



Online Literacy: The Do's & Don'ts of Social Media

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Social media has become one of the most common ways people communicate today. It connects us with friends, family, and the world, but it also comes with risks. That's why **social media literacy is important**. Learning how to act and protect yourself online helps you stay safe, respectful, and responsible.



Things not to do on Social Media

Posting Personal Information

One of the most common and dangerous online mistakes is oversharing personal information. Many people underestimate how easily these details can be misused. Your *full name, address, phone number, school, or workplace* can be used by scammers for identity theft or other fraudulent purposes. With enough data, they can access accounts or impersonate you online.

Even casual posts can have serious effects. For example, announcing a family vacation may signal to burglars that your home is empty. To stay safe, always think before posting personal or location-based details. Regularly check your privacy settings and share information only with people you trust. Being cautious online is a simple but powerful way to protect yourself.



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Don't Click Suspicious Links

A golden rule of the internet: **“Do not click on random links.”** Many scams begin with a single click. Fraudulent links may look legitimate, often disguised as messages from your bank, a government agency, or even someone you know. These can lead to fake websites designed to steal your information or automatically download harmful malware onto your device.

If you ever receive a message containing a link that seems unusual or too good to be true. These include promises such as free prizes, money, or giveaways. Verify the source first. If it appears to be from a friend or organization, reach out directly (like a phone call or official website) to confirm its legitimacy. Remember, **it's better to be overly cautious than to fall victim to a scam.**



Things you should do on Social Media

Think! Before You Post

Social media gives everyone a voice, but that freedom comes with responsibility. What you share online shapes how others see you and can impact your relationships, education, or future career. Once something is posted publicly, it's almost impossible to erase. Even deleted content can resurface through screenshots or digital archives.

A good rule to follow is the “Grandma Rule.” Before posting, ask yourself how you'd feel if your grandmother, teacher, or future employer saw it. If you'd feel uncomfortable, it's probably best not to post at all.





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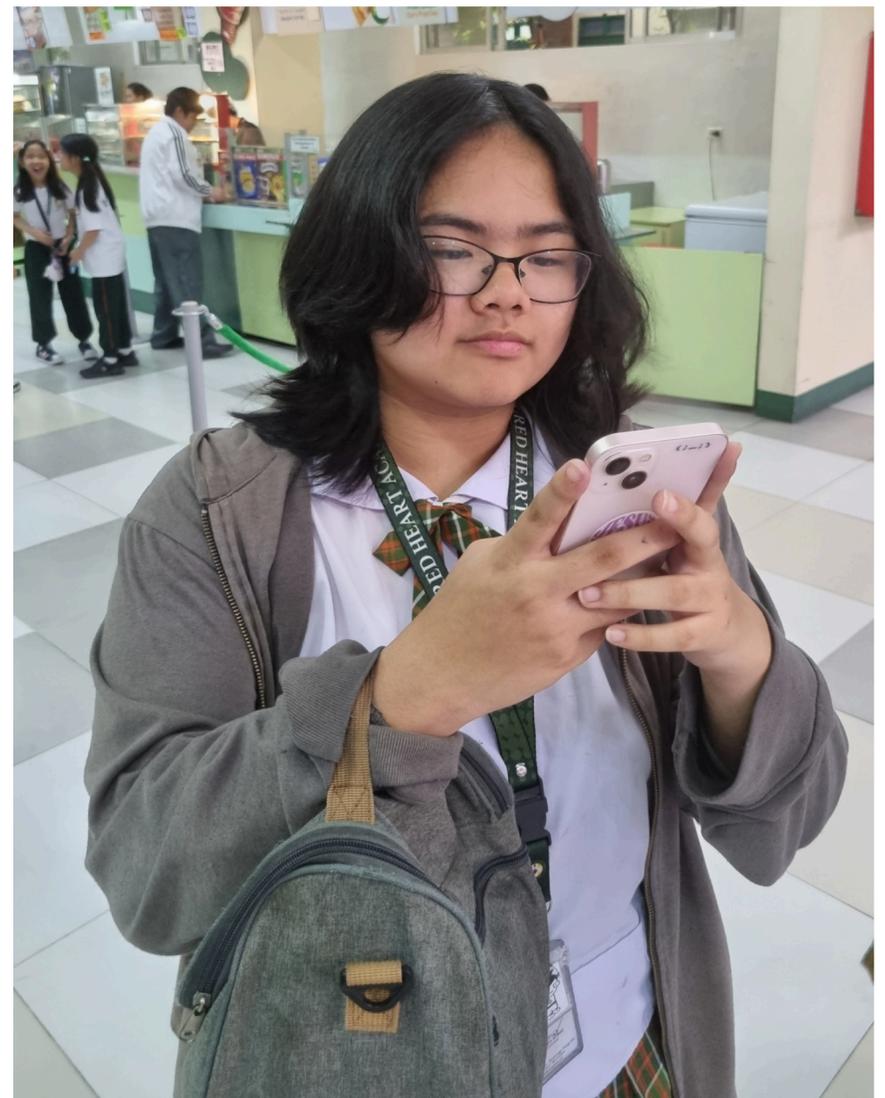
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Practice Kindness and Respect

Behind every username or profile picture is a real person with feelings. It's easy to forget this when communicating through a screen, where physical distance can sometimes reduce empathy. Cyberbullying and online hostility are serious problems that can have lasting emotional effects on victims.

Choosing kindness online doesn't just make social media a better place; it reflects good character and integrity. Responding politely, offering encouragement, and avoiding hurtful comments are simple yet powerful ways to contribute to a positive digital environment. For those who follow Christian values, showing kindness also aligns with living according to the teachings of Christ: to treat others with compassion and love, both in person and online.

Social media can be fun, informative, and inspiring if used wisely. Protect your privacy, avoid risky links, and think before posting. Be kind, stay safe, and surround yourself with positive people. When you use social media responsibly, you help create a digital world that's respectful, safe, and full of opportunity.



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