Creative Research Tasks

THE SOCIAL MEDIA TRAP

How Do We Fix It?

Level 1: Understanding the basics

Spotlight on social media safety policies

🎯 **Learning intention**

Identify key policies and design changes aimed at improving social media safety.

Instructions

Social media policies play an important role in shaping how people interact online and how safe platforms are for young people.

For this activity, you will investigate rules and design changes and create flashcards to show your learning.

- Choose three safety policies or design changes (such as phone bans, banning under-16 social media use, turning off autoplay, limiting notifications, or others).
- Find out what each policy or design change is meant to achieve and who is responsible for making it happen.
- Create flashcards that explain each policy or design feature, making sure to include a simple definition and its positive impact on users.
- Present your work visually, using drawings, clear vocabulary, and a layout that other students can understand easily.

Level 2: Making connections

Global approaches to social media wellness

🎯 Learning intention

Compare different approaches taken by governments and organisations to promote healthy social media use and reduce harm.

Instructions

Governments and organisations around the world are taking different steps to make social media healthier for youth and society.

In this task, you will research these approaches and design a creative comparison product.

- Choose two countries or organisations discussed in the video (for example, Australia, Europe, the United States, Brazil, Center for Humane Technology, or Meta and Stanford's research program).
- Investigate what specific actions are being taken to reduce the negative effects of social media and promote healthy usage in each case.
- Analyse the similarities and differences between them, considering effectiveness, challenges, and any unique features.
- Design an illustrated social media post or news report comparing both approaches, highlighting important dates, policies, and outcomes in a format that is engaging and easy to follow.

Level 3: Thinking deeper

Design a campaign for better social media safety

🎯 Learning intention

Design a creative campaign product recommending impactful changes to social media platforms for online safety.

Instructions

The video explores the ongoing search for better solutions in social media safety, including tech company accountability and design innovation.

In this activity, you will conduct research and craft a proposal for positive change.

- Research two design changes or policy initiatives that you think could have a significant impact (such as disabling infinite scroll or implementing stricter moderator controls).
- Gather evidence about their benefits and drawbacks from reliable sources.
- Invent your own campaign product (such as an advertising pitch, a digital prototype, or a video script) that advocates for these design changes or policies to be put in place by tech companies.
- Your final product should combine persuasive messaging, evidence, creative visuals, and calls to action, showing how these changes can improve online safety and wellbeing.

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Facilitate a class debate using a prompt and its suggested arguments below. Each level increases in difficulty.

Level 1: Understanding the basics

> 🎯 **Learning intention**
> Describe the effects school mobile phone bans have on classroom attention and safety.

Debate prompt

Schools should ban mobile phones during school hours.

Arguments FOR the motion:

- Banning phones can help students focus in class and avoid distractions.
- Less phone use at school can reduce social comparison and loneliness.
- Schools may be safer if students are not posting on social media at school.

Arguments AGAINST the motion:

- Mobile phones help students contact parents in an emergency.
- Some students need phones to check schedules or homework.
- Banning phones may not reduce distractions fully, as other devices exist.

Level 2: Making connections

> 🎯 **Learning intention**
> Analyse how requiring tech companies to have a duty of care impacts user wellbeing.

> **Debate prompt**
>
> Tech companies should be required to act in users' best interests.

Arguments FOR the motion:

- Acting in users' best interests can reduce harm from online platforms.
- Users may trust platforms more if companies are responsible.
- Enforced duty of care can limit risky design choices like infinite scroll.

Arguments AGAINST the motion:

- Users should monitor their own relationship with social media.
- Rules may limit technological innovation and progress.
- Defining 'best interests' for millions of users can be complex.

Level 3: Thinking deeper

> **⊙ Learning intention**
> Evaluate solutions for balancing youth protection with rights and innovation in social media.

> **Debate prompt**
>
> Governments should impose strict laws to control social media use for youth.

Arguments FOR the motion:

- Strict laws can protect youth from harmful content and misinformation.
- They can encourage tech companies to put safety first in design.
- Policy can empower families and schools to support healthier habits.

Arguments AGAINST the motion:

- Strict laws may violate free speech and personal choice rights.
- Overregulation could slow useful tech development for students.
- Young people may find ways around rules, making them less effective.

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How Do We Fix It?

> 🎯 **Learning intention**
>
> Describe and examine ways governments, organisations, and individuals can promote online safety.

Facilitate small group or class discussions using the prompts below. Each level increases in difficulty.

Level 1: Understanding the basics

- What are some negative effects of social media?
- Who are some groups involved in trying to reduce social media harm?
- Why do some governments choose to ban phones in schools?
- What does "Duty of Care" mean for tech companies?
- How do design features of social media influence users?

Level 2: Making connections

- How might banning social media for children under 16 affect youth wellbeing?
- What changes in social media design could make these platforms healthier?
- What is the role of private organisations in raising awareness about social media harm?
- How do governments and tech companies share responsibility for online safety?
- What impact could stricter content policies have on social media users?

Level 3: Thinking deeper

- Do you think tech companies should be more responsible for users' wellbeing? Why or why not?
- How would you design a social media platform to promote positive online experiences?
- What is the effectiveness of current laws and policies?
- What changes would you suggest for balancing safety and freedom online?
- Should individuals or organisations lead efforts to minimise social media harm, and why?

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How Do We Fix It?

> 🎯 **Learning intention**
>
> Investigate how shared responsibility can help improve online safety.

> **Inquiry question**
>
> How can different groups work together to make social media safer?

Engage

Use this activity to hook students' interest while connecting to their prior knowledge, preparing them for new learning, and exposing any misconceptions.

- Begin by asking students to share their daily routines involving mobile phones or social media before school starts.
- Discuss why schools or governments might want to regulate phone and social media use, and invite students to share their opinions or experiences regarding online safety and digital rules.

Explore

Have students complete the following hands-on, investigative activity to explore the inquiry question.

- Hypothesis/Wondering: Predict which group, government, tech companies, or individuals could have the greatest impact on improving online safety.
- Investigation: In teams, research current laws, tech company initiatives, and individual actions that address social media safety using reputable websites and classroom materials.
- Evidence gathering: Collect news articles, case studies, or interviews that show successes or challenges faced by each group in keeping social media safe.

Explain

Ask students the following questions and have them justify their responses with evidence.

- How do laws banning mobile phones in schools affect online safety for students?
- What changes have tech companies made to social media design, and how do they help users?
- Which group's actions (government, companies, or individuals) do you think are most important, and why?
- How could policy and technology work together to reduce harmful effects on social media?

Elaborate

Students can complete one of the following activities to extend and apply their new knowledge in different contexts.

- Create a diagram showing connections between governments, tech companies, organisations, and users, explaining shared responsibilities for online safety.
- Write a journal entry about a positive change you would recommend to improve social media usage based on what you've learned.
- Interview family or peers about their experiences with social media safety and suggest solutions in a brief report.

Evaluate

Assess students' understanding and learning by asking the following questions.

- What did you learn about the challenges and benefits of shared responsibility for online safety?
- If you were in charge of making social media safer, what actions would you take and why?
- In your opinion, what is the best way for groups to collaborate so everyone benefits from safer online spaces?

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> 🎯 **Learning intention**
> Identify and define key vocabulary about online safety and social media.

Below is a list of words and their definitions from the video.

Word	Definition
social media	Online websites and apps where people share, connect, and communicate.
duty of care	A responsibility to act in someone's best interest.
misinformation	False or incorrect information shared.
tech literacy	Understanding how technology works and how to use it safely.
wellbeing	The state of feeling healthy, happy, and safe.
regulation	Rules made by governments to control or guide behaviour.
social media platform	A website or app where people can post and interact.
collaboration	Working together with others to achieve something.
accountability	Taking responsibility for actions or decisions.
content policy	Rules for what can and cannot be posted online.

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How Do We Fix It?

> 🎯 **Learning intention**
>
> Recall and explain what is already known about the topic to support new learning.

Use the following activities to hook students' curiosity, activate their prior knowledge, and identify misconceptions.

Hook

Present students with an everyday scenario using simple props: a backpack, a notebook, and a smartphone. Ask students to list how each item helps or hinders their school life. Facilitate a quick, hands-on discussion, drawing connections to how technology impacts their daily routine and wellbeing.

Questions:
- Which object do you use most often at school?
- How does having a smartphone change the way you interact with your friends or teachers?
- What are benefits or challenges of carrying technology during the school day?

Activate prior knowledge

Have students brainstorm, in small groups, what online safety means to them. Record keywords or phrases on the board. Allow students to share both positive and negative experiences connected to social media, focusing on responsible usage and wellbeing. Identify misconceptions and discuss their existing understanding.

Questions:
- What does online safety mean to you?
- Can you share a time when you or someone you know felt unsafe online?
- What rules do you follow to stay safe when using social media?
- How could social media be made safer for everyone?

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