

MySpace wastes teens' precious time

Helen Bavin
FEATURES EDITOR

The past three years, the Facebook and MySpace epidemic has broken out throughout the United States. In less than three years, MySpace has become one of the top five most visited sites in the U.S. Teenagers spend multiple hours a day clicking away on their computers, updating pictures, sending comments and designing their profiles.

Despite what parents may argue, an article in the New York Times states that all this seemingly wasted time may actually be put to good use. The article states that through such social networks, teenagers learn "how to get along with others" and "manage a public identity."

But this still doesn't account for the hours spent inside, communicating with friends through a screen, something that shouldn't be accepted.

What happened to the days of spending time with people, in person, in order to "get along with others?" Or how is it managing a public identity when you can pretend to be whoever you want online?

As our society advances in technology, we've come up with more excuses to defend our addiction to electronics.

Although the New York Times study claimed that online interaction benefits technical skills as well as contemporary literacy, it quoted a student admitting that one can "become addicted" and "can't live without it."

And another student stated that he has MySpace open every minute of the day after he comes from school, receiving text messages alerting him of new comments on his account. This doesn't just stop in their high school years. Students carry these habits into college and make it difficult to manage time for their studies and personal life.

Whether MySpace, Facebook and other online networks help a teenager socialize in a more contemporary fashion, the time being spent on these websites robs time from similar activities in real life. Additionally, instead of working on homework and taking time to concentrate on the next school day, teens often rush home to turn on the computer and sit in their room leaving comments and going from page to page. If one considers the hours a student spends at school socializing, the need for talking to friends on the computer isn't necessary.



Also, according to science magazine *Science Daily*, 60 percent of teenagers spend an average of 20 hours per week on the computer while the other 30 percent spend more than 40 hours a week. If a teenager already spends so much time on the computer researching, typing and completing homework, they lose time being outdoors. Therefore, the extra time they are taking to socialize on social networking sites further removes any time for physical activity or even time spent with family.

Not only is time something that is lost while on MySpace and Facebook, but "managing a public identity" while online also isn't always truthful. People can pretend to be whomever they want. Many teens have lied about their age

in order to be eligible for a MySpace or Facebook and consequently have endangered themselves. Others pretend to be someone they are not and change their personalities in order to "fit in," trying to get their peers to like them.

Being able to create and become any person you'd like isn't exactly beneficial in teaching teenagers to maintain their identity.

It's easy to become anyone you want with a click of a mouse, blurring or erasing the truth.

MySpace and Facebook should not be taken away from teenagers altogether, but teens need to be aware of the valuable time they are losing. An online photo or avatar can never replace real life activities.

Sanders' proposals won't fix budget woes

Daniel Edwards
OPINIONS EDITOR

When the National Bureau of Economic Research officially declared that the United States has been in a recession since December 2007, it was no surprise to the San Diego residents and city hall occupants.

The University of San Diego economists compiled data in February 2008 illustrating that California, especially San Diego had begun slipping into a recession anywhere from three to six months before the nation as a whole began to feel the symptoms of a slowdown.

So the question now is not, "Are we really in a recession?" For us, it's "How do we get out of it?" The city of San Diego currently sits on an approximate \$43 million budget deficit, which has prompted the city council and the mayor's office to offer solutions.

Unfortunately for the citizens of this city, the proposals laid out by Mayor Jerry Sanders over the past few weeks are flawed and attempt to shave the shortfall at the expense of essential programs. According to the San Diego *Union-Tribune*, the mayor's proposals include the closure of

17 libraries and recreational facilities until more money is available to reopen them. However, this undermines the purpose of public libraries: to provide a free source of literature for those who can and cannot afford it alike. Public libraries are also among the few places people without internet can go to in order to access such resources.

Cutting recreational facility hours would adversely affect local sports and charity drives, according to the *Union Tribune* article. From charities to public health concerns, there is an enormous amount to disprove the mayor's proposals as unfeasible.

Libraries and recreational facilities aside, the most appalling flaw in the mayor's plan is the proposal of cutting the budget for fire and police operations by nearly \$12 million. Even in a time of recession, the last thing that should be reduced is public safety. The year-round fire danger in San Diego cannot be disregarded despite of the harsh economic climate.

Fire and police have been on the chopping block before and have taken considerable cuts. Fire officials have warned time and again that resources are stretched too thin as it is.

Something that San Diego public

safety takes pride in is its response times. Ninety percent of the time, fire rescue and police are on the scene within five minutes of a call. If jobs and funding are cut, that response time could easily increase.

The mayor's plans go so far as to call for the removal of a San Diego icon and a symbol of our culture and way of life. Last week, hundreds of pits were bulldozed out of beaches such as Mission Bay and La Jolla.

In addition to basic necessities, our way of life should be preserved as well. Tourism at beaches could slide. And the savings in maintenance costs annually would only account for a couple hundred thousand dollars, a pittance compared to the \$3.13 billion of San Diego's annual expenditures.

Granted, a nearly \$45 million shortfall cannot be fixed without the loss of programs and jobs, but the areas in which cuts are proposed that are simply irrational.

Although drastic times call for drastic measures, more innovative steps must be taken in attempt to consolidate the budget other than cutting jobs.

For example, as San Diego relies greatly on tourism, the hotel room tax could be raised. That obviously would

Proposed San Diego Budget Cuts

\$43 million budget deficit:

• **Police:** \$8.3 million out of a \$411 million budget

• **Fire:** \$4 million out of \$191 million budget

• **Library:** \$2 million out of \$37 million budget

Sidebar by Anna Mills
Source: www.signonsandiego.com

not compensate for the deficit, but it is a viable option to cushion the budget. We are in the midst of a budget crisis within a serious global economic decline, and the consequences are nothing short of great.

If San Diego City Hall and Mayor Sander's want to fix our problems and help get our city moving again, it means going beyond traditional cuts to public safety and recreation and library closures. The budget will not fix itself, but without inventive thinking, our budget may never be balanced.

Experience, variety extensive within Obama's cabinet

Will Ellis
STAFF WRITER

Things are looking brighter for America's near future.

With President-elect Barack Obama's recent election, he has been fast to select his cabinet. He is choosing quickly yet carefully to have the most qualified people for their respective jobs in order to reverse the effects of Bush's administration.

Obama is taking note from his liberal leanings without going head over heels crazy. He has been choosing mostly moderate figures, creating a widely centrist cabinet. In other words, Obama has been doing a nearly perfect job in selecting his cabinet, keeping in mind the needs of the country while staying true to his vision for the country.

Obama has chosen a group of individuals who are strong-willed, and will tell Obama what they think of his decisions to provide a counterbalance to his decisions as President.

The perfect illustration of this principle is his nomination of Hillary Clinton for Secretary of State. Anyone who paid any attention during the election can attest: Hillary Clinton is not afraid to speak her mind.

In foreign policy, Clinton has shown different leanings than Obama, as she supported a more gradual withdrawal from Iraq versus Obama's immediate withdrawal proposal.

Some have complained, though, that his cabinet is not really the change they asked for. Hillary Clinton as his Secretary of State, Bill Richardson as Secretary of Commerce, and Eric Holder as Attorney General all held important positions in Bill Clinton's presidency, and Obama is even keeping Bush's Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates.

With so many repeats from past administrations, it is a bit unclear at first how Obama's cabinet will spell out change.

The change can live on, however, because Obama is ultimately The Decider. He can go against the suggestions of his cabinet appointees.

That is why it is such a good thing that Obama is choosing a cabinet so heavily filled with experience, so he can gain advice from those who have experienced Washington and global conflicts more than he has.

His cabinet has the most experience of any cabinet in recent years, a promising fact for those who were worried about Obama's inexperience during the election.

Americans should be hoping that Obama's work during his administration reflects his success in choosing his cabinet. That would create a liberal-leaning centrist administration whose dedication to change is solidified by experience.

Domestic horse-slaughter ban harms horses, owners

Eileen Shi
STAFF WRITER

The horse is an icon of America's pioneering spirit, the trusty friend of the Western cowboy. Naturally, animal rights activists began pushing for a national ban on the practice of domestic horse-slaughtering in order to protect their equine companions.

In response to petitions and protests, Illinois and Texas state courts in Sept. 2007 ruled to shut down their horse processing plants, the last three of its type in the U.S., effectively ending domestic slaughter.

However, this ban has resulted in unwanted repercussions; despite the fact that animal rights activists have their hearts in the right place.

A domestic ban does not rid the horse industry of its surplus of old or disabled horses. With few other options, owners sell more to "kill" buyers, who export the horses to slaughterhouses in Canada or Mexico. The American Veterinary Medical Association reported that horse exports to Mexico have increased by 312 percent in 2007, relative to 2006.

The problems with exportation easily contradict the idea of humane treatment. These exported horses must endure cramped trailer rides to another country without resting for food or water.

Once a horse leaves the U.S., its treatment no longer adheres to American standards of a quick and painless death by a stunning bolt to the head. While some processing plants are regulated accordingly by their respective Canadian and Mexican governments, so-called clandestine facilities do not adhere to the same standards. In Oct. 2007, the U.S. Humane Society released a video showing the stabbing of a conscious horse in a Mexican facility. It's not exactly the epitome of humane treatment.

Yet, activists are at it again. The Senate is considering a Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act, which will criminalize the domestic and international shipment of horses to be processed for meat.

But the consequences of such a ban would further impact the livelihoods of horse owners. The current ban has already lowered the market value of horses and discouraged kill buyers from, well, even buying from owners.

Because of the extra transport costs, kill buyers see less profit in buying and then selling small or thin

Numbers to Consider

As of Dec. 20, 2006, **10,783 horses** had been shipped to Mexico for processing for human consumption

At the same time in 2007, **44,475 horses** had been shipped across the border

This is a **312 percent** increase that followed the ban

Sidebar by Eileen Shi
Source: www.avma.org

horses to processing plants as meat for foreign countries. With a worsening economy, fewer kill buyers now attend horse auctions.

This leaves horse owners with a glut of unwanted horses, further dampening the market and leaving owners with horses that usually cannot perform work. Furthermore, rising hay prices make it more expensive for owners to feed their working horses, much less their unneeded ones. As a result, many are of these horses are abused or even abandoned.

Many believe that such a fate can be remedied by animal shelters. However, the American Association of Equine Practitioners estimates that an additional 2,700 rescue facilities would be needed to accommodate the surplus. There simply isn't enough space to make a home for all the neglected horses.

Others believe that owners can always opt for euthanasia. But owners are often unwilling to pay procedure costs and carcass-disposal fees, which easily run from \$100 to \$400.

Realistically, such options aren't feasible.

We shed tears over horses destined for slaughterhouses, but, the fact is, horse slaughter is an essential part of the horse market. Eroding further at a horse's right to humane treatment and simultaneously exacerbating the financial hardships of owners hardly seems to be the correct course of action.

The Nexus

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Journalism Education Association/National Scholastic Press Association
Spring National Convention 2008, Third Place
Fall National Convention 2007, First Place
Spring National Convention 2007, First Place
Spring National Convention 2006, Fourth Place

San Diego County Journalism Education Association
Grand Sweepstakes 2005-2008 First Place
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Staff Editorial

Security camera footage should be viewable to public

They adorn prisons, vaults and late-night convenience stores, not nationally ranked high schools.

It cannot be argued that after numerous acts of vandalism, the installation of security cameras stood out as a necessary safety requirement as well as a financial practicality for the Westview community.

However, as much as the necessity is understood, the presence of security cameras carries the connotation that the campus is a place of mistrust.

Though the footage is for the school's protection, it is easy to feel like someone is monitoring the masses suspiciously or conducting surveillance on unassuming citizens.

That connotation is not part of the environment that is characteristic to Westview, a campus that has historically maintained an administrative philosophy of unobtrusiveness.

In reality, the footage is only reviewed if an issue arises to assist authorities with an investigation.

While the cameras must stay, their seedy implications do not need to.

Rather than expecting them to capture a world of crime, the cameras could be used to promote the actual environment found at Westview, the positive and secure one, turning these tools for investigation into tools for presentation.

Cameras positioned in highly trafficked areas could stream live video to a specially designated page on the Westview website, showcasing the real day-to-day happenings within the realm of the campus.

Granted, it would not be wise in terms of campus security to stream from every camera on campus, as outsiders or those with malicious intent could exploit the detailed visual information, and target areas of campus that are not as well secured.

However, providing a few samples of live videos featuring main hubs of campus activity would not completely compromise safety.

Making some of the footage accessible to the public eases some of the tension regarding any Big Brother-esque concerns.

Curious minds – parents, homesick alumni, eager middle-schoolers – could get an untainted glimpse of the Westview world.

Little-known yet everyday occurrences could be observed and appreciated: the marching band rounding the buildings at 9 p.m., clubs and organizations participating in service projects on Saturday afternoons, and early morning preparations for campus activities.

Or, perhaps, the Westview community can accomplish the same resolution that showcasing campus footage would achieve, without actually streaming any video at all. The reality is that the footage would not likely be captivating for any length of time; long stretches of time during class periods and certain days after school might depict limited activity.

In addition, the public accessibility of campus footage may present privacy issues for certain individuals, potentially making the broadcast of live campus images unfeasible.

But the point is not entertainment.

It is the principle that there is nothing to hide here, and everything to be proud of.

We shouldn't allow the presence of security cameras to affect our perception of the campus's atmosphere. Let's remind the community that the goal of the security cameras is to protect the sense of freedom found on campus, not to stifle it.

The Nexus Mission Statement

The Nexus is an open forum for Westview students that aims to provide the public with information that follows standards of accuracy, ethics and professionalism. As a source of news, opinions and entertainment for its readers, The Nexus commits itself to impartiality and depth of coverage.

The Nexus is published by Journalism 2 students. All editorial decisions are made by the students with the guidance of adviser Jeff Wenger. The editorial board comprises the editors, who write and select the staff editorial. The opinions published in The Nexus do not necessarily represent those of the Westview administration or PUSD school board. When opinions of an individual are expressed, they are labeled as such. Letters to the editor must be signed as the opinion of the individual. The editors select submissions for print based on relevancy to readers, and they may be edited for space or content reasons.