

Facebookers react to added features, stage online protest

News Feed sparks activism among college students concerned with online privacy

Alicia Collins
for the Index

In past decades, students have protested infringements of civil rights, wars and attacks on the right to individuality. Today's students protest Facebook.

Deemed the "Facebook Generation" by numerous publications, this generation has joined together to speak out against the Sept. 5 additions to the Web site.

Facebook's News Feed is a constantly updating list of news stories about users' friends located on their homepage. Mini-Feed is similar, but it tracks only the user's actions and is located on their profile page.

Students across the country immediately started numerous groups to protest the additions. The largest of these groups is "Students against Facebook News Feed (Official Petition to Facebook)" which had more than 70,000 members by the end of the first night and was quickly approaching 800,000 by the time of publication.

Unnerved by the amount of information available on the News Feed, junior

David Kiblinger said he joined the petition group.

"It was a bit scary to see that all of my actions were being tracked," he said.

Kiblinger, an avid Facebook user, said that although he does not like the additions, he thinks there are other things students should be worried about.

"I wish people would get this angry about other things," he said. "We can really change the government, etcetera, and [students] should be outraged at things around the world, not just Facebook."

Kiblinger said Facebook administrators should have worked through the privacy settings better before launching both News Feed and Mini-Feed on the Web site.

"I think it's different because [on Facebook] you're not going to be checking each other's accounts that often," he said. "To have that much information available to that many people just crosses the line."

However, three days after Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg began receiving negative feedback concerning

the additions, he and his staff made changes to mollify users, according to a Facebook representative. New privacy settings allow users to choose which information will be displayed about them in both the News Feed and the Mini-Feed.

Kiblinger said he thinks most people will choose to have the least amount of information possible displayed about them in the News Feed.

"I think the whole negative reaction against the News Feed thing is going to stay around," he said. "I don't need or want the rest of the world to see my every action."

Michael Goggin, associate professor of physics, said he began using Facebook to keep in touch with students.

He said Facebook administrators' reasoning that personal information had always been readily available and was just available in a different manner is irrelevant.

"There is a lot of information that is always readily available about people in general and people can get to it, but you still don't tape it to your front door or build a big marquee and broadcast it

out to everybody every time you change something," he said.

Dereck Daschke, associate professor of philosophy and religion, who has a Facebook profile, said News Feed and Mini-Feed seem to take away a student's ability to decide what level of interaction they want to have with other users.

"It's Facebook saying, 'You are going to have this sort of relationship with everybody, and we didn't tell you that when you signed all of these people up to be your friends,'" he said. "It's almost like a violation of privacy. It makes people feel vulnerable."

Todd Kuhns, Facebook user and technical support specialist with Information Technology Services at the University, said recent complaints about the Facebook changes should have students worrying more about what information they are putting online, not just who is seeing it.

Usually people don't need a social security number or license number to get bank or credit-card information, Kuhns said.

Kuhns said students should keep as little information about themselves on Facebook, and other sites, as possible.

"I'm glad this is waking people up to [identity theft], but it's ridiculous how much information people willingly give out about themselves," he said.

The additions of News Feed and Mini-Feed to Facebook have prompted the creation of several anti-News Feed groups on Facebook. As of press time:

744,936

People belonged to the Global "Students against Facebook News Feed (Official Petition to Facebook)."

385

People belonged to the Global "AFSS (Anti-Facebook 'Stalker' Society)."

31

People belonged to the Global "Anti Anti-Facebook Group."

10

People belonged to the Truman Chapter of the "Anti-Facebook Group."

Author visits Truman with hopes to wake up youth

Sister Helen Prejean will discuss the death penalty on campus

Katie Johnson
Staff Reporter

More than 20 years ago Sister Helen Prejean got a new pen pal. She never dreamed that she would watch him die.

That pen pal was Patrick Sonnier, a prisoner on death row.

Prejean, author of the book "Dead Man Walking," will speak at 7 tonight as the keynote speaker for Amnesty International's Death Penalty Awareness Week. Senior Bethanie Seiglar, president of the Truman chapter of Amnesty International, said she hopes the events bring awareness about the importance of abolishing the death

penalty.

"Personally, pro-life is so much more than the abortion issue," Seiglar said. "You don't hardly hear anything anywhere about the death penalty, and so I want to bring some attention to that issue."

Prejean began prison ministry in 1981, and during that time began writing to Sonnier. He was convicted of killing two teenagers and sentenced to execution in Louisiana's Angola State Prison in 1978.

"First, because I was serving poor people in New Orleans, a friend working in the prison asked me to be a pen pal for someone on death row," Prejean said. "I wrote to him thinking I was only going to be his pen pal. I never dreamed they were going to kill him. Louisiana hadn't killed anybody in 20 years. So I

became his spiritual adviser."

Prejean's relationship with Sonnier led her to become more involved with the process and effects of execution.

"I had been with three people executed and I had been with murder victims' families, and I saw how these people were suffering," Prejean said. "But I had been in up close and watched execution, seen the protocol of death. I knew that you're not going to heal them by having the state kill the one who had killed their families."

These experiences led her to write an international best-seller, which in 1996, turned into Polygram Pictures' major motion picture of the same title, starring Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn.

Prejean's visit is part of a larger campaign organized by

the Death Penalty Discourse Center.

The goal of the center is to educate people and get them to reflect on the reality of the death penalty. Prejean said she thinks that by doing this, people will realize the injustice and will call for a moratorium on the death penalty in the United States.

The center targets college campuses because Prejean hopes to capture the interest and passion of the students.

"That's where young people are," she said. "We've got to wake them up and help them to see the big issues of today and not trivialize their lives."

Tim Robbins, who starred in "Shawshank Redemption," was on the road with musician Bruce Springsteen when he witnessed the power of young people and

decided to write a play based on "Dead Man Walking," according to Prejean.

A staged reading of "Dead Man Walking" will be performed by students, faculty and community members on campus on Sept. 22.

"One of the wonderful things about the play is that although the sister is very clear about the fact that she is against the death penalty, the play doesn't take sides, and you really see how the sister struggles with the other side," said Dana Smith, associate professor of theater. "She deals one on one with the victims' families and sees the pain they go through, ... and here is this population that she is unable to serve and still hold true to her belief about the death penalty."

Death Penalty Awareness Week

Sept. 11 to 15

- Sister Helen Prejean's keynote speech, 7 p.m. tonight, Baldwin Auditorium
- "Dead Man Walking" staged reading 7 p.m. Sept. 22, Black Box Theatre

Bulldog Home Openers



Volleyball & Football



No. 4 nationally ranked spikers open home schedule at Pershing Arena. Be There!

Gridiron Showdown Saturday @ noon
Stokes Stadium

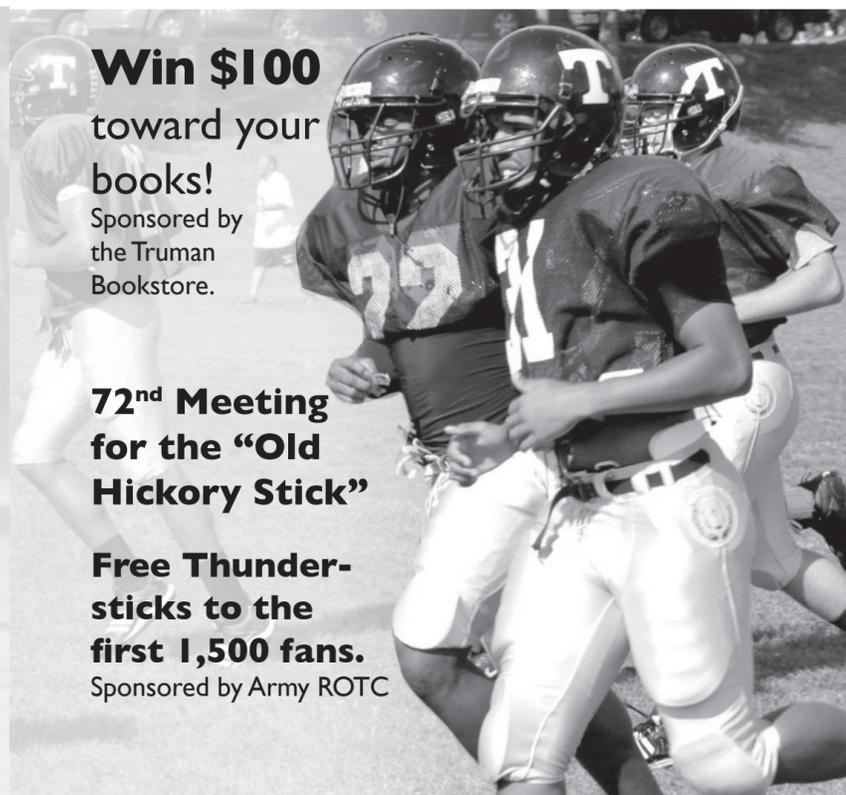
Bulldogs vs. Bearcats
Go Bulldogs - Beat Northwest!



Friday 7 p.m.
vs. Southwest Baptist

Saturday 5 p.m.
vs. Quincy

Follow all Bulldog sports at gobulldogs.truman.edu



Win \$100 toward your books!
Sponsored by the Truman Bookstore.

72nd Meeting for the "Old Hickory Stick"

Free Thundersticks to the first 1,500 fans.
Sponsored by Army ROTC