## **Social Networking and Ethics**

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Auteurs Vallor, S. [1]

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> In the first decade of the 21st century, new media technologies for social networking such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube began to transform the social, political and informational practices of individuals and institutions across the globe, inviting a philosophical response from the community of applied ethicists and philosophers of technology. While this scholarly response continues to be challenged by the rapidly evolving nature of social networking technologies, the urgent need for attention to this phenomenon is underscored by the fact that it is reshaping how human beings initiate and/or maintain virtually every type of ethically significant social bond or role: friend-to-friend, parent-to-child, co-worker-to co-worker, employer-to-employee, teacher-to-student, neighbor-to-neighbor, sellerto-buyer, and doctor-to-patient, to offer just a partial list. Nor are the ethical implications of these technologies strictly interpersonal. The complex web of interactions between social networking service users and their online and offline communities, social network developers, corporations, governments and other institutions—along with the diverse and sometimes conflicting motives and interests

Samenvatting

of these various stakeholders—will continue to require rigorous philosophical analysis for decades to come. Section 1 of the entry outlines the history and working definition of social

networking services (hereafter referred to as SNS).

Section 2 identifies the early philosophical foundations of reflection on the ethics of online social networks, leading up to the emergence of Web 2.0 standards (supporting user interactions) and full-fledged SNS.

Section 3 reviews the primary ethical topic areas around which philosophical reflections on SNS have, to date, converged: privacy; identity and community; friendship, virtue and the good life; democracy and the public sphere; and cybercrime. Finally, Section

4 reviews some of the metaethical issues potentially impacted by the emergence of SNS.

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