

The Truths About Social Media

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One of the biggest trends in the world is social media. According to the article “Social Media Users – Global Demographics (2023)” from *Demand Sage*, Rohit Shewale (2023) states

that “there are over 4.9 billion users that use social media globally.” That is about 60% of the world population. Whether it is TikTok, Twitter (or X), Instagram, Snapchat and many other apps, people scroll all day long on these apps and have a spot in their heart for them. Some people say that social media is great because it is very enjoyable, can be an excellent tool for communication and it can help you earn money. Even though there are many positive things about social media, there are also some negative things. Some of the cons of social media are that it can become super addictive, the information can be false, can cause online bullying, can affect your mental health, and can result in money loss due to scams. Since social media is here to stay, I am concerned about social media's negative impact on the world.

Some people say that social media is great because it is very enjoyable. As a person who uses social media, I can confirm that it is enjoyable. When I am bored, I usually will take out my phone and scroll through Tik Tok or Instagram to watch funny videos or to waste time. I like to watch movies that pop up and highlights of hockey games. But with all of this fun we need to ask ourselves, at what point does this become addictive? Addiction can be defined as something that you physically cannot stop doing. In the research article “Social Media Addiction Statistics: Facts, Stats & Trends in 2023” by *Cloudwards*, Samuel Okoruwa (2023) states that “210 million of those 4.9 billion users are addicted. Which means about 4-5% of the people that use social media are addicted. In the U.S, around 30% of the 4.9 are addicted.” Cloudwards gets their numbers by using records, documents, and government resources. This is significant because people are wasting time on social media instead of doing our daily jobs. We also are missing time with face-to-face communication. We are so addicted that we don't even realize that we are wasting time on our screens instead of hanging out with our loved ones or friends. Our schools have had to put out phone policy rules because we tend to grab our phones every time we do not have an assignment. The addictive part also makes us more lazy. This morning when I woke up,

I turned to grab my phone and I scrolled through Tik Tok for about 45 minutes before waking up without even realizing the amount of time that I was on it.

Another disadvantage of social media is that not all of the information is true. A huge problem in our current world is finding real or fake news. When most people see news on social media, they automatically assume that it is true. Although some of the news on social media is true, some of the news can be fake. Finding fake news can be mentally draining because once we believe one thing that we see and it turns out to be fake, how do we know when to trust any other news? According to the article “69+ Fake News Statistics Revealed For 2023 (Updated)” By *Demand Sage*, Daniel Ruby (2023) states that “67% of social media users reported that they had read false information and news across social media.” This is bad because the world keeps turning to social media to find true and reliable information. Once we read all of this fake news, we will likely share it to our friends and family. I have experienced some fake news myself. Just today I read on twitter that some hockey player was going to sign in Toronto, I went upstairs and told my mom to let her know because I felt that this signing could help Toronto a lot. Later on that night, I got breaking news that he signed somewhere else. As I went up to tell my mom that the news that I read was fake, I felt a huge amount of embarrassment that I believed something that wasn't true. Social media can do this to you because the sources are not 100% reliable.

Social media also creates the conditions for cyber bullying. Cyberbullying can be defined as bullying in the form of technology such as digital devices. Social media is the new spot for bullies to find their next victim. Bullies have gotten smarter and have realized that instead of bullying kids in person they can simply just bully them online. Kids can say basically whatever they want and have ridiculously small punishments or possibly never get caught for their actions. According to “17 Scary Cyberbullying Statistics (2023)” by *Exploding Topics*, Josh Howarth (2022) states that “We're currently in a cyberbullying pandemic. Over 60% of children and 40%

of adults have been targeted by cyberbullies. And if you look at the trends, those numbers are likely to keep going up in the future.” This is bad because it shows that all ages can be cyberbullied, and it won't stop anytime soon. Cyberbullying also creates some problems like kids not wanting to go to school anymore because they don't feel safe or feel like they have no control. It also can create isolation. The worst part of cyberbullying is that most kids or parents keep this away from their parents or other peers, so they have absolutely no idea that they are struggling.

Another huge problem with social media is that it can affect our mental health in many ways. One of those ways is that it causes depression. Seeing all our friends or so-called friends posting pictures of themselves having fun is mentally defeating. And that feeling can lead to depression. In the source “does social media cause depression” by *Child Mind Institute*, Caroline Miller (2023) states that “In several studies, teenagers and young adult users who spend the most time on Instagram, Facebook and other platforms were shown to have a substantially (from 13 to 66 percent) higher rate of reported depression than those who spent the last time.” This quote shows that the rate of depression is rising through teens. This is bad for our society because it affects the way teens think and act. Which could end in a traumatic way. One of my friends suffered through depression for most of his life. He had to go to a therapist, and they found that the main cause of his depression (through his teen years) was because he was on his phone so much. In the past year he committed suicide. I encourage you to be cautious with your friends and family with their amount of use on social media because it can end up in a heart-breaking way.

Lastly, a big problem in social media is theft. People are starting to have a higher demand for products and goods and scammers have been getting smarter and they are starting to target a

specific audience, people who use social media. It can be anyone who can get scammed, from young teens all the way to celebrities. Some of the common ways that they get you to fall into their trap is by commenting on posts. They will say “click here to win 5,000 dollars” or “register for a chance to win 10,000 dollars”. Or they can steal your identity, hack into your account, and pretend to be you to get your friends and family to give you (the scammer) money. Even though they use the same methods studies show that people still fall for them. According to the article “Americans Reported 2.7 Billion Dollars in Losses from Scams on Social Media, FTC says” By *CBS News*, Khristopher Brooks (2023) states that “Americans lose money to fraud on social media platforms more than any other method of communication, including websites, phone calls, e-mails, online advertising or mail, the FTC said.” This is important because social media users need to understand the risk that they are taking by having social media downloaded. Why should we risk downloading social media if we have the possibility of getting scammed and losing hard earned money? My grandpa has been a victim of social media scamming. He clicked on a link that said, “register to have a chance to win 10,000 dollars” and registered. He had to give 20 dollars to be able to be “put into consideration” to win. He gave them that money and then never heard back. Don’t take the risk and keep social media.

To sum up, you have learned about the negatives that are usually not looked at in social media because people only focus on the positives. Social media is addictive, can give out false information, causes people to be lazy and procrastinate, can cause online bullying, can affect your mental health, and can result in money loss due to scams. I have learned that I am probably addicted to social media and may need to delete some of the apps to be able to spend more time in the real world. I hope that you now understand the dangers of social media and take those into consideration the next time you think about opening your phone and scrolling through Tik Tok or Facebook for long amounts of time.

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