

- Social networking / Cyberbullying / Mental health

Be wary of dangers as you enjoy benefits of social media

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SOCIAL media is an integral part of our lives, shaping how we connect, communicate and share our experiences. As I scroll through my feeds, I can't help but question how safe social media is for us. It's not just about cyberbullying.

Let's start with privacy concerns. Every click, like and share leaves a digital footprint. This data can be harvested by companies for targeted advertising.

It's unsettling to think that my personal preferences, habits and even private conversations are being monitored and analysed without my consent.

When it comes to cyberbullying, the anonymity of social media emboldens bullies, making it easy to launch cruel and unprovoked attacks. The lack of accountability means harmful behaviour often goes unchecked.

Addiction is another concern. One can lose track of time scrolling through feeds, chasing the next hit of dopamine that comes with a like or a comment. This can take a toll on mental health.

Unrealistic standards are also a major problem. The carefully curated images and posts I see often present an idealised version of life. This constant exposure to unattainable standards can distort self-image and contribute to a growing sense of inadequacy.

Then, there's misinformation. False news and misleading information can easily go viral, influencing public opinion, sometimes leading to real consequences.

The rapid spread of conspiracy theories and fake news make it harder to distinguish fact from fiction. This can polarise communities and incite fear or hostility.

It's understandable that the government is mulling a social media application for Malaysians.

We should be supportive of such a move as it aspires to solve problems for netizens.

At the same time, always be aware that navigating social media requires a careful balance of enjoying its benefits while staying aware of its dangers.