

# **Student Essay on Colleges Educate Students about Facebook**

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## Essay

Incoming college students are hearing the usual warnings this summer from alcohol to credit card debt dangers. A new topic is being brought up and lectured, the risks of Internet postings, particularly on popular social networking sites such as Facebook.

Facebook, which was made for the college students and with 7.5 million registered users, is a specific focus. But students are also hearing stories about those who came to regret postings to other online venues, from party photos on sites such as Webshots.com to comments about professors in blogs. Public schools like the large Western Kentucky to small private ones like Birmingham Southern and Smith, colleges around the country have made new speeches for their orientation which talks to students and parents about online behavior.

Others, like Washington University and St. Louis have new role-playing skits on the topic that students will watch and then break into smaller groups to discuss. Many colleges aren't going to actively watch the websites and online profiles that they go to, and won't search through, but fraternities that hate each other tend to rat each other and point out photos that have alcohol use involved.

The website Facebook makes sure users need a ".edu" e-mail address and once they have that they can view profiles only of users at their colleges unless identified as a "friend" by the profile's owner. College administrators say they can't, and wouldn't want to, keep students off sites such as Facebook.

Many welcome the kind of community building, and they realize that they have become an important, and usually harmless, website for the kind of things that students want in a college experience. The site actually helps with one of the major goals of orientation, bonding. At Birmingham Southern, dozens of members of the incoming class of about 350 had already formed a Class of 2010 Facebook group long before the start of school.