



TIME (7 July 2014) – The Antisocial Network

Read the articles and answer the questions that follow.

In *The Antisocial Network*, Jack Dickey discusses the cruel side of online social networking and its ability to destroy its teenager victims.

Why are millions of teenagers attracted to and active on online social networking sites such as Ask.fm and why is such a trend a cause for concern?

The Terebin brothers who created Ask.fm do not accept blame for the cyberbullying or suicides, arguing that a society with bad values is at fault. They point out that Ask.fm cooperates with law enforcement and has moderators and software to remove abusive posts. They insist that even if they were to close the website, it will be quickly replaced by another similar platform. Ray Homyk, who has tried unsuccessfully to distance his son Matthew from online attacks, agrees that the obligation to fix things does not rest with Ask.fm but argues that it did not help. (a) What is your take on the situation: who should shoulder the blame when abusive cyberbullying happens? In your opinion, has Ask.fm or the Homyk family done enough to avert Matthew's suicide? (b) If you or your peers were victimised by malicious and anonymous gossip online, or if someone you know is a perpetrator of cyberbullying, what will you do? What can you do?



Explain the contextual meaning of the following words.

1. His son had been medicated and hospitalised for depression **intermittently** in the months leading to his death.

2. Toss this [teenage] brain into the social web, a sea so **roiling** that it something proves unnavigable even for adults, and what do you get?

3. While the stories of suicide by users may be exceptional, they remain **indelible**.

4. But an inquest this May confirmed what Ask.fm’s founders said all along: Smith almost certainly sent the dark messages to herself. Ask.fm and the Terebins were **vindicated**.

5. While selfie-loving millennials have been **derided** as **narcissistic** and puffed up, perhaps the generation following in their footsteps, which has to navigate this new, difficult climate during an already strained period of emotional development, will be restless and insecure..