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MCA 311

ISSUE REACTION PAPER ASSIGNMENT #7

Issue: Social Networking Services

Case: Catfishing

 Ever since the Manti Teo hoax catfishing has been a huge topic of discussion when it comes to social media. Social media networks provide a service to people to connect them with others who have similar friends and similar interests. People automatically assume they are being connected with people who are, who they say they are according to their profile. Social media networks should take more precaution when it come to making fake profiles, and uploading pictures that have been sourced from the internet.

The popular Urban Dictionary defines catfishing as a person or the act of engaging in an online relationship while posing as someone else. The term was first used in the 2010 film *Catfish*, where director Ariel Schulman follows his younger brother Nev as he becomes involved in and pursues an online romance. To be “catfished” is to be deceived by someone online who is basically pretending to be someone they aren’t. With the advances in technology these days anybody can claim to be a person who doesn’t really exist and is completely made up. “With all of the relationship opportunities afforded to us by social media, we get the chance to retool our images and fine-tune our realities to present ourselves exactly how we want to be seen” (Anderson). Or in some cases people search Google images and upload pictures of a completely different person. Social media networks have access to every profile in the network. I think these networks should be constantly scanning for newly uploaded pictures to make sure the picture isn’t found on another social network or sourced from the internet to better protect people from being catfished by a fake person and end the ability of fake profiles.

Catfishing is most certainly a concept that has existed for as long as the online chat room has, but it’s hard to deny the trend would have gained as much traction without the societal normalizing of social media. “Some catfish start out of a desire for companionship paired with a lack of self-confidence, and things snowball (Anderson).” I also think catfishing can come from a place of loneliness, desire for love, and acceptance from other people. No matter what peoples reasoning for catfishing I believe it is the networks right to protect its users the best way it can, so nobody gets hurt and nobody’s identities are taken and to make sure false information isn’t being given to their users. No matter what “Twitter and Facebook have bolstered many a romance and not only helped people find that special someone, but also helps bridge a literal physical gap between couples that might otherwise be insurmountable” (Gonzalez, 2013). Still today society is still uncomfortable with the idea of an online relationship.

References

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