

## Social media and freedom of expression

Social media and social networks are a fantastic way to get people to express themselves. Whether it be via a Facebook status, writing on walls, Twitter updates, photos you share, these are all extensions of you and your personality. They help portray your interests, your views and help show people who you are. They offer a platform for you to be yourself, to be creative, to be who you want to be and most importantly, have an audience for all of this. Unlike in the real world, where social etiquette and manners can sometimes seem restrictive and limiting, people feel they have a greater sense of freedom of expression and of speech when using online networks. Of course, content is monitored<sup>1</sup> and can be removed, but with millions of users on sites such as Facebook and Twitter, even YouTube, not every single status, photo or comment can be watched, evaluated and completely controlled. This has led to a rise in expressions, feelings and ideas from people who may otherwise find it hard to portray themselves how they would like in person and face to face with others. Essentially, social media has changed the way we are able to communicate and behave, not only in groups and society, but with each other.

*www.wearesocialpeople.com, 2014*

1. watched