

**Q&A: Should children and parents be getting involved in social media (eg Twitter, Facebook, blogs) through schools? Some new research suggests schools will be left behind if they don't show some leadership on this.**

I'm one of those that don't see social media as a "thing" that it's made out to be in the popular media. It is just another form of communication, albeit with some interesting characteristics.

You might as well ask "Should children and parents be getting involved in phone conversations, pen-pals, letters to the editor, radio talk-back through schools?" And the answer would be – why not? I know I had pen-pals organised through schools, and we were encouraged to put our opinions in writing letter-to-the-editor style.

It is a "new" medium, but it's an old form of engagement. And yes, parents and schools should be involved in helping children be good socially. Issues such as etiquette, watching what you say (lest your words come back to haunt you), how to have meaningful and genuine conversation, interact with the real issues, discern fakery from the serious etc. etc. – all are good skills and learning about them in social media would be a good thing.

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