

Is social media making us less social?

[Media](#), [Social Media](#)



Social media is the reason for many of the world's problems and solutions. It can be used to raise awareness for an important cause, but it can also be used to spread hate. Do you ever wonder how much time per day the average American spends looking at a screen? Have you realized it has become harder to start a conversation, or keep a conversation going in person, nowadays? Since social media has taken the world by storm, nobody feels the need to socialize in person anymore.

I was drawn to this topic because it makes me go crazy to see a couple or a group of people eating at a restaurant, and they are staring at a screen when they could actually be having an actual conversation with the person right in front of them, but I also unfortunately fall victim to this. People need to understand that the over consumption of social media is disintegrating our society because it disfigures interpersonal social skills, it showcases an unrealistic idea of what body image is, gives a fake ideal of happiness, and it acts as a distraction which results in less productivity. It is important that people understand the importance of this issue because it would be the first step towards an improved society.

First and foremost, society is under the impression that being deemed "socially acceptable" requires a person to look a certain way. There are now dozens, maybe even hundreds of applications that allow people to change their pictures to form them into a thinner or prettier version of themselves; feeding their desire to be socially accepted. According to the article, "How Social Media is a Toxic Mirror" Rachel Simmons states, "Visual platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat deliver the tools that allow teens to earn approval for their appearance and compare themselves to others" (time.

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com). The article goes on to state how teenagers are subconsciously affected by the amount of likes they get on a photo or how much attention they receive solely based off their appearance.

Now, let's talk about the people who feel like they do not meet these unrealistic standards. They resort to linking their looks to their self-worth, resulting in low self-esteem and severe mental issues. They focus on what their body should look like in comparison to that of a celebrity or a model and to make it worse, many of them starve themselves in hopes of achieving, what society refers to as, "a perfect body". This also leads to taking on a massive amount of debt to portray a certain lifestyle to be deemed socially acceptable. Social media needs to stop acting as a toxic mirror that ruins self-esteem; instead it should encourage people to be satisfied with the way that they are.

Second, people are easily tempted to use social networks as a form of distraction; which diverts their attention away from their current task. These distractions can result in numerous issues. For instance, it can cause a person's education to suffer. Instead of doing research for an assignment, they could easily check their Facebook or Snapchat and distract themselves for – what could be hours – which prevents the work from being done. Scott Campbell, an associate professor of Communication Studies at the University of Michigan state's, "Young people turn to digital media as an immediate way to relieve boredom and, sadly, the classroom is one of the environments in which they most commonly experience boredom" (eab. com).

Social media also slows down productivity, whether its at school or the workplace. The time spent on the distraction and the challenge in mentally returning to the person's primary task results in inadequacy in task performances. Also, the long periods of time that a person spends on social networks reduces the amount of time that they get to spend with theirfamily. Relationships like these are likely to be ruined by the antisocial barriers they surround themselves in as a result of the over consumption of social media.

Lastly, social media decreases face-to-face communication which not only takes out the emotional connection, it can eventually affect a person's ability to properly communicate in person. Some people tend to know their limits when it comes to socializing via the internet but there are others who are so caught up in the virtual world that they tend to lose track of reality. " Since it has become more prevalent, social media has made people have a tendency to want to interact with people online rather than in person because it has made the process simpler" (rampages. us). However, this has caused peoples' social etiquette and communication skills to deteriorate. When faced with real life situations or social gatherings, the one whom uses social networks as a means of communication finds it extremely difficult to think fast and respond immediately.

This eventually leads to a breakdown of constructive communication skills, which in turn has a damaging effect on self-esteem. The end results: shyness, lack of courage, ineffective communication skills, socialanxiety, etc. all lead the person to feel much more negatively to social situations. Thus, resorting them to a greater usage of social networks in order to convey

messages effectively. So, it is basically an ongoing cycle in which one ends up only digging the hole deeper.

There are, however, a couple of ways that social media is used to positively impact society. For starters, it keeps people connected with friends and family from around the world. I have family in Mexico and I do not get the chance to visit them as often as I would like to. I also have a boyfriend in the army who is currently stationed overseas and I can only see him about four times a year when he takes leave and comes home. Therefore, being able to communicate with them through networks like Facebook and Skype is very helpful because it allows me to stay in touch with them. Another positive impact would be that social media keeps people up to date with what is happening in education, politics, medicine, etc.

For example, when Hurricane Sandy hit the United States back in 2012, families were urged to use social media as a means of informing their loved ones that they were safe. " Many government officials and agencies, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), have taken full advantage of the power of these social networks, using them to keep people updated on storm developments" (mercurynews. com). Despite the negative components of social media, it does help people stay informed about what is happening in our country and allows us to educate ourselves on important current events.

In conclusion, the effects that social networks are taking on society keep on spiraling downward and if nobody does anything to stop it now, there is no telling what kind of future is in store for us. It is important that people realize

that social media is destroying society through its breakdown of communication skills, its idealistic concept of body image, and the distraction that leads to less productivity. People need to put their phones down when they are out with friends or family so they can actually enjoy their time with them instead of being concerned with who is crowned perfect body or who the new celebrity couple is.

It also is time for men and women to stop comparing themselves to pictures – that for all we know might be airbrushed – and start feeling beautiful in their own skin. If people do not want to lose the meaning of their self-worth, they need to start focusing more on themselves for who they want to be and not for who society expects them to be. People also need to learn how to limit their usage of social networking. That way they can focus on their education or getting a job done efficiently. While I will admit that social media has its benefits, it also has its downsides and we, as a society, need to keep it under control while we still can.