

Social media contests: a timeline for viral challenges

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



Social media gives people the power to connect. Opportunities don't come knocking everyday so it's up to people to grab it when it does. We've seen social media react to worldwide events, rapid activation of social movements, reconnect families etc. At the same time, we have seen the advancement of communication through social media as an entertainment purpose. Social media contests influence users to try new things. Most people can agree that these challenges became viral for a reason: even if it's just because of curiosity.

Today's youngsters are making ignorant choices based on challenges that could physically or mentally affect them for years merely for a few "likes" or cool status update. It is no secret that the awkward stage of adolescence is greatly impacted by hormones- mainly estrogens and testosterone. Research has recently proven that there are certain changes of hormones in different parts of the body, including the organs and brain.

Teens often underestimate risks and is leads to another factor influencing the popularity of social media challenges. Teens often get lost in the details about specific risks, focusing heavily on the rewards involved. The benefit at the end of the challenge is what matters. Whether it is the satisfaction of completing a goal, getting more likes, or comparing themselves to their peers, the reward is only magnified when social media is the primary mode of communication. However, this study attributes these behaviours to a child's limited self-regulation and development. It explains that these challenges have potential attraction to all children, boys and girls from every demographic possible. This thought can be disheartening, leading many to

imagine the worst-case scenario featuring children experimenting with online challenges. Sufficient awareness and effective education is given when it comes to halting the addiction online media challenges have towards the children.

It is very difficult to notice a new challenge on the social media. When a large number talks about a challenge that's trending, then one secretly wants to be a part of it to understand it more. It later begins to feel that they belong to a part of a larger group where they laugh at this private joke. If an individual has a Face book account or uses Twitter or Instagram, then they are bound to catch a viral challenge. If it gets popular enough, a challenge will spread through all of these mediums and it will be easily shareable from one medium to another. If you watch a funny challenge on Instagram, you might feel propelled to share it on Face book. Nowadays it is very unlikely that a person doesn't use social media or uses just one platform, therefore it is fairly easy for a challenge to blow up on any network. Viral challenges make sure we have a sense of fear, sadness, or happiness. Emotion is one of the biggest influential- when we feel something we are inclined to do something about it. In this case, the easiest way to express your emotions is to share the video with your friends, family or strangers.

With the advancement of social media, people were given the ability to showcase the popular tradition of daring friends to a variety of activities that have been dubbed " social media challenges." Over the past few years, numerous challenges have gone viral. Some of the frivolous and more popular ones included " The Mannequin Challenge," where people stand in

poses while someone walks through the scene recording, and “ The Running Man Challenge,” a goofy dance popularized by two University of Maryland basketball players. Then, there was “ The Water Bottle Flip Challenge,” where children and teens tried to flip partially-filled water bottles and have them land upright. Unfortunately, social media challenges have become darker lately. People, primarily teenagers, are hurting and sometimes even killing themselves. One dangerous challenge was the “ Salt and Ice Challenge” — pressing an ice cube on skin sprinkled with salt, which in some cases led to second-degree burns. “ The Hot Pepper Challenge” required eating a ghost pepper. Some teens just vomited, but others ended up in the emergency room. Finally, the horrifying “ Fire Challenge” had kids cover themselves in a flammable liquid, light themselves on fire, and then jump into a shower or pool.

More often than not the person doing the challenge is doing something funny. It is funny to watch someone freak out while the salt and ice are burning their hand or watch them cough and make funny faces while trying to swallow cinnamon. Viral challenges are often just funny videos that include an element of belonging- you see a person doing something funny and you feel compelled to try it yourself. You never knew you wondered what happens when you put 100 layers of nail polish, but you did wonder the moment you read this sentence. Viral challenges are often just an interesting or a funny experiment- their name proposes a question and your mind demands answers.

The whole concept of “ challenges” becomes a trend when people happily participate in it and make it viral until more and more people participate. One or the other challenge would be trending and there never felt any shortage on the social media. While some challenges have no purpose to serve, others push social media users to be innovative or to advice themselves about a cause which needs their attention. Over the years we’ve seen trends that include staying still, laying down, crazy dances, and pouring freezing cold water over yourself that have swept the internet. We’ve compiled a list of the top social media challenges to ever hit the net and included some of our individual favourites. Viral challenges are often an easy way to spread awareness on an important subject. The “ Ice Bucket Challenge” attempting to promote awareness of the disease ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). When people know that doing the challenge might help someone or help raise awareness, they are much more likely to take part in it. A few more examples of viral charity challenges: November (spreading awareness to different men’s health issues), #NoMakeUpSelfie (raising money for cancer research) and KONY 2012 (aimed to raise awareness about the African leader).

Attempting to grasp the motives behind the reckless behaviour of teenagers has been a frustrating endeavour for parents since the beginning of time, and many experts believe the internet has made it even worse. In the good old days, parents typically felt they could maintain control over their misbehaving teen simply by limiting the time spent with peers who were a “ bad influence.” This might be a given, but we are very likely to do what

famous people do. Even when you don't like a certain celebrity, their voice is much stronger than that of an average person and they are more likely to affect the audience. Not just a celebrity, even a famous you tuber can come up with such a challenge and make it look quite interesting.