

# Social Influence Techniques Used Online

([www.netfamilynews.org/willard0605.html](http://www.netfamilynews.org/willard0605.html))

"Virtually all of the Internet risks and concerns are grounded in the negative impact of social influence."

## 1- Rule of Reciprocity

If someone gives you a gift, a favor, or a concession you feel the obligation to give something back to that person. It triggers the feeling of indebtedness, which requires a return.

## 2 - Commitment and Consistency

This is valued because it leads to trustworthiness- a person who is consistent can be trusted to act in certain ways under certain conditions. They are also convenient. If we always respond in a certain way to a certain situation, then there is no need to take the time to figure out how to respond.

## 3 - Social Proof

People are influenced by what other people think and do. Marketers use this as "viral marketing" to create "group think." To reduce susceptibility to it requires independence of mind and the willingness to make decisions based on an honest appraisal of the situation-not what others think. If you are in a group that wants to go in one direction and your "gut" is telling you that this is a bad choice, listen to your "gut" and take a close look at the situation. Make your own choices.

## 4 - Liking

Beyond the concerns of dangerous strangers, commercial advertisers are also using this technique as a component of their viral marketing strategies.

A person is likable if:

- Physical attractiveness = attractive people have more influence.
- Similarity = we like people who are like us.
- Praise = giving someone a compliment works wonders in influencing.
- Increase familiarity = repeated contact with good circumstances leads to liking.
- Association = association with positive things increases liking.

## 5 - Authority

There is a strong pressure in our society to comply with requests or demands from an authority figure. There are two key questions that one can ask to assess the appropriateness of deference (authority) to someone who commands it and is seeking compliance or obedience:

Is this authority truly an expert?

Is there independent evidence of this person's expertise and credibility?

How truthful can we expect this expert to be? Is this person in a position where he or she would have something to gain by our compliance? Is there evidence of self-serving?

## 6 - Scarcity

Scarcity is grounded in two factors. When something is more difficult to attain, it is typically perceived to be more valuable. Also if something is less available, the freedom to have it may be lost. Both of these factors stimulate more active resolve to obtain the "thing."