

Eye on Our Generation

The Secret of Our Generation is That There Are No Secrets

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How often do you worry about the freedoms and rights you have as an American being taken advantage of? When on the phone with your mom, asking her to pick up more Ellio's pizza, do thoughts of wiretapping and suited FBI agents listening in cross your mind? Probably not, but for some paranoid Americans, the Patriot Act means that if walking around with a tinfoil helmet on keeps you safe from the government, then who cares about hat hair and self-image? The Bush Administration, in yet another popular move that helped them win over the country, decided to pick and choose which Americans can have all of their "God-given" rights, and furthermore decided that government officials can and will spy on anyone capable of "suspicious activity."

Now to a college student, the above information evokes little other than a yawn, because who cares what a twenty-something wants to talk about over the phone. Well, people do care. And it won't be just calls and e-mails being screened by mysterious FBI agents, but Facebook and MySpace sites as well. And frankly, the government probably isn't worried about you, but others are. Employers, deans at universities, parents, teachers, etc. have all heard of social networking sites other than Match.com, and they are beginning to understand how much they can learn about employees, students, children, etc. through these sites.

Those Sony Cybershot owners have one thing on their minds after the weekend: uploading pictures. But before those shots of you double-fisting Natty Light cans make it to the internet, you should think about whose monitor they'll show up on. Sure, it's no secret parents love spying on their kids, and they can do so easily by creating an account on the aforementioned sites. So you get in trouble for drinking or smoking a cigarette, big deal. But then a potential employer sees those pictures, and you're wondering why it's been months since you graduated and you still can't nail down a decent job. How can this happen? Simple, especially if you don't feel the need to make your profiles on Facebook and MySpace private. That is the first and easiest step to keeping your life out of the limelight. Secondly, if you apply for government employment, expect them to find a way around passwords and blocked materials. Expect them to see every dirty secret, every sloppy

night, every illegal activity contained in your Facebook albums or tagged photos. The secret of our generation is that there are no secrets. Pictures of our teenage years should be where those of our parents are: tightly bound between leather covers in photo albums resting on a bookshelf safe inside our homes. Instead, they are in albums on the internet, a scary thing considering the types of people who can then access the pictures of us being teenagers, living life, messing up, and breaking laws. Though teenagers are meant to be rebellious, it is expected of us, we are not meant to broadcast our activities to anyone who is willing to listen or look. Tongue in cheek no longer exists; broken laws are no longer subjects saved for confidential talks, soft murmurs and snickers and gasps that you still haven't got caught. Rather, when a teenager does something wrong and there are pictures of the misdeed, they are judged by complete strangers and may even be prosecuted.

Prosecuted. A word no poor college student can hear without the hairs on the back of their neck standing up. Don't worry, I'm sure your mom has no idea that you skipped out on your grandmother's birthday party to go drink 40's in a parking lot with your underage friends. But if there are pictures, and those pictures are on Facebook or MySpace, and your sneaky mom has an account on either website (or BOTH!), then she probably knows. So does your boss, who you faked strep throat with over the phone on Friday, then posed for pictures at some concert at the Trocadero later that night that ended up on Facebook and now you have no job. A student at the University of Hartford reported being shocked when, in the middle of an internship interview at a prestigious law firm, the interviewer pulled out photos taken from the student's Facebook.

Is the Patriot Act to blame for not getting a job or getting in trouble with your parents or employer? No, but it does make it more likely that if you do something wrong, the people you don't want to know can find out. It doesn't mean your Facebook or MySpace will become a part of your job application unbeknownst to you, but it does mean that maybe we should think about being more honest, law-abiding citizens. And if we can't do that, go to A.C. Moore and invest in a private photo album.

Do you want to know when classes are canceled without having to watch the news or check the website?

Penn State Brandywine encourages students, faculty and staff to enroll in PSUTXT, an easy and accessible system that lets you know via cell phone when classes are canceled due to weather conditions or if the campus has an emergency situation. Sign up now for PSUTXT and, when necessary, we will send a text message alert directly to your cell phone and/or e-mail account.

To register, visit <http://newswires.psu.edu/> and click on the PSUTXT REGISTER button at the bottom of the page to sign up. If you have any questions, contact Helene Bludman at hcb3@psu.edu.

Getting It Together

News from the Academic Advising Center

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CAREER FAIR IS COMING

Be sure to mark your calendar for the upcoming Career / Internship Fair on March 25th.

It will be held in the gym from 11:30 – 1:30. It's never too early to start networking. So start working on your resume and schedule to meet with a career counselor to review your resume.

Stop by 112 main for more details and to schedule an appointment.

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UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 11:30 in room 205 Main
Explore Grad School

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 11:30 in room 205 Main
Careers in Liberal Arts