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UK debates social media closure in crises

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1108/110826-social_media.html

Contents

The Article	2
Warm ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

26th August, 2011

THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110826-social_media.html

Britain's government has been debating whether to shut down social media sites during times of public disorder. Prime Minister David Cameron has said police may need extra powers to curb them, even though he praised their use in the protests that led to the fall of Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt earlier this year. Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Blackberry Messenger were used extensively by rioters across England in the country's recent social unrest. They enabled looters and gangs to organise themselves during the riots and carry out attacks on police and property. Two men were jailed for four years for setting up a Facebook event entitled "Smash Down Northwich Town". Neither of the men took part in any rioting.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg dispelled rumours that his government would act against social media, saying: "We are not going to become like Iran or China [and] suddenly start cutting people off." He added: "The government did not seek any additional powers to close down social media networks." Britain's Guardian newspaper reported that social media played a more positive role in the riots in organising street clean-ups and criticising the rioters. A Facebook official said their site was useful to the police as a valuable intelligence tool in gaining evidence to convict criminals. A Twitter spokeswoman said: "Twitter is an effective way to distribute updates and dispel rumours in times of crisis or emergency."

WARM-UPS

1. SOCIAL MEDIA: Walk around the class and talk to other students about social media. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

debating / public disorder / extra powers / networking sites / looters / property / rumours / social media / positive role / valuable / intelligence tool / convict / crisis

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. RIOTS: What should governments do during street riots? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	Pros	Cons
Ban social media		
Water canon		
Tear gas		
Curfew		
Send in the Army		
Photograph rioters		

4. JAIL: Students A **strongly** believe people who encourage violence using social media should be jailed for four years; Students B **strongly** believe they should not go to prison at all. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. SITES: Which are your favourites? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put your favourites at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- Twitter
- Google
- Facebook
- English learning site
- News site
- A blog
- A site about technology
- BreakingNewsEnglish.com

6. SOCIAL: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'social'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110826-social_media.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. The UK government has given police powers to close social media sites. T / F
- b. The UK leader thought social media in the Egypt revolution was good. T / F
- c. UK rioters used Twitter and Facebook but not Blackberry Messenger. T / F
- d. Guys who encouraged violence via Facebook were sent to prison. T / F
- e. The UK's deputy leader said China and Iran should ban social media. T / F
- f. The deputy leader requested powers to close down social media sites. T / F
- g. Twitter was used more for positive than negative reasons in the riots. T / F
- h. A Facebook worker said the site was useful for police investigations. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. debating | a. part |
| 2. curb | b. allowed |
| 3. extensively | c. issue |
| 4. enabled | d. limit |
| 5. entitled | e. try to find |
| 6. dispelled | f. discussing |
| 7. seek | g. instrument |
| 8. role | h. widely |
| 9. tool | i. called |
| 10. distribute | j. dismissed |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. debating whether to shut down | a. curb them |
| 2. need extra powers to | b. positive role |
| 3. the protests that led to the fall | c. rumours |
| 4. They enabled looters | d. part in any rioting |
| 5. Neither of the men took | e. social media sites |
| 6. Nick Clegg dispelled | f. tool |
| 7. suddenly start cutting | g. of Hosni Mubarak |
| 8. social media played a more | h. or emergency |
| 9. a valuable intelligence | i. and gangs to organise |
| 10. in times of crisis | j. people off |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110826-social_media.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Britain's government has been debating whether to shut down social media sites (1) _____ times of public disorder. Prime Minister David Cameron has said police may need extra (2) _____ to curb them, even though he praised their use in the protests that led to the (3) _____ of Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt earlier this year. Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Blackberry Messenger were used (4) _____ by rioters across England in the country's recent social unrest. They (5) _____ looters and gangs to organise themselves during the riots and (6) _____ out attacks on police and property. Two men were jailed for four years for (7) _____ up a Facebook event (8) _____ "Smash Down Northwich Town". Neither of the men took part in any rioting.

carry
powers
entitled
extensively
setting
during
enabled
fall

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg (9) _____ rumours that his government would act against social media, saying: "We are not going to become like Iran or China [and] (10) _____ start cutting people off." He added: "The government did not seek any additional powers to (11) _____ down social media networks." Britain's Guardian newspaper reported that social media played a more positive (12) _____ in the riots in organising street clean-ups and criticising the rioters. A Facebook (13) _____ said their site was useful to the police as a (14) _____ intelligence tool in gaining evidence to (15) _____ criminals. A Twitter spokeswoman said: "Twitter is an effective way to distribute updates and dispel rumours in times of (16) _____ or emergency."

suddenly
convict
dispelled
crisis
close
role
valuable
official

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110826-social_media.html

Britain's government _____ whether to shut down social media sites during times of public disorder. Prime Minister David Cameron has said police may need _____ them, even though he praised their use in the _____ the fall of Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt earlier this year. Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Blackberry Messenger were used _____ across England in the country's recent social unrest. They enabled _____ organise themselves during the riots and carry out attacks on police and property. Two men were jailed for four years for setting up a Facebook event entitled "Smash Down Northwich Town". _____ part in any rioting.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg _____ his government would act against social media, saying: "We are not going to become like Iran or China [and] suddenly _____ off." He added: "The government did not _____ powers to close down social media networks." Britain's Guardian newspaper reported that social media played _____ the riots in organising street clean-ups and criticising the rioters. A Facebook official said their site was useful to the police as a _____ in gaining evidence to convict criminals. A Twitter spokeswoman said: "Twitter is an effective way to distribute updates and dispel rumours _____ emergency."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110826-social_media.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'social' and 'media'.

social	media

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• whether• curb• earlier• recent• carry• neither	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• act• cutting• seek• role• tool• crisis
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STUDENT SOCIAL MEDIA SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110826-social_media.html

Write five GOOD questions about social media in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

SOCIAL MEDIA DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the term 'social media'?
- c) How important is social media to you?
- d) What did you do before social media came along?
- e) What are the bad things about social media?
- f) Should governments ban social media during riots?
- g) What part has social media played in the unrest and uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa?
- h) How are Facebook and Twitter different?
- i) How can police deal with rioters using social media to plan attacks on them?
- j) Is a four-year jail sentence appropriate for using Facebook to incite violence during riots?

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SOCIAL MEDIA DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Does your country have any controls on social media?
- c) Is it a breach of human rights to cut off social media sites?
- d) In what ways can social media improve the world?
- e) Is a more connected world a better world?
- f) Should rioters think more about police using their messages as evidence against them in court?
- g) How can social media sites stop users using the sites to commit crimes?
- h) Should we all be using social media?
- i) Is social media useful to you when studying English?
- j) What questions would you like to ask a social media expert ?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110826-social_media.html

Britain's government has been debating (1) _____ to shut down social media sites during times of public disorder. Prime Minister David Cameron has said police may need extra powers to (2) _____ them, even though he (3) _____ their use in the protests that led to the fall of Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt earlier this year. Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Blackberry Messenger were used (4) _____ by rioters across England in the country's recent social unrest. They enabled looters and gangs to organise themselves during the riots and (5) _____ out attacks on police and property. Two men were jailed for four years for setting up a Facebook event (6) _____ "Smash Down Northwich Town". Neither of the men took part in any rioting.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg dispelled rumours that his government would (7) _____ against social media, saying: "We are not going to become like Iran or China [and] suddenly start cutting people off." He added: "The government did not (8) _____ any additional powers to close down social media networks." Britain's Guardian newspaper reported that social media played a more positive (9) _____ in the riots in organising street clean-ups and (10) _____ the rioters. A Facebook official said their site was useful to the police as a valuable intelligence (11) _____ in gaining evidence to convict criminals. A Twitter spokeswoman said: "Twitter is an effective way to distribute updates and dispel rumours in (12) _____ of crisis or emergency."

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) wither | (b) weather | (c) whatever | (d) whether |
| 2. | (a) carb | (b) curb | (c) crib | (d) crab |
| 3. | (a) praised | (b) appraised | (c) prized | (d) parsed |
| 4. | (a) extensive | (b) extension | (c) extensively | (d) extended |
| 5. | (a) hold | (b) throw | (c) carry | (d) shut |
| 6. | (a) enthralled | (b) entitled | (c) entreated | (d) entered |
| 7. | (a) act | (b) play | (c) mime | (d) perform |
| 8. | (a) reek | (b) meek | (c) peek | (d) seek |
| 9. | (a) rail | (b) role | (c) real | (d) roll |
| 10. | (a) criticise | (b) criticism | (c) critical | (d) criticising |
| 11. | (a) tale | (b) teal | (c) tool | (d) toll |
| 12. | (a) times | (b) timings | (c) timed | (d) timing |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about social media. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA: Make a poster about social media and the role it plays in street protests. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. RIOTS: Write a magazine article about riots. Include imaginary interviews with a police officer and a rioter.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Britain's prime minister. Ask him three questions about social media and riots. Give him three of your ideas about it. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. F b. T c. F d. T e. F f. F g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. debating | a. discussing |
| 2. curb | b. limit |
| 3. extensively | c. widely |
| 4. enabled | d. allowed |
| 5. entitled | e. called |
| 6. dispelled | f. dismissed |
| 7. seek | g. try to find |
| 8. role | h. part |
| 9. tool | i. instrument |
| 10. distribute | j. issue |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. debating whether to shut down | a. social media sites |
| 2. need extra powers to | b. curb them |
| 3. the protests that led to the fall | c. of Hosni Mubarak |
| 4. They enabled looters | d. and gangs to organise |
| 5. Neither of the men took | e. part in any rioting |
| 6. Nick Clegg dispelled | f. rumours |
| 7. suddenly start cutting | g. people off |
| 8. social media played a more | h. positive role |
| 9. a valuable intelligence | i. tool |
| 10. in times of crisis | j. or emergency |

GAP FILL:

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Britain's government has been debating whether to shut down social media sites (1) **during** times of public disorder. Prime Minister David Cameron has said police may need extra (2) **powers** to curb them, even though he praised their use in the protests that led to the (3) **fall** of Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt earlier this year. Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Blackberry Messenger were used (4) **extensively** by rioters across England in the country's recent social unrest. They (5) **enabled** looters and gangs to organise themselves during the riots and (6) **carry out** attacks on police and property. Two men were jailed for four years for (7) **setting** up a Facebook event (8) **entitled** "Smash Down Northwich Town". Neither of the men took part in any rioting.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg (9) **dispelled** rumours that his government would act against social media, saying: "We are not going to become like Iran or China [and] (10) **suddenly** start cutting people off." He added: "The government did not seek any additional powers to (11) **close** down social media networks." Britain's Guardian newspaper reported that social media played a more positive (12) **role** in the riots in organising street clean-ups and criticising the rioters. A Facebook (13) **official** said their site was useful to the police as a (14) **valuable** intelligence tool in gaining evidence to (15) **convict** criminals. A Twitter spokeswoman said: "Twitter is an effective way to distribute updates and dispel rumours in times of (16) **crisis** or emergency."

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a

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