Humans are social beings. Mostly every opportunity that we get we create interactions with each other. Over the past decades the Internet has been a major influence for social interaction everywhere. It has facilitated communication in a way where we can receive instant messages from one part of the hemisphere to the other. One of the new innovations that came with the Internet is Social Networking Sites (SNS). Which have basically redefined how we share personal information, especially for more recent generations. Social Networking sites like MySpace and Facebook, the latter the most popular one; have made possible for us to make our social circles public online. Creating a Personal Profile, we can browse names of our acquaintances and “friend” them to our profiles. A whole new world for instant sharing was brought with the creating of SNSs. Interactions from posting a picture of a party, to creating an event from that party where you know who’s attending or not; personalized advertisements that recommend places or products you might be interested in, etc. There’s a wide variety of features that have arisen from SNSs, fit for the new technology era that we live in.

Since the main idea of social networking sites is sharing personal information; many privacy claims have been brought up by discontent users. One of them is that third parties can gather some of your information (likes, interests, etc) and use it for personal recommendations or ads. Another “threats” that has been brought on by SNSs is cyber-bullying. Some SNSs allow people to be anonymous or use pseudonyms. This sometimes causes users to be less intimidated by speaking their opinion even if it is negative or aggressive and this can be a stimulator for depression or anxiety in teenagers. One more of these threats are identity thefts, where an individual uses another person’s information with an ulterior motive. When studying about these issues, some experts say that it is necessary to increase legislation to prevent them. However there are different approaches towards “fixing the problem.”

Enforcing legislation would be a more extremist approach towards obtaining privacy. Privacy is a very subjective term; it will always depends on the person. For example, one person may think posting a picture of them on a family trip to Italy is fine, but another may think it is “sharing too much information.” Privacy is not a word you can set a standard to, which is what legislation is trying to do. Certain laws can come at the expense of some of the features many people enjoy from Social Networking sites. It could limit the experience for the people that it was invented for in the first place. Therefore, educating and informing people of what they are posting online is a more appropriate approach for online privacy. Everyone chooses what to disclose when creating an online Personal Profile. From disclosing your birthday to your gender, they are all options. When you are creating a Personal Profile on a SNS, some could say you are “putting yourself out there”. Still, it was a choice. People should know the way they are exposing themselves for others to see. Users should be educated on how the Social Networking Sites work and then if they agree with how their information is being displayed, join or leave the site; rather than generically modify a website just to suit the users that are not conformed with it. In a hypothetical situation: if you are watching television and you do not like the TV show that is on what do you do? Change the channel, or call the operator and tell them to modify the TV show so that it is about something you *do* like?