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'I have Social Disease. I have to go out every night. If I stay home one night I start spreading rumours to my dogs.'

Andy Warhol

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

You will often hear people complain that before the invention of social media, people used to talk. They used to meet in 'normal' ways; there was none of this 'sexting' business; we had friends before Facebook, you know...In fact, what people used to do before social media was socialise using different media: cave paintings, storytelling, gossip, smoke signals, carving initials in trees. Updating your Facebook status about your lunchtime ham sandwich is much the same as prehistoric man leaving a handprint on the cave wall to tell everyone he'd caught a really big bison.

And that's the trick to successfully bluffing your way in the confusingly high-tech world of Internet networking and sharing: realising that it is no different to every other way in which human beings talk to and about one another.

As a species, humans have always wanted to share information – and the reason social networking services are so popular is because they make it easier than ever before. Where once you had to corner someone in the next cave to

boast about who you had just snogged, today you can put a picture on Instagram and shout it to the whole world.

While some welcome the mass exchange of information, others mistrust technological developments for fear they make us less human. Charles Dickens, confronted with the development of the telegraph, said: 'Electric communication will never be a substitute for the face of someone who with their soul encourages another person to be brave and true.'

Which ironically is the perfect 140-character length for a tweet (if you lose a full stop).

So when someone wants to complain about social media being the death of proper talking, point out to them that apes grunt, *Homo erectus* had basic symbolic communication, and *Homo sapiens* uttered the first words sometime between 30,000 and 100,000 years ago. Remind them that humankind is a storytelling species and is unique in that regard.

In the 1960s, some Californian geeks began linking their computers in what became known as the Internet and in 1982 Britain's Tim Berners-Lee developed a way of navigating it with addresses, links and readable pages – the World Wide Web. At this point, the evolution of human communication sped up exponentially, with email in 1993, blogging shortly after, Facebook launching in 2004 and Twitter in 2006.

Four years later the Internet went into warp drive, when astronaut T.J. Creamer sent a tweet unassisted from the International Space Station in orbit above Earth.

And here we are, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, at the point where any of us can have an