**Define the Problem**

Studies show that the amount of time a person uses social networking sites affects that person’s social skills. Either good or bad, researchers have reasons for both. “Social networking is just another communication tool. They are more approachable for some people because it’s not face to face. The trick is in figuring out which method of communication works best for each of your contacts,” Tracey Segarra said ([www.cpa2biz.com](http://www.cpa2biz.com).). By surveying this, parents will get a better idea on how much time their children should be allowed on social networking sites. This study may affect a person’s social interaction with others as they get older. Social networking sites contribute to how individuals respond to everyday situations. It also is an individual’s way of interacting in society.

**Review of Literature**

“We were interested to find that the best-adjusted young people were far more likely to use social media as an extension of their positive friendships, while less socially adept youth either did not have Facebook or MySpace pages, or, if they did, were more likely to use these sites in less than positive ways,” said professor Amori Yee Mikami (Samarrai).

“Given the importance of attachment to parents and peers in adolescent health and development, concern about high levels of screen time among adolescents is warranted.” (Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine.) According to Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, the more time children spent on the computer the more likely they were to have low attachment to parents. For every hour used on the computer, there is a twenty four percent increase in low attachment.

Some experts say children are becoming disconnected from the real world. With communicating through a computer screen so many adolescents do not develop body language, tone of voice, or a sense of other people’s emotions. It also causes kids to become more self-centered, showing no empathy for anyone else ([www.raisesmartkid.com](http://www.raisesmartkid.com)). Researchers show that social networking is also becoming more popular in employment. “But most firms will not hire people who can’t handle face-to-face communication, think about how many professionals you know who hide behind e-mails.” said Michelle Golden, president of Miss-based Golden Practices, Inc. ([www.cpa2biz.com](http://www.cpa2biz.com)).

While some experts say social networking decreases adolescent’s social skills others say it increases. Facebook creates a more peer-based environment where they can interact and learn from each other. Researchers have said, ‘Kids are more relationship-oriented, considerate, empathetic, and create long term relationships.” ([www.raisesmartkid.com](http://www.raisesmartkid.com).). Children who were better adjusted to social media early in their childhood used it more as they got older and had positive patterns of friendship and behavioral adjustment (Samarrai). Cambridge University findings say Facebook is a place to contact old friends and change the way people associate at a fundamental level (news.bbc.co.uk.). Facebook makes kids communicate and interact more than ever ([www.raisesmartkid.com](http://www.raisesmartkid.com).).

**Hypothesis**

The more time a person uses a social networking site the poorer their social skills will be.

**Conducting the Survey**

I distributed 100 surveys by randomly handing them out in the commons. Possible chances for error were the questions not clearly written, so people skipped over them. My survey was taken at Marengo High School, which has about 850 students and is located in Marengo, Illinois.

**Measurement of Variables**

The variables I am working with are GENDER, AGE, USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES, and SOCIAL INTERACTION. I defined gender as male and female. I defined age as how old people are. I defined using social networking sites in how many days a week it is used. I defined social interaction as how often do people talk to and hang out with friends.

**Analysis of Research**

Of the 51.5 percent of females that took the survey, 48.9 percent of them use social networking sites 7 days a week. Of the 48.5 percent of males who took the survey, 35.7 percent of them use social networking sites between 0-2 days a week. 20 out of 47 males hang out with their friends 4-5 days a week, while 10 hang out every day. 21 out of 50 females hang out with their friends 4-5 days a week, while 25 only hang out on weekends. According to the survey, 54 percent of females said they talk to different people online than in person but only 10 percent said they were embarrassed or scared to talk to them in person. On the male side, 46.8 percent talk to different people online than in person though 12.8 percent are embarrassed or scared to talk to them in person. 27.7 percent of females feel more comfortable talking to someone online than in person while 28 percent of males do.

**Report of Findings**

My study does not support my hypothesis. According to the surveys, people that use social networking sites more often do not feel more comfortable talking to someone online than in person. The review of literature takes both sides of the issue so the results are right no matter what. But my survey demonstrates the fact that social networking sites influence a person’s social skills positively. I think being social online gives a person confidence to be more social in person. If you look at the survey results, the people who have more friends online have multiple groups of friends in person instead of only having one group. Even though these are the results of my survey it doesn’t mean this is true for all people. It is different for males and females. Females use social networking sites more often than males whereas males hang out with their friends more than females. Even though the results are little different in those categories, they both are almost equal in talking to different people online and feeling scared or embarrassed to talk to someone. I only surveyed 100 people so it does not give me a very big sample size. The people I surveyed could be the more social people of the school or grade level could be a big factor. It is hard to really make a true conclusion about someone if you just go by ten questions on a survey and don’t really know the person.

**Works Cited**

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**Appendix A**

My name is Lauren and I am looking at the relationship between using social networking sites and a person’s social skills.

**Circle your response.**

1. Gender

Male Female

1. Age

14 15 16 17 18

1. Do you use a social networking site (Facebook, MySpace, Twitter)?

Yes No

1. If yes, how many days a week do you use it?

7 5-6 3-4 0-2

1. Approximately, how many friends do you have on this site?

0-100 100-300 300-500 500+

1. How often do you hang out with your friends outside of school?

Everyday 4-5 days a week Only weekends

1. Do you have multiple groups of friends you hang out with or just one particular group?

Multiple One group

1. Do you talk to different people online than in person?

Yes No

1. In regard to the people you talk to online, are you scared or embarrassed to talk to them in person?

Yes No

1. Do you feel more comfortable talking to someone online than in person?

Yes No