

Social media
detrimental to a users
health assignment



Social media has given users the ability to communicate with people a world away. It also allows for them to stay in constant contact with friends and family. But is social media causing more harm than it is doing good? Social media is breaking down the way that healthy interpersonal relationships are formed. It is much easier for someone to sit behind a computer screen than to have a real time, face-to-face conversation. Not only that, but social media is also adversely affecting romantic relationships.

The constant contact can exacerbate preexisting trust issues. Although these sites seem like they have many positive aspects to them, they are causing more harm than they are doing good. Social media usage can lead to things like relationship dissatisfaction and poor interpersonal skills. Social Media: Bad for a User's health? Social media sites have recently become incredibly popular among people of all ages, especially young people, " Growth in the use of Sons has been extremely rapid; in August 2010 Backbone reported over 500 million active users, compared to 200 million users in April 2009" (Gold et al. 2).

These sites are alluring in that they offer anyone the ability to stay in constant contact with all of their friends and family no matter the distance between them. This also means that young people might develop a cross-cultural awareness that previous generations have not been able to be a part of (Intuiting and Barber 1183). These sites have been used to promote philanthropic events and aid in political elections of all kinds, but are they hurting more than helping? Although these sites seem like they bring many appealing benefits to the table, they are causing more harm than good among the people that use them.

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The active side effects, both mental and physical, include and are not limited to: depression, relationship dissatisfaction, poor interpersonal skills, and low self-esteem or self- image. The Breakdown of Interpersonal Relationships The most notable negative side effect of social media usage is the break down of the way that interpersonal relationships are formed and maintained. It used to be that two or more people, in person, formed interpersonal relationships, and the relationship grew from gradual disclosures of personal information over long periods of time.

Social media has completely thrown this out of the window with the advent of the personal information sections on most sites. Users can go to their pages and post anything and everything they want about themselves and make it readily available for the world to see. This leads people to post things that aren't necessarily true, " However, it appears that users' increased capacity for disclosure coincides with enhanced or otherwise exaggerated self-presentations" (Intuiting and Barber 1184).

This exaggeration is usually done through posting things that put the user in a positive light to anyone that sees it, "... SONS users tend to enhance their self- reservation by choosing their most attractive profile pictures and presenting themselves as having more positive emotions and better well-being than they actually do" (Intuiting and Barber 1184). These posts that include exaggerated self well being cause other users that see them to believe that life is unfair, and that other people are happier than they are (Intuiting and Barber 1184).

This sort of behavior completely destroys the trust that was previously involved with interpersonal relationships. Not only are the relationships developed online shallow, but they also lack the trust that makes them meaningful and lasting. Depression The posts discussed in the previous paragraph can lead to depression and can also cause any preexisting problems to be amplified. This is stated in Intuiting and Barber's paper, "... SONS provides a metric for social comparison that can exacerbate any preexisting tendencies users have toward low self-esteem" (Intuiting and Barber 1184).

Any user that has low self-esteem will see the posts of self-aggrandize users and they will have what little self-esteem they have lowered even further. They feel this way because the posts of other users do not depict reality but the user with low self-esteem does not see it that way. All that they see is someone, or many people, that appear far better off than they are. When they cannot attain the level of happiness they see depicted in the posts or photos, it only leads them to spiral even further into their depression.

This depression can lead these user's to become reclusive, which in turn gives them even more time to spend on social media that just leads to even more depression. The Threat to Romantic Relationships Another preexisting problem that can be exacerbated by social media usage is trust issues. This exacerbation of this problem is most evident in romantic relationships. The advent of social media has created many social obligations that did not exist before. These social obligations mean less time for a significant other.

When a significant other does not get the time they deserve, they become Jealous and social media is the perfect place to feed this Jealousy. "... Backbone may decrease relationship satisfaction by increasing Jealousy, with the potential to fall into a vicious cycle where being on Backbone exposes romantic partners to Jealousy-inducing information, which in turn compels them to search for more information on Backbone, which induces even more Jealousy' (Intuiting and Barber 1184).

When a significant other sees something on Backbone that causes Jealousy, they search for more information that causes even more Jealousy. This information could be a post or a picture of their partner with other people. This ' cycle of Jealousy leads them to be consumed by their Jealousy, and when that happens, the relationship is most likely over. Users with preexisting trust issues are at the most risk because social networking sites provide an easy way for them to make that condition even worse.

As much as they might try, these sites are so easy to get to and use that they would be ere hard to stay away from. This is evidenced by the case of Ms. H, a case study in Intuiting and Barber's article, and her long distance relationship, " Due to the long distance nature of the relationship, Backbone became the locus for these suspicions, and Ms. H reported spending many hours clicking through the pictures on her boyfriend's profile" (Intuiting and Barber 1188-1189). Ms. H became reclusive because of her fear of human interactions so she started to devote more of her time to social media usage.

When she began a long distance relationship, her time on Backbone as spent searching for things on her boyfriend's profile to become Jealous about.

Intuiting and Barber say, " Each week, she came in with more ' evidence' that he harbored romantic feelings for an ex-girlfriend and each week I attempted to strongly suggest that she cease the behaviors so we could look at the meaning behind her actions" (Intuiting and Barber 1189). This woman spent hours every week looking for reasons to become Jealous and she epitomized the ' cycle of Jealousy that Intuiting and Barber discuss.

She became so obsessed with finding this material that it consumed her and put her relationship in peril. The Bigger Issue The biggest problem that these sites cause is that they provide users the ability to avoid face-to-face interactions. Intuiting and Barber say, "... Those who tend toward disorganized and anxious attachment styles may use SONS to hold relationships at a distance by avoiding uncomfortable or emotionally threatening face-to-face conversations" (Intuiting and Barber 1187).

Although this may not seem like it is that big off problem, what needs to be seen is the big picture.

Using social media to avoid stressful face-to-face interactions might lead to a time where all interactions are done through screens. The advent of social networking sites makes it much easier for people to communicate without the stress of talking to other people in person. Greenfield has this to say about conversations, " They occur in real time, with no opportunity to think up clever or witty responses, and they require a sensitivity to voice tone, body language, and perhaps even to pheromones...

Moreover, according to the context and, indeed, the person with whom we are conversing, our own delivery will need to adapt. None of these skills are

required when chatting on a social networking site” (Greenfield 511). These sites pose a real threat to the future of unman interaction because they provide a way out of stressful personal interactions and there is not much dialogue going on about it or any ideas on how to fix the situation.

The Opposition There are those who believe that social media is not only here to stay, but that it is also useful tool in getting the word out about healthcare and, therefore, beneficial to a user’s health. In the article, “ The Role of Social Media in Recruiting for Clinical Trials in Pregnancy’, the authors define a social networking sites by saying, “ Social media is typically an online platform that can enable dialogue among individuals and online immunities, serving as a site for information dissemination and discussion” (Sheer, Chaos, and Korean 2).

Naturally, the authors decided that social media was the perfect platform for getting the word out about healthcare and health studies. Their assumption was correct, “ During these 6 months implementing recruitment through social media (December 2011-May 2012), 45 women were recruited, for a 12-fold higher rate of 7. 5 recruits per month... (Sheer, Chaos, and Korean 4)”. This was much higher than the previous rate, 0. 62 per month, that used traditional resources (Sheer, Chaos, and Korean 4).

The authors of the article, “ A systematic examination of the use of Online social networking sites for sexual health promotion”, also use social media to advocate the promotion of healthcare, “ Sons provide a medium of enormous potential for health promotion both in terms of audience reach and interactive functions that could be exploited for intervention delivery. ” (Gold

et al. 2). The authors of that article also experienced better results in their study because of the use of social media.

Does the good done in these studies really outweigh the negative side effects of social media? It is ironic to think that these authors advocate the sage of social media as a way to promote general well being when social media is the cause of many psychological disorders. They do provide examples of how social media helped them recruit people for their studies and that is commendable, but the negative side effects caused by social media usage greatly outweigh the positive things that come from a few more people joining a study about pregnancy or sexual health.

There is not a way to even measure how much good those studies have done while there are cold hard facts and studies done to prove that social media is causing a huge increase in the amount of depression in the world today. Intuiting and Barber say, “ But these social technologies also serve to deny the universal needs to at least occasionally forget or suppress distressing information and to separate from others to maintain psychological and social health” (Intuiting and Barber 1189).

Social networking sites might allow for some benefits to the user’s health, but the constant stream of information robs us of our ability to get away from information that causes us stress. Conclusion Social networking sites have the potential to change the world for good, but the truth is they are doing more harm than good to the user’s health. Although there are positive things about social media like their usage to help advocate health and studies about health, they are more of a detriment to health than a benefit.

Social networking sites are causing things like relationship dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, depression, poor interpersonal skills, and little or no healthy interpersonal relationships for those that use them. The biggest issue is that of the lack of interpersonal skills. The ability to carry on a conversation is vital in the world today. It is useful in the business world as well as personal life and social media has made it AR to easy to avoid the face-to-face conversations that are critical in building interpersonal skills.

The issues discussed in this paper effectively prove that social media is detrimental too user's health.