

Social media abstinence

The invention of social media has been transformative for both people's social and professional lives. Since its commercialisation in 1995, there has been a steady increase in the use of the internet, being readily accessible to 4.9 billion people in 2021. As technology continues to advance, an absence of social media use can seriously restrict a person's ability to expand socially and vocationally. This essay talks about people's social media use; their motivations for why they use it, their dependency on it, and how our film responds to this topic.

For referencing, I used: *'Uses and gratifications of social networking sites for bridging and bonding social capital: A comparison of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat'* (Phua, Jin and Kim, 2017). This study drew upon several social theories, primarily as suggested by the title: the *Uses and Gratifications Theory* (Katz, Gurevitch and Haas, 1974), which provides a study to why people actively pursue specific types of media- and the *'informational, social and leisure needs'* gratified by these media. The paper (Jin and Kim, 2017) tested two hypotheses using four major social networking platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. The first questions how users that interact with a particular social networking site (SNS) would differ from each other in terms of online bonding social capital and online bridging social capital. Respectively, these terms are defined as the thick relations within a social group of individuals with a shared sense of identity (sex, race, or class) and the connections between individuals across social divides (Aldrich, 2012). The second hypothesis in this study queries the relationship between SNS usage and bonding & bridging social capital through 7 characteristics: *intensity, trust, tie strength, homophily, privacy, introversion, and attention to social comparison*. The study used by Jin and Kim used 305 college students' part of a research participation for their study, using 1 to 7 Likert scales on questions about each characteristic regarding online bonding & bridging social capital of a specific SNS, to measure against their hypotheses. In our film we conducted a survey by asking randomly selected people 3 questions regarding their social media use: *'What is your main reason for social media usage?'*. *'Is social media a positive or negative thing in your life?'*. *'How long could you go without social media?'*. Most of the participants said the main reason they used social media was to keep in touch with friends, only being able to abstain from using social media for a couple of days at most. This is reflected in the theory (Jin and Kim, 2017): *'SNS users with high SNS intensity increased their bonding social capital, but not bridging social capital with increased SNS use'*. Interestingly, the older male participants in our film were less in favour of the social aspect of social media, one saying *'if he could retire, he would never use it again'* (Scrumptious Consumption., 2022). This aspect is interesting to me as it could show us how different age groups feel towards SNS. Applying the theories of Jin and Kim, these men may be seen to use SNS to gain social bridging capital by using it for work, with younger people trying to gain social bonding capital to keep in touch with their friends. Nevertheless, it is seen as an unavoidable entity. In the study (Jin and Kim, 2017), 79% of people used smartphones as the primary way of using SNS. With this technologically advanced form of media, gratification is instantly accessible in your pocket. 74% of 15–24-year-olds in the world are connected to the internet- 14% more than the rest of the world (ITU, 2021)- meaning that young people are more liable to access SNS. When the Uses and Gratifications theory was first formulated in 1974, the mass media observed in the study (Katz, Gurevitch and Haas, 1974)- television and print- wasn't as immediate as their contemporary's: meaning that older generations haven't be as exposed to an instant access to fulfil gratification and will feel less inclined to do so. This increase in accessibility also means that it is easier than ever to seek any type of media to gratify

someone's needs. It is even suggested that '*teenagers and young adults (collectively known as "millennials"*' [Jin and Kim, 2017]) use multiple SNS's simultaneously as tools for communication and information, to achieve gratification. We touch on this in our film with the ultimate fact at the end stating that the average person has 8 social media accounts (Statista, 2019). With accessibility to the internet and smartphones increasing every year (ITU, 2019, 2020), this is unlikely to change with future generations seemingly destined to follow their predecessors.

To conclude, immediate gratification is here to stay: and the use of these social networking sites to fulfil this is here to stay also. Since the revolution of the smartphone, people can bridge and bond with their peers easier than ever. Although some may actively seek it more than others, gratification through use of SNS's is almost universal, whether that gratification is achieved through; social interaction, escapism, or informative means (Katz, Gurevitch and Haas, 1974). The universality of fulfilment combined with its ease of access makes it harder to refrain from using SNS's and this difficulty is only going to increase as the younger generation grows into the old: leaving space for new consumers. The issue of not being able to abstain from social media is not a positive or negative one, ultimately it is down to the individual that uses it and the reasons for why they use it as stated in the second principle of the uses and gratifications model: '*In the mass communication process much initiative in linking gratification and media choice lies with the audience member*' (Katz, Gurevitch and Haas, 1974).

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Movie link

➔ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_qjuKqca28&list=LL&index=1