Team Talks Its Way to Victory

SYLVIA WINSTON
Staff Writer

Over the past decades, AHS has had success in various areas. This year, the Speech and Debate (S&D) team has brought acknowledgement to AHS after seizing first place sweepstakes at their recent Spring Varsity tournament for the first time in addition to successes at other tournaments.

"The three first place sweepstakes trophies won by the team [...] thus far have surpassed our previous successes. As for the National Forensic League, the team keeps adding seals from competing, winning at tournaments and moving up the national ladder," coach Kevin Tong said.

Many members recognize the benefits of being in a program like S&D.

"[S&D] has helped me with public speaking and [thinking] on the spot. It has also helped me improve my diction and perceive things on a more analytical level," freshman Sharleen Mock said.

The team is among the top 30 S&D programs nation-wide, bringing pride to its coach.

"I feel very proud of the team. Many of the members have done a great job working on speeches and debate cases and dedicated their time to practicing and competing," Tong said.

S&D members also feel satisfaction when they see their hard work come to fruition at tournaments and in day-to-day life.

"It is a privilege to be part of this program and it has helped me gain self-confidence. I no longer fear expressing my own opinion," sophomore Matthew Chan said.

However, the team does not run on its own. It has four senior captains who strive to end this year with a big win and prepare the path for incoming members.

"I'm very proud of this year's team, and it's an honor to be able to help lead the team this year. My responsibilities as captain range from arranging practices to making sure everything goes smoothly with our team at tournaments," captain Kimberly Phan said.

Hours of rehearsal and memorization are key to this team's success.

"[Practices] can be stressful because there's a lot to manage and teach," captain Henry Chen said.



TALKING IT UP AHS' Speech and Debate team smile their way to success. PHOTO courtesy of SHIRLEY LI

According to sophomore Felice Gonzales, S&D has become her second home. Not only has she gained experience in public speaking and competition, but

she also gained a family. "I [never dwell] on my achievements. I always seek for more. I tend to draw inspiration from others," Gonzales said.

Online Courses: An Alternative Learning Source

JENNY LEE
Staff Writer

Although education has been associated with tangible textbooks, online courses are growing in popularity. Schools, such as the California State Universities (CSUs), the University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) and Harvard University, have begun to incorporate this system. Students can either take online classes as supplements to their campus courses or for a degree.

Taking online courses lessens a student's concern over schedule

conflict, commute issues, punctuality and tuition. The Sloan Consortium's 2012 Survey of Online Learning reported that there were over 6.7 million students taking online courses in the fall term of 2011; the number increased by 570,000 compared to the previous year.

According to the UPenn Director of Program Development Marni Baker-Stein, UPenn's online program was "designed to

recreate the Penn experience online." At UPenn, there are online courses for credit and non-credit directed toward UPenn students wishing to fulfill graduation re-

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-Ivy Dang

quirements and high school students searching for college experience.

"[The online system is] easier to access and more effective. It's

more convenient," junior Ivy Dang said. "Students can finish at their own pace."

However, cheating has been a concern for professors, since they do not know who is actually in front of the computer. While some schools abide by the honor code, others are considering implementations that help verify a student's identity, such as iris recognition technology. Even so, this may not stop students from

reading a cheat sheet or listening to answers from someone nearby.

Additionally, a survey conducted by Excelsior College and Zogby International found that 83 percent of executives consider an online degree as credible as one earned on campus. Nonetheless, there are still employers who deny online degrees from both accredited and unaccredited schools.

"If I was the employer, I would employ the person with a regular degree [acquired by attending class]," senior June Chen said. "I don't learn as much if it's online. There are too many distractions."

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