

Jack Pearce

Prof. Brad Stiles

EN281-Writing in the Disciplines

November 28th, 2023

# **Social Media Addiction**

## **Introduction**

The overuse of social media platforms may have a substantial impact on people's relationships, daily routines, and overall mental and physical health. This occurrence is often denoted as social media addiction. Recently, there has been a notable rise in the amount of time people spend using digital displays, mostly because social networking platforms have become widely popular. People might become dependent on the constant stream of notifications they receive from likes and comments due to the immediate satisfaction they provide. One may easily combat their social media addiction by establishing personal limits.

Moreover, anxiety, despair, and psychological discomfort are often seen as mental health consequences among persons in the young adult age bracket (16–25 years old). Alonzo et al. produced a thorough research report on this subject and released it in April 2020. Excessive social media use has been shown to have substantial connections with negative effects on mental well-being and sleep quality, according to researchers [2].

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a noticeable occurrence that has attracted significant attention: the appearance of "tic-like" episodes in persons who did not have any previous history of tic disorders. Most of the new referrals include functional tics,

phonic tics, or motor tics, which are mostly seen in teenage girls. Hull and Parnes provide a case study involving six teenage girls who had an abrupt start to tic-like movements. Significantly, these people had a consistent characteristic: previous exposure to a certain TikTok star before the onset of their symptoms [2].

The detrimental effects of overreliance on social media may be mitigated or eradicated through use of innovative technological advancements and ethical programming solutions devised by conscientious programmers [2].

### **Social media as a product and its impact**

Goods liability case law is increasingly acknowledging the need to classify software and other intangibles as goods. As per a summary from a California district court, it is widely recognized that the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) is applicable to software that is mass-produced, standardized, or easily available. This encompasses scenarios when alterations and supplementary services are included in the agreement. Social media firms use the term "products" to describe their offers, which include both extensively used and in compliance with recognized norms [1].

Since January 2022, social media businesses in the United States have faced over a hundred product liability lawsuits in both state and federal courts. Several instances have included youngsters who suffered injuries or fatalities due to their dependency on or improper usage of social media. These lawsuits are initiated on behalf of underage individuals who have experienced a range of mental health problems linked to their engagement with social media, such as suicidal ideation, eating disorders, intense anxiety and despair, racial discrimination,

sexual assault, and sex trafficking. The plaintiffs renounce any potential claim that may arise from the social media platform's function as a publisher or distributor of third-party material [6].

By 2021, it is estimated that 72% of Americans will be using social media, which is a substantial increase compared to the meagre 5% reported in 2005. In addition, nearly the same proportion, 95%, use social media in diverse capacities [1].

### **Mental Health Consequences**

An important finding since the start of the COVID-19 epidemic has been the presence of "tic-like" episodes in people without pre-existing tic disorders. Examine the scenario that Hull and Parnes described involving six teenage girls. These girls exhibited a cohesive purpose and have lately started to manifest tic-like motions. The duration of video consumption featuring a particular TikTok influencer prior to the onset of any symptoms. There was no indication that the occurrence of tic symptoms throughout childhood or a family history of the disorder indicated a biological susceptibility to the illness. The substantial increase in the admission of young people to children's hospitals nationwide as a result of eating disorders is a notable consequence of the pandemic [2].

In June 2021, the government of British Columbia (BC) declared its dedication to allot \$6.6 million for the purpose of financing eating disorder treatment and virtual peer support initiatives across the state. This decision was taken in light of the growing demand for such services. Abundant data suggests a strong association between the use of social media and the development of eating problems. Turner and Lefevre (2017) used a validated questionnaire to evaluate the symptoms of orthorexia nervosa in a group of 680 individuals who regularly followed social media accounts that emphasized healthy cuisine. A positive link was found

between the prevalence of orthorexia symptoms and the extent of Instagram use. This study does not include TikTok. Logrieco et al. did research to investigate this matter and made an unexpected discovery: even TikTok material that opposes anorexia might possibly have detrimental consequences. Multiple studies have investigated the correlation between media intake and eating problems [2].

The research seeks to examine the experiences of teenagers in Belgium during the lockdown period, with a special emphasis on their impressions of social media and its potential to alleviate emotions of dread and loneliness. It was shown that loneliness had a greater influence on the happiness levels of teens than anxiety. Moreover, research revealed that teenagers who experienced feelings of anxiety obtained a considerably greater amount of satisfaction while using social media, as opposed to their peers who were struggling with feelings of loneliness [2].

### **Ethical consideration for Developers**

Uncapped-use apps, which offer users uncontrolled access, have the potential to contribute to the development of addictive habits, posing a danger. Through the use of these apps, developers that prioritize ethical practices may provide customers with a two-fold level of safety. The weekly use report should be sent to the top 20% of users who exhibit the greatest frequency of logins and the longest engagement time with the application. In order to maximize outcomes, it is advisable to give priority to the uppermost 20% of the data [3].

It is important to make sure that programs with unlimited use include self-regulation features. These features could include time limits, blocking certain types of content, or not allowing the app to be opened during certain times of day. [3]. Technological variables have a significant impact on both the creation and sustenance of internet addiction. The proliferation of

portable electronic gadgets and high-speed internet connections has greatly increased the attractiveness and convenience of using the internet. An individual's addiction to the internet, social media, or gaming services is defined by a strong and constant desire to use these platforms [5]. Software developers have a vital responsibility to guarantee that their labor and the software they develop do not cause any preventable damage to anyone or anything.

### **Understanding addiction**

Individuals with social media addiction exhibit symptoms characterized by an excessive preoccupation with online social networks, a strong compulsion to use these platforms despite potential negative consequences, and a consistent behavioral pattern in which these platforms take over an individual's life, excluding other aspects of their existence. Social media addiction, like other drug use disorders, may manifest in several manifestations. These factors include changes in emotional state (social media usage can improve one's mood), excessive focus on social media (both in behavior and thinking), growing dependence on social media (a tendency to use it more often), withdrawal symptoms (when social media usage is significantly reduced or stopped), conflicts in relationships caused by social media use, and the return to excessive social media usage after a period of abstaining [4].

Social media algorithms require constant modifications to maintain user interest and promote frequent visits. This is accomplished by inducing the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter linked to feelings of positivity. Validation received on social networking sites, such as likes, comments, or other types of interaction, induces the release of dopamine in the brain. The human brain undergoes adaptation to a constant flow of dopamine and therefore encounters withdrawal symptoms when it stops, which may possibly result in the formation of

addiction. Overindulging in social media has the ability to negatively impact an individual's self-esteem, interpersonal connections, and immediate surroundings [8].

### **Protecting Users**

Based on theoretical viewpoints, the frequent and excessive use of electronic devices by children throughout the day might potentially hinder their developmental growth. This is in contrast to participating in activities that are recognized to be advantageous for their comprehensive development and progress. Instances of such endeavors include exchanges between parents and children, partaking in the act of reading aloud, engaging in athletic endeavors, and providing sufficient rest. Individuals who dedicate more time to online activities tend to possess superior skills in interpersonal communication. likely to engage in the required amount of physical exercise or kindly contemplate the idea of indulging in a little respite or partaking in a short interval of relaxation. Using screens at the age of 11 has been correlated with an increased probability of engaging in sedentary activities and being overweight by the age of 14. The existing study offers data indicating that excessive screen usage may be linked to possible adverse effects on cognitive and behavioral development, as well as academic challenges [7].

Individual and environmental factors may affect a child's and their family's internet usage. This finding supports the ecological systems notion that both elements affect children's development. When children externalize undesirable behaviors, parents may allow unfettered electronic device usage to reduce tantrums. Lower-income and black children may use electronic gadgets more due to time and financial constraints. Internet use by non-white kids suggests they are trying to express their race or ethnicity and connect with peers. Suggest that making electronic gadgets more accessible for impaired children may lessen social isolation from non-

disabled peers. Found that parents are crucial in teaching children healthy habits. Limiting technology use and prioritizing literacy may achieve this. Thus, kids are more inclined to play outside and read independently, and they are less likely to overuse the internet. The relationship between internet usage and parenting is unclear [7].

Electronic gadgets and internet technologies do not improve mental wellness. Comprehensive aid in other areas of development for young adolescents who use internet technologies may help offset the frequently documented unfavorable correlations. This includes encouraging regular physical exercise, predictable sleep habits, and frequent parent-child interaction. Additionally, vulnerable groups' connection dynamics may vary depending on internet technology. How much their parents were active in early reading activities and restricted their children's television intake may affect how much they use the internet in the future [7].

### **Negative Impact on Youth**

The use of social media among university students in the digital age has been linked to a higher probability of encountering sleep disturbances. Nevertheless, the exact correlation between these two occurrences is still ambiguous. An excessive preoccupation with social media platforms might possibly lead to burnout and social media fatigue (SMF). Social media fatigue (SMF) is a syndrome characterized by the subjective and negative feelings of tiredness and burnout that may result from extended use of social media platforms. If university students continue to spend an excessive amount of time on social media platforms, it may have a detrimental effect on their academic performance and lead to a decline in their use of these sites. This is corroborated by an increasing number of students who have documented the occurrence of social media fatigue (SMF) and have articulated a desire to decrease their use. Social media addiction (SMA) is a behavioral manifestation that results from the overuse of social media

platforms. The research found that the worldwide prevalence of spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is 5%, with a confidence interval of 95% ranging from 3% to 7%. Emerging research suggests that people with SMA often encounter decreased self-esteem, lowered life satisfaction, compromised mental well-being, and worse academic performance. Furthermore, it is a growing issue among college students. The general public is increasingly worried about the negative effects of overdependence on social media platforms, especially among college students, because of their extensive use. The overuse of these platforms is becoming more and more evident. Individuals are increasingly recognizing the connection between using social media and experiencing sleep disruptions. Insufficient sleep is a common problem found among college students [9].

### **Participation Inconsistency**

The Fear of Missing Out phenomenon among Chinese university students was assessed using an instrument produced by Li et al., which is the Chinese version specifically designed for this purpose. This version was designed to follow established worldwide requirements. Each issue is assessed using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement. The current investigation produced a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of 0.924 for the Fear of Missing Out construct. The people were categorized into two groups for statistical analysis based on their median Fear of Missing Out score. One group included people who had a high score ( $\geq 32$ ,  $n = 1398$ ), while the other group comprised those who obtained a low score ( $< 32$ ,  $n = 1346$ ) [9].

### **Conclusion**



Upon analyzing the multitude of hazards linked to the excessive use of social media, it becomes clear that there is an urgent need to practice self-control and limit this obsessive conduct. The excessive reliance on social media by teenagers might have adverse consequences for their academic performance, social behavior, and interpersonal connections. The overutilization of social media may result in a range of hazards, such as sexting, stalking, cyberbullying, privacy infringements, and improper technological utilization. Establishing guidelines to safeguard teenagers from the dangers of social media addiction is crucial, considering the substantial hazards it entails.

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