

Tumblr: a creative outlet or a pirate-prone wasteland?

by Sean Clark
Humor Editor



Every day, millions of teens seek refuge in the iconic, dark-blue depths of tumblr.com. A survey conducted by Garry Tan of Y Combinator found that more teens use Tumblr than Facebook. The website allows teenagers to find a sense of community that they might not find in their lives offline. In a matter of seconds, you can find blogs run by people just like you. Soon your dashboard will be filled with pictures, quotes, gifs, and videos of your favorite celebrities, TV shows, books... the list goes on.

Tumblr exposes people to various forms of art. Without this site, many people would never appreciate art on a deeper level. Vapid teens can now post photography and poetry on their Tumblrs rather than pictures of last Friday's beer pong tournament on their Facebooks. Tumblr makes it acceptable amongst teenagers to appreciate various forms of art. Tumblr is also great for artists, who can use the website to publicize their work. Once an artist posts his or her song, poem, photograph, or video, users can reblog it for all of their followers to appreciate.

Tumblr has also played a huge part in disaster relief. Just recently, Tumblr erupted with links and hotlines to support those affected by the hurricane in the Philippines and collaborated with the World Food Program to extend their relief efforts. They even added a button right next to the iconic Tumblr logo to donate. It is not uncommon to see "signal boost" posts that alert users of recent missing persons reports and crimes. Users reblog (they post the picture or message on their on blog) these posts to signal other users to be careful due to current events. Tumblr users often raise money for other users who have been kicked out their homes or experienced some kind trauma.

Tumblr has also become the homebase for feminism and other social justice movements. The website gets teenagers involved in social justice, which decreases the amount of racism, sexism, prejudice, and discrimination in our society. Instead of allowing racism or sexism to continue, teenagers are taught to stand up for their own rights and other people's rights.

Finally, Tumblr gives teenagers a sense of community. Tumblr users can search tags and connect with people who have mutual interests. This is especially helpful when you're interested in a TV show, book, musician, etc. that people at your school don't like. Teenagers can talk to others in a similar situation, and that might help relieve some stress. On Tumblr, there is a whole community of people, mostly teenagers and young adults, who have experienced depression, insomnia, or other relatively common mental illnesses.

For many teenagers, Tumblr isn't just a website, but a way to interact with others and help benefit people around the world. Though Tumblr has come under fire for "making people stupid," I believe that Tumblr unites teenagers and promotes art, culture, and music.

by Sarah Bainbridge
Culture Editor



Since the technology boom, social media has become a prominent part of our culture. Tumblr is a social blogging site that allows individuals to create blogs tailored to their interests and a dashboard that allows them to scroll through an endless stream of media. Tumblr allows people to share art, ideas, and to create a community, but there are many negative aspects.

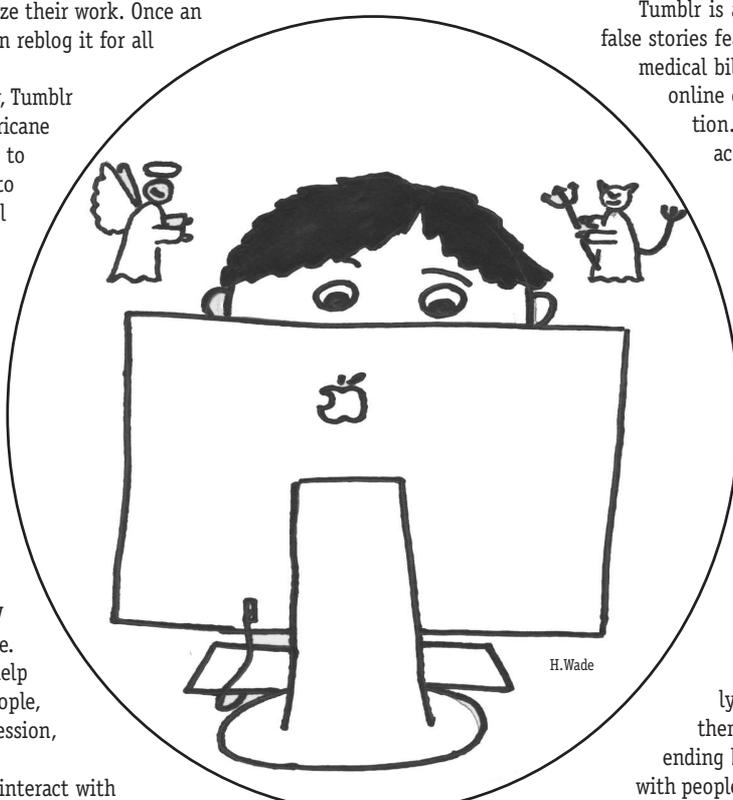
Art theft is rampant among Tumblr users, and the anonymity a username gives people makes it harder and harder for artists to keep their work safe. Drawings are taken and edited and people change a photo to black and white and claim it as their own. Important captions are taken off, and credit is rarely given where credit is due. In some extreme cases, an artist's work is used as album covers, t-shirt designs, and tattoos, all without the artist's permission. Tumblr gives artists a chance to get exposure to millions of people but it also exposes them to theft.

Tumblr is also an extremely popular tool for exploitation through phishing, false stories featuring teens kicked out of their homes, small children who need medical bills paid, and even dogs who need surgery. Although some of these online campaigns are real, it is nearly impossible to discern fact from fiction. In some of these cases money can pour into the personal bank accounts of online thieves.

Good causes left in the hands of the internet can be twisted in ways the creators could have never imagined. This is largely the case with many of the new wave feminism and social justice movements that are currently taking place in the cyber world. Angry words and anonymous arguments spark hatred instead of debate, and tone policers and "social justice warriors" take politically correct to another level; by doing so, they shut down discussions of touchy topics. Slurs are thrown around and civil debates turn into childish fights. Social justice is always a good idea, but the internet, especially Tumblr, has the tendency to twist causes into something that looks more like a high school fight than an informative and civil discussion.

Online communities can give people a sense of belonging, but when things turn sour, people can be singled out and bullied. Tumblr allows messages to be sent to users both anonymously and with their usernames present. But as cyberbullies go, not many are frightened off by the thought that a username will be associated with a hurtful comment. Every social media site is a source of bullying, and Tumblr is no exception. People have physically harmed themselves and even committed suicide because of seemingly never-ending barrage of online hate. Tumblr can be a place to form connections with people from around the world, but it also opens you up to a world of hate.

Tumblr can be a place of entertainment, education, ideas and friendship, but the darker side is always present and users must always be aware of the risks before they get too invested in this online community.



Religious studies are key

by Haley Wade
Editor-in-Chief



Religion is one of the most fascinating aspects of cultural history, and something our classes usually fail to elaborate on. Our curriculum may cover religious symbols in

novels or study the way religion influenced public policy and foreign relations, but it never delves deeply into the actual beliefs and practices. We touch lightly on the surface and then veer away from truly learning about and understanding religions around the world. A deeper study of religion will not only add perspective and insight into history and current events, it can also keep us from spreading and making stereotypes and assumptions.

Religious stereotypes are created and spread by those who don't even know that their facts are incorrect. I've heard way too many people say "I like the ideas of Buddhism, but I could never give up meat." The truth is, the religion doesn't require you to do so. Buddhism prohibits the killing of other living things, but nowhere does it say that eating meat is against the practice. Even some of the most devout Buddhist monks eat meat.

Hindus are widely believed to be "cow worshippers," a label that is usually explained incorrectly as some sort of superstitious mumbo-jumbo. The truth behind the "sacred cow" is actually filled with practicality and religious and cultural significance. Not only are cows a respected and protected animal, owning cows for slaughter is

expensive, especially when the cow offers cheese, milk, and horsepower when alive.

The stereotypes placed on Islam and Muslims are especially prevalent in our society. These ignorant generalizations can go as far as believing that all Muslims are linked to terrorism and the Taliban. This is a thought process equally as absurd as saying that all white men are members of the Klu Klux Klan. A group of extremists should never be considered the definition of an entire culture, country, or religion. Islamic attire is often criticized for incorrect reasons as well. The burqa and hijab sometimes worn by Muslim women are all too often viewed as misogynistic and as a symbol of male supremacy. The true purpose behind headscarves and veils is to uphold the Islamic value of modesty in both men and women.

In truth, I'm embarrassed about the amount of research I had to do in order to write this article; these are simple concepts I should be learning in school. So many of us are in the dark about even the most basic religious beliefs. We like to believe that we're a progressive, open-minded generation, but the current idea is that in order to include everyone under the blanket of equality, we have to pretend that religion doesn't exist. Of course it's true that religion should not be a factor when it comes to human rights. However, keeping students in the dark about different religions is only promoting ignorance and allowing students to make incorrect assumptions about different religions and those who follow them.



Take a full load of classes

by Montana Fowler
Center Editor



LGHS is one of the best public schools in California with its impressive test scores, high API score, and variety of activities available for students. Yet, many students choose to give up one of their electives

senior or junior year to have a "free sixth." However, students at LGHS should choose to take six classes all the way through their senior year; they should seize the opportunities our school offers.

The main reason students give for having a "free sixth" is that they will use the extra time to work harder in their other classes. This may be true for some, but for a lot of students, the "extra time" is not put into studying. Students should think carefully before choosing to have a "free sixth." When senior students have "senioritis" during second semester, most do not have a large desire to work hard in school, especially once they know what they are doing after high school. Instead of using that extra time for reality television, why not learn how to use a pottery wheel in Ceramics with **Mr. Aguayo**? Why not learn new techniques in Creative Writing with **Ms. Austin**?

Many students choose not to take an opportunity to learn from some of the most talented teachers in California. Students who attend schools in less-privileged districts merely miles away would take the opportunity in a heartbeat to learn how to write in Java from **Mr. Bollhorst**, or learn new painting techniques from **Mr. Smith**. We are so lucky that LGHS can offer 45 different elective classes, not even including the levels within each class. The list includes El Gato, Yearbook, Leadership, Advanced Science Research, Digital Photography, Creative Writing, Guitar, Orchestra, Band, Choir, Japanese, Spanish, French, Woodshop, Fashion, Cooking and so many more.

Senior **Betsy Wall**, who enjoys her elective as a senior at LGHS. She stated, "There's such a variety of electives at LG that I had a difficult time deciding which one I wanted to do as a freshman. I chose Art 1 and loved it so much that I am currently in Art 4 as

a senior. The art teachers, as well as the students, are a lot of fun and are great to work with."

Students can learn skills that may seem unimportant at the time, but may lead to careers or new ideas in the future. Steve Jobs famously sat in on a calligraphy class after he dropped out of college, and it led to the typography in Mac computers. In his commencement speech to Stanford 2005 graduates he stated, "I learned about serif and sans serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating. None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts."

High school is about learning, discovering who we are and what we want to do in the future. Even if you don't want to become a singer, artist, musician, writer, computer programmer, or photographer, trying out the classes offered at LGHS will open up your eyes to new ideas, thoughts, talents, and activities. We will never know we like something until we try it, so do not drop the period, the opportunity; take it, seize it, and learn from it.

