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Toulmin Model Argumentation

Should actions made online determine one's acceptance into colleges or chances of employment?

A young, inexperienced teenager sweats nervously, tapping his foot against the floor as he sits directly across from his potential future employer. He *needs* this job to pay for the premium gas his Lamborghini requires. He adjusts his suit, clears his throat, and locks eyes onto the back of the established interviewer's laptop. The employer types away, their concentration focused upon their screen. The teen counts the number of keys hit. "Did they just type my name?" the teen begins to wonder anxiously. He fixes his tie, biting his lip, before an exponential amount of fear strikes him and he holds his breath, "Will my interviewer find out that I'm a sexist, racist, bigoted pig?"

The Internet provides an endless database; full of useful resources, funny videos, and countless forms of social media used to develop connections with people who may live across the world. Alongside this, a computer provides a mask—a safeguard for anyone from anywhere to share their opinions with anonymity. This vocalization has managed to migrate to social media, shrouding Facebook and Twitter—personal accounts attached to personal names. These posts, or tweets, are irreversible once they have been submitted, and more often than not, users are fully aware of this. Considering this, should users be held accountable for the things they say online? Absolutely. If people are brave enough to say such degrading or offensive statements online where they are protected by distance, they are doubtlessly expressing their sincere feelings or thoughts. Some may feel that it's just a "joke" on the Internet and that such users may not genuinely believe the comments they post. However, online, there is a severe lack of fear of the

consequences of one's actions. Behind a computer screen, the risk of being potentially

reprimanded by someone who has been offended by overhearing such comments in person,

where a physical confrontation can take place, is slim. Social media acts as a shield, and a man

going into battle with a shield is far more confident in themselves than someone who lacks one.

On the other hand, some people blatantly do not care that the world knows they are racist. These

people often put on an act in person, around their employers or on campus, and then unleash

their beliefs online, where someone somewhere will undoubtedly agree with them. Most people

would not waste their time by creating an argument over an opinion online just for the hell of it,

but because they would like to persuade others to believe the same as them.

Viewing one's online profile is a certain way to understand what someone is really

thinking and the kind of character they are, as well as the morals and values they hold. An

opposing view may inquire, why does it matter if someone is racist online, so long as they

behave appropriately to others in person? The matter is simple if you consider the severity of the

situation when it comes to the police force. This lies on the far end of the spectrum, but a biased

cop is one that brings injustice and can potentially ruin, or end, an innocent person's life. They

may behave appropriately in front of a crowd, but if left alone with a citizen of a race they are

not particularly fond of, and with no witnesses, they can take advantage of their authority in a

heartbeat. And who would society believe—the trustworthy, seemingly genuine police officer or

the victim played off as a delinquent? If employers are given the chance to view a racist officer's

online profile and pick up evidence of their biased behavior, then this should be enough

qualifying evidence to question the officer's sincerity. America, although it isn't quite there yet,

is supposed to be a place of equality. If we wish to truly transform this country, we cannot turn

our backs on the offensive posts of an employed officer, someone who is supposed to serve and

protect us. For certain job positions such as this, it is extremely vital to monitor online behavior. Employers should not knowingly subject their customers to prejudice or hate simply because they do not believe there is any sincerity behind one's tweets.

If an offensive comment is posted online, there is no question that the user wanted other people to see it. The Internet is not a private paradise. Under no circumstances has anyone ever been told that this is true; those active on social media are aware that they have an audience. Therefore, users know that others will be reading their biased thoughts—and they are looking for others to agree with them. This develops the perfect breeding ground for hatred and discrimination. Some impose that these users' posts were intended for friends' eyes only—not their employer or the head of admissions at their college, and that they never anticipated that their name may be searched. This rebuttal is pointless. Just because a teenage boy would "never have said" what they did about women on their Facebook status if they knew it would determine their chances of success in the future, does not mean that they want to take it back, or do not honestly believe in their post. Hateful statements, at any point, are evidence of these thoughts passing through the user's mind. Not only do these thoughts occur, but the user has straight up decided that they were sufficient enough to post to the public. Especially in this day and age, a majority of colleges are promoting diversity and acceptance. The Internet is a ticket to filtering racists or sexists from those of genuine character with accuracy and ease. If we are given the tools to better promote a harmonized and peaceful society, why not use it? Technology has given us countless benefits and advancements, so we should absolutely use it to our advantage.

The Internet has opened up a whole new world where people from all over can connect with each other. People can share their beliefs online and find others that agree with them and support them. It is no secret that the Internet is not a place of privacy and that word spreads fast

through social media. Behind a computer screen, anonymity takes place and protects users from the consequences of posting offensive or discriminatory material online. Employers and colleges should change this and use online profiles to their advantage in order to avoid employing or admitting biased individuals that wrongfully represent their hard-earned name. This tactic could be used even more efficiently if an employer searches an applicant's name as they sit across from them, leading to the face-to-face confrontation that the applicant did not expect to encounter as a result of their offensive remarks, such as the teenage boy discussed earlier. The boy's forehead is now damp with sweat as he releases his breath, his eyes meeting the interviewer's as they finally speak up about their findings, "So, you think that women like me are incapable of holding any respectable position in society?"

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Kaitlyn Zak

An Argument Against Fracking

Along with the evolution of the energy industry, fracking (also called hydraulic fracturing) has become a more widespread method of extracting oil and natural gas from the ground. In recent years, a fracking boom has occurred in the United States, driven by concerns over energy security and the cost of imported fossil fuels. Although this process can strengthen energy security and energy independence, fracking has become both a political and an environmental issue. The most important question concerned with fracking is whether this process is worth the risks. Environmental critics claim that fracking can destroy public drinking water, pollute the air, contribute to greenhouse gases, cause tremors in the earth, and discourage the exploration of new energy sources. Due to the environmental risks associated with fracking, it is not an energy source that society should come to rely on. We should instead shift our focus to less destructive, renewable sources of energy.

Proponents of fracking claim that it allows us to access more natural gas and oil than ever before. While this is true, it takes our focus away from more sustainable energy sources. These fossil fuels are likely to run out during our lifetimes, at which point we will be forced to find another source of energy. It is unreasonable to invest so much time and effort in the fracking process if these resources will be depleted in such a short amount of time. It would be much more reasonable to focus our attention on non-depleting energy sources such as wind and solar power. Wind and solar have a number of benefits over the use of natural gas and oil recovered from fracking: they do not release billions of metric tons of greenhouse gases every year, they do not spew large quantities of chemical-laced water into the ground, and they will never be depleted by human activity.

Fracking has gained support due to the claim that using the natural gas extracted during this process, rather than coal, would improve air quality. A decrease in air pollution would be marked by a significant reduction in carbon dioxide emissions; however, this decrease in air pollution would be accompanied by other forms of pollution. The process of fracking involves blasting water, chemicals, and sand beneath Earth's surface to obtain fossil fuels. As a result,

water supplies in fracking zones show an increase in toxic chemicals. Fracking may look good on the surface, as it provides us with the fossil fuels that we demand as a country; however, poisoning the groundwater that our country relies on is not beneficial in any way. What is the point in decreasing air pollution if we are killing people through other sources, such as water? Fracking would not be an improvement in pollution, it would just obscure this pollution by sending it underground.

A third argument made in favor of fracking is that it decreases our dependence on foreign oil and, as a result, saves us money. By uncovering domestic oil sources, the United States can become less dependent on other nations and can also experience economic benefits. Although fracking provides more security for our country in regards to oil, it would, at the same time, destroy our groundwater supplies by contaminating it with toxins and by pumping out such large amounts of water required for the fracturing process that it becomes depleted. This destruction of our water supplies would have the opposite impact than intended; it would be very costly to cleanse the contaminated water supplies and, if fracking becomes enough of an issue, we might even become dependent on other nations for cleaner water supplies. There are both environmental and monetary costs to this process, many of which are unforeseen consequences that can be avoided by eliminating the use of fracking.

In the discussion of fracking, many factors must be considered; it is a complicated process that produces complicated results. Proponents of fracking argue that it would allow us to access more natural gas and oil, that it would contribute to improved air quality, and that it would decrease dependency on foreign oil and, as a result, generate economic benefits. Considering these advantages, fracking seems to be beneficial; however there are more risks concerning fracking than what meets the eye. Environmental activists have uncovered some of these risks, claiming that the ability to access more fossil fuels through fracking diverts attention from more sustainable energy sources, that fracking actually creates much more pollution than is necessary, and that the ensuing destruction of our water supplies would have negative economic impacts and could potentially make us dependent on other nations for clean water sources. Fracking clearly is not as good as it seems on the surface and it would be ridiculous to focus our

attention on such a destructive energy source when we have plenty of safer sources of energy to invest in.