

A highschool senior sits nervously at his kitchen table. His acceptance letter from his top college choice should be arriving soon. He taps his foot out of anticipation and excitement. He is sure that he will get in. He meets all the requirements and has outstanding grades and test scores. He glances out the window and see the mail truck pull away. He sprints out the door and grabs the mail. He sits back down and frantically opens the letter. A look of disappointment crosses his face as he realizes he was not accepted. He does not understand why. He was an exceptional student. He then realizes it was because he had racist posts on his social media pages.

With the rapid growth of social media in teen culture more and more colleges have started looking at applicants' social media profiles. Many have even started to base whether they accept an applicant or not on social media profiles. Do colleges have the right to do that? Absolutely. Many colleges take in students from all over the world, and so a college has every right to refuse a student who has posted racist, sexist, homophobic, or other bigoted comments on social media. If a college sees that someone often posts offensive material or often harasses certain groups of people, they can not possibly be allowed to attend a college where these groups of people will often be found. It would simply put these groups in danger of physical injury and emotional trauma in a setting where everyone is encouraged to meet new people and try new things. College is a place for experimentation, learning, and socializing, not harassment and judgment.

Many would argue that what someone posts on social media is no one else's business. This contradicts the term social media. It is social. It is everyone's business,

that is why people use it. Social media is meant to be a mass communications system to spread news with everyone in an instant. However, many people have started to use social media in order to spread hateful and discriminatory comments. Whenever someone posts something they are posting it with every intention of having it seen by others. Even when their account is private and only friends can view the post, someone else is still viewing the post, and if even one person sees the post, it only takes one screenshot to give everyone access to that post. People often forget this, especially teenagers. They assume that if they simply delete a post it is gone forever. Unfortunately, people often screenshot posts and spread them around in order to turn them into a joke, or criticize the person who posted it.

Opponents of the idea of colleges checking applicants' social media profiles claim that colleges have no reason to do so and that it is of no use to the college. Social media is one of the most useful tools a college has in deciding to accept someone or not. It gives them access to a candidate's views, ideas, and lifestyle. No one is going to admit if they are racist or sexist on an application. They will however, make racist and sexist comments on social media, where there is seemingly no consequence. This is because a computer screen acts as a sort of shield people can hide behind without having to actually confront anyone when they post things, whereas in a face to face conversation the people involved can immediately react and retaliate. Social media also allows people to easily leave a conversation whenever they feel like by simply turning off the computer. In a face to face conversation you are trapped and have to finish the conversation regardless if it is going your way or not. While there may not be an

immediate consequence, there are consequences later on when applying for college or a job.

Many believe that what someone posts online does not reflect their actual views or personality. No one says or posts something for no reason. Even if someone does not believe that a post reflects their actual beliefs, they do agree with the post on a subconscious level. Having access to these posts helps colleges decide if an applicant should be accepted or not. Colleges accept people of all cultures and backgrounds and so can not have someone who is racist, sexist, or bigoted on campus. People who discriminate against a certain group of people can often become violent towards or harass people of that group. Colleges obviously can not accept applicants who are going to put other students at risk or violate their basic rights through harassment.

Social media is an outlet for people to share creativity and news with the world in an instant but is unfortunately often misused in order to spread hateful or ignorant views of certain groups of people. Colleges look at how their applicants use or misuse their social media accounts in order to determine if they are going to be a good fit for the college. Without the ability to look at their applicants' social media profiles, colleges would not be able to know if someone would pose a threat to other students' physical health or basic human rights until after the applicant arrived at the school. This might cause other students to feel threatened, intimidated, or uncomfortable and cause them to drop out, causing the college to lose money. Reports of harassment or violence on a college campus could also be put on social media, causing the college to appear undesirable and dissuading other students from applying.