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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Social networking and social media are the latest wave in Internet uses; Internet usage has evolved quickly from simple e-mail, banking, and shopping to a place to meet friends, share interests and activities, and find and interact with others with similar interests; the drive to be part of a group is a strong motivator; and

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WHEREAS, Social network sites are designed to allow interaction between users who share interests, skills, or some other commonality and to build cooperative activities; according to the Wharton School's online business journal, over 300 social networking sites existed in 2006; social networks have become a source for community collaboration on a worldwide scale; and

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WHEREAS, Social media sites allow people to share content they have uploaded on sites like Wikipedia (a cooperative encyclopedia), Flickr (photo sharing), and YouTube (video sharing); and

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WHEREAS, Wikipedia has given birth to a similar function used in schools to promote teamwork, YouTube allows an outlet for youngsters' creative talents, and Flickr allows the sharing of photos with friends and relatives, particularly with

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1 grandparents; and

2 WHEREAS, A recent study prepared for the Online Computer  
3 Library Center (OCLC) by Harris Interactive, Inc., quotes from  
4 Time Magazine's December 13, 2006 article, "Time's Person of  
5 the Year: You", by Lev Grossman: "The new Web is a very  
6 different thing. It is a tool for bringing together the small  
7 contributions of millions of people and making them matter.";  
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Among the 14 to 21-year age group of Internet  
10 users surveyed, 75% have been online for 4 years or more, about  
11 a quarter of their lives; to quote from the OCLC study, 20% of  
12 all surveyed and 32% of the Americans surveyed "have used a  
13 social media site and created or contributed to others' web  
14 pages; 17% have blogged or written an online diary/journal";  
15 and

16 WHEREAS, About 37% of Americans surveyed have used a social  
17 networking site, the largest percentage within the countries  
18 surveyed; today it is easier for the non-technical user to post  
19 on a blog, build a web page, contribute to a social media site,  
20 or interact on a social network site; and

21 WHEREAS, This same study, "Sharing, Privacy and Trust in  
22 our Networked World", pinpointed MySpace as the most used

1 social networking site among the countries surveyed, excluding  
2 Japan, in which Mixi was the most used; both are used heavily  
3 by users under the age of 50 and very little by those over 50;  
4 among social media sites, YouTube was the most frequently used  
5 site and used in much the same proportions; and

6 WHEREAS, Every new technology comes with the need to learn  
7 to use it safely; the introduction of the automobile 100 years  
8 ago required the world's populations to adopt a new lifestyle;  
9 the Internet has created a similar global lifestyle shift and  
10 is still evolving; Internet use for e-mail, information  
11 searching, and on-line ordering and banking is now commonplace;  
12 social networking has gained widespread use since 2005, but  
13 privacy and participation on social networking sites differ  
14 from that understood in earlier uses of the Internet; and

15 WHEREAS, Of importance to the Senate is that the OCLC study  
16 found that users of social networking will share interest  
17 information, but are less likely to share contact information;  
18 while on a commercial site, 73% will share surnames and 50%  
19 will share telephone numbers; on a social networking site, only  
20 46% will share surnames and 12% will share telephone numbers;  
21 on social media sites, the numbers are even lower; even so, it  
22 is urgent that all Internet users understand the risks of  
23 sharing personal information, and so it was encouraging to find  
24 that 85% of those surveyed in the OCLC study understood that

1 use of social networking sites was not reasonably private and  
2 that youths were less likely than older age groups to feel that  
3 their Internet activities were private; and

4 WHEREAS, The Illinois Library Association (ILA) is to be  
5 commended for partnering with MySpace to produce and distribute  
6 cyber safety bookmarks through public libraries nationwide and  
7 particularly in this State; this trio of bookmarks lists  
8 methods for dealing with cyber bullying, gives tips for parents  
9 on social networking safety, and emphasizes safe blogging  
10 practices; the bookmarks are available from ILA, and the Senate  
11 recommends that every school in this State use these or the  
12 information and videos available on other sites to begin a  
13 discussion with youngsters; and

14 WHEREAS, In the State of Virginia, the Department of  
15 Education has produced an excellent handbook to guide schools  
16 in Internet safety instruction, which can be found on its  
17 website; and

18 WHEREAS, Social networking and social media sites are not a  
19 fad, but rather a part of every student's learning experience;  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, Social networking and social media sites are  
22 merely a step in the continued evolution of the Internet, and

1 our youngsters and their parents need help to cope with this  
2 swiftly changing environment; therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL  
4 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that the Senate urges  
5 schools and public libraries to use available information to  
6 provide Internet safety education to the children and parents  
7 of this State; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
9 delivered to the State Board of Education and the Illinois  
10 Library Association.