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## SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

### Social Media Holds Hidden Dangers

Even before the lockdowns brought on by the coronavirus, too many seniors felt isolated. Now it's even worse for many of us with the lack of face-to-face interactions ... and we've turned to social media for connections to others.

There, on Facebook and Twitter, in chat rooms and email lists, we've found friends to talk to and pass the hours of this lockdown. We feel happy to have these people at the other end of the keyboard. It's good for us.

Or maybe not.

The big problem with social media is that we really don't know who is on the other end. The new friend who seems so interested in us might actually be a scammer, just waiting for the right moment to spring the trap and ask for money. How can you refuse, you'll wonder, if someone you've come to know so well asks for help?

Or maybe we've shared too much information, such as our location or our real name.

Or how about the new friend who sends funny cartoons, one of which might contain a virus that leaves our computer open to hackers?

Add in an election year, and it's all too easy to talk online with people who supposedly share our views. Quite commonly they ask for money or contact info.

Some things to think about:

If you really want to connect with others on social media, create a fake name for it. Learn how to block people and don't add just anybody to your network or list. Don't give out your real name or location, no matter how friendly other people seem.

Focus on an area of social media with a narrow, safe focus such as pets, cooking or gardening.

Better yet, call up a few people you already know and ask if they'd like to meet for online games, such as chess, or just chatting. They might feel just as isolated as you do and welcome your overture.

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