In The Media

The show I’ve chose is Parks and Recreation, season 6, episode 2 ‘The Pawnee-Eagleton Tip off Classic’. In this episode, Ron faces newfound challenges with finding his information on social media and other sources that he would like removed. He later finds that there can be benefits for being at least partially ‘on-the-grid’. The episode exemplifies how hard it can be to remove your social media presence even when trying as coworker’s post content with his knowledge and as he travels to remove physical evidence of himself.

Parks and Recreation is a show featuring a state Parks and Recreation department in Pawnee, Indiana. The town though is fake its fictionalized location is only about 35 miles above Bloomington. The show is written by the same writers and is filmed in a similar fashion as The Office. The some of the most prevalent characters of the show are Ron Swanson who is a director of parks and rec, He is a strong believer in small government and believes the parks department should not ever run or maintain parks. Mark Brendanawicz who is a city planner who in later episode marries Leslie Knope. He is a hard worker and matches the crazy traits of Leslie very well. And the main character Leslie Knope, who is the director of the Pawnee Parks and Recreation – who is a very passionate and hardworking woman who loves her hometown of Pawnee. Overall the show features several situations varying from events currently happening such as a government shutdown to the group hosting a telethon.

In this episode, the nearby town Eagleton, which Leslie has been at competition with from her early childhood is having a recall election and soon learns about Eagleton’s budget crisis which may
consolidate her win. Ron receives a spam news article and is finds out how little privacy he and others have with sources of social media. Ron looks to get “off the grid”, he removes all forms of identity he can think of. Two other characters – Ann and April travel to Bloomington exploring college campuses. As Ron attempts to delete pictures of himself he creates a vine. Later Ron learns the benefit of being somewhat on-the-grid to contact his family (parks and recreation season 6 episode 2).

This episode faces an important argument for how technology can change our rights to privacy. The presence of Ron attempting to remove himself from social media when his peers are posting him without his permission show how little control we can have when we try to remain private. The use of social media has major benefits for many people – not only does it make communication to others much easier but it allows people to be a part of other people’s lives much easier. This does come with a downside as many people don’t want to be online, myself included. Social media is a relatively new invention and has only been in use for less than 20 years (Hendricks). Many also think current laws were never made for this freely shared new form of communications.

Social Media is now more than ever everywhere. As stated before those who try to not be included can be included intentionally or unintentionally without their notice. Because Social Media is available to everyone it has become so prevalent statistics state that currently 81% of U.S. Americans have a social media profile (Statista). Social media does have its benefits as well. It allows people to grow their network of friends and stay in touch with them, as well as letting people monitor current events happening. Ron felt that after noticing how much information was out their he had to remove all traces of his name and image – going from restaurants with his photo on the wall to shredding his identity cards and only taking busses and paying with cash to travel where he needed to be. After he did this he lost contact to his family and eventually settled that he’d have to be somewhat connected after they refused to join his ‘crazy’ ways, he is later shown carrying an original Nokia phone symbolizing he still strives for privacy.
I feel that social media is very challenging to classify if it is ethical or not, it has many benefits but the issue come down to is if privacy is still expected when almost everyone has decided to let their profile become public. I feel like social media is ethical but it depends on how you use it. If everyone asked for permission to post photos of someone else I would completely agree that it is ethical but I feel that this doesn’t happen often enough. In the future, I only see social medias usage going up, not only has it been a rising trend for many years (Statista), but it’s been only getting more integrated in people’s lives. I’ve seen social media profiles for children who were just born preparing their kids profiles for the future.

In Conclusion Ron finds that there can be a balance of how much you want to be ‘on-the-grid’, though he decides to go very primitive as far as where technology is he still accepts that to socialize with the ones he close to he must use some technology. This example shows the two-edge sword social media can be, giving much better communication to the ones your close to, but losing privacy as you do so. The use of social media is most likely only to go up and to be more invasive so answering these hard questions of how useful it is in comparison to its downsides needs to be a topic of discussion.
Works Cited


parks and recreation season 6 episode 2. 2013. TV.