

# Appendix 1

Using the table below suggest ways that existing sociological perspectives might interpret new forms of digital communication.

Theoretical perspective	Views on the role of new forms of social media/ relevant concepts	Evaluation (strengths and weaknesses)
<b>Functionalism</b>	Part of the wider process of structural differentiation, the specialising of functions carried out by institutions. Likely to see greater communication as evidence of an improvement in the quality of relationships.	How applicable are functionalist theories to today's society? May ignore the problems created/dysfunction by new forms of digital communication.
<b>New Right</b>	Coalition government concern with children's access to adult content online eg pornography	Unlikely to recognize the support mechanisms accessed by people through the internet
<b>Marxism</b>	See new digital forms of communication as a way of the ruling class controlling/exploiting the working class, through advertising etc	Anti capitalist social protests rely heavily on new forms of digital communication. How relevant is social class to people's identity today?
<b>Feminism</b>	Argue that those who control new forms of digital communication are men, although liberal feminists may acknowledge the ways in which it creates support mechanisms for women and acts as a vehicle for social protest for women	Ignore positive effects of new forms of digital communication eg the ability to transcend gender eg through cyborgs (where you do not have to necessarily identify as male or female)
<b>Interactionism</b>	It is the meanings given to interactions within new forms of digital communication that are significant and reflect broader meaning	A micro approach may be very appropriate for exploring how individuals choose and interact with new forms of digital communication
<b>Postmodernism</b>	New forms of digital communication reflect postmodern society – choice, globalisation, change, plurality of identities, fragmentation	Useful for describing contemporary society but does not offer explanation or recognize the inequalities perpetuated through for example the digital divide

