

## Social media

**Social media** are computer-mediated technologies that allow the creating and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. It can be further defined as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The variety of stand-alone and built-in social media services currently available introduces challenges of definition. However, there are some common features.<sup>[1]</sup>

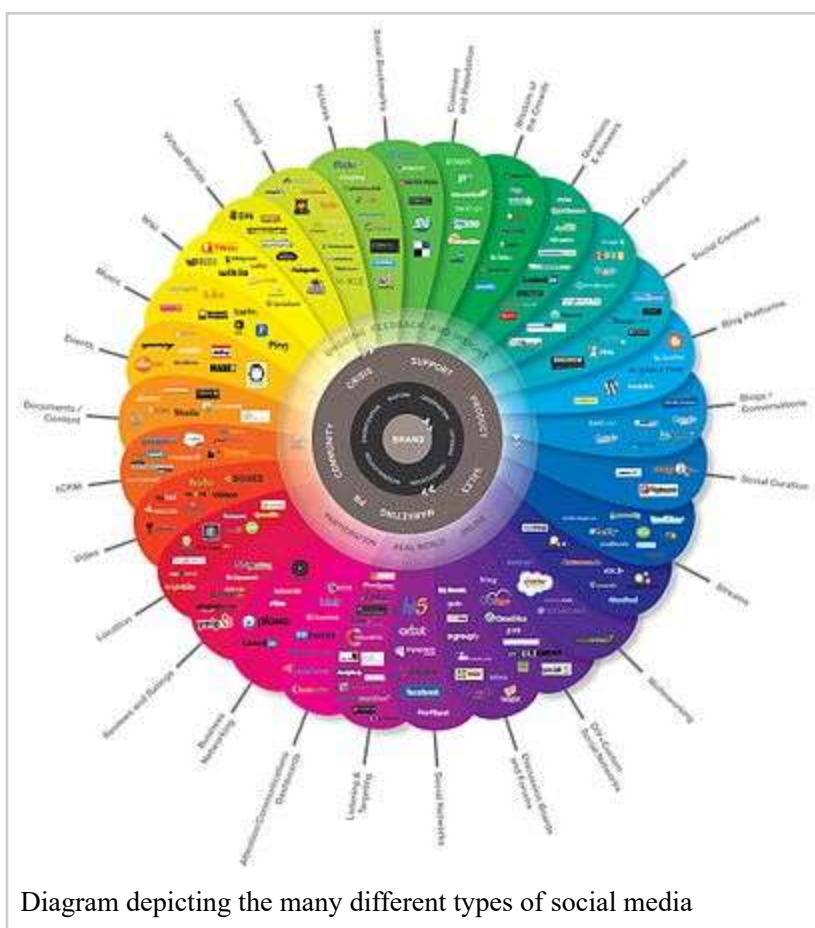
1. Social media are interactive Web 2.0 Internet-based applications.<sup>[1][2]</sup>
2. User-generated content, such as text posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and data generated through all online interactions, are the lifeblood of social media.<sup>[1][2]</sup>
3. Users create service-specific profiles for the website or app that are designed and maintained by the social media organization.<sup>[1][3]</sup>
4. Social media facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals and/or groups.<sup>[1][3]</sup>



A soldier views an armed forces-oriented Facebook page on a mobile device.

Social media use web-based and mobile technologies on smartphones and tablet computers to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities and organizations can share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content or pre-made content posted online. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between businesses, organizations, communities and individuals.<sup>[4]</sup> Social media changes the way individuals and large organizations communicate. These changes are the focus of the emerging field of technoself studies. In America, a survey reported that 84 percent of adolescents in America have a Facebook account.<sup>[5]</sup>

Social media differ from paper-based or traditional electronic media such as TV broadcasting in many ways, including quality,<sup>[6]</sup> reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence. Social media operate in a dialogic transmission system (many sources to many



receivers).<sup>[7]</sup> This is in contrast to traditional media which operates under a monologic transmission model (one source to many receivers), such as a paper newspaper which is delivered to many subscribers. Some of the most popular social media websites are Facebook (and its associated Facebook Messenger), WhatsApp, Tumblr, Instagram, Twitter, Baidu Tieba, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Gab, Google+, YouTube, Viber, Snapchat, Weibo and WeChat. These social media websites have more than 100,000,000 registered users.

Observers have noted a range of positive and negative impacts from social media use. Social media can help to improve individuals' sense of connectedness with real and/or online communities and social media can be an effective communications (or marketing) tool for corporations, entrepreneurs, nonprofit organizations, including advocacy groups and political parties and governments. At the same time, concerns have been raised about possible links between heavy social media use and depression, and even the issues of cyberbullying, online harassment and "trolling". Currently, about half of young adults have been cyberbullied and of those, 20 percent said that they have been cyberbullied on a regular basis.<sup>[8]</sup> Another survey was carried out among 7th grade students in America which is known as the Precaution Process Adoption Model. According to this study 69 percent of 7th grade students claim to have experienced cyberbullying and they also said that it is worse than face to face bullying.<sup>[9]</sup> According to Nielsen, Internet users continue to spend more time on social media sites than on any other type of site. At the same time, the total time spent on social media sites in the U.S. across PCs as well as on mobile devices increased by 99 percent to 121 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 66 billion minutes in July 2011.<sup>[10]</sup> For content contributors, the benefits of participating in social media have gone beyond simply social sharing to building reputation and bringing in career opportunities and monetary income.<sup>[11]</sup>

Over 60% of 13 to 17-year-olds have at least one profile on social media, with many spending more than two hours a day on social networking sites.<sup>[12]</sup>

The variety and evolving stand-alone and built-in social media services introduces a challenge of definition.<sup>[1]</sup> The idea that social media are defined by their ability to bring people together has been seen as too broad a definition, as this would suggest that the telegraph and telephone were also social media – not the technologies scholars are intending to describe.<sup>[13]</sup> The terminology is unclear, with some referring to social media as social networks.<sup>[3]</sup>

A 2015 paper<sup>[1]</sup> reviewed the prominent literature in the area and identified four commonalities unique to then-current social media services:

1. social media are Web 2.0 Internet-based applications,<sup>[1][2]</sup>
2. user-generated content (UGC) is the lifeblood of the social media organism,<sup>[1][2]</sup>
3. users create service-specific profiles for the site or app that are designed and maintained by the social media organization,<sup>[1][3]</sup>
4. social media facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals and/or groups.<sup>[1][3]</sup>

In 2016, Merriam-Webster defined social media as "Forms of electronic communication (such as Web sites) through which people create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, etc."<sup>[14]</sup>

The term social media is usually used to describe social networking sites such as:

1. Facebook – an online social networking site that allows users to create their personal profiles, share

- photos and videos, and communicate with other users
2. Twitter – an internet service that allows users to post "tweets" for their followers to see updates in real-time
  3. LinkedIn – a networking website for the business community that allows users to create professional profiles, post resumes, and communicate with other professionals and job-seekers.
  4. Pinterest – an online community that allows users to display photos of items found on the web by "pinning" them and sharing ideas with others.<sup>[15]</sup>
  5. Snapchat – an app on mobile devices that allows users to send and share photos of themselves doing their daily activities.<sup>[16]</sup>

## Classification

Social media technologies take many different forms including blogs, business networks, enterprise social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, products/services review, social bookmarking, social gaming, social networks, video sharing, and virtual worlds.<sup>[17]</sup> The development of social media started off with simple platforms such as sixdegrees.com.<sup>[18]</sup> Unlike instant messaging clients such as ICQ and AOL's AIM, or chat clients like IRC, iChat or Chat Television, sixdegrees.com was the first online business that was created for real people, using their real names. However, the first social networks were short-lived because their users lost interest. The Social Network Revolution has led to the rise of the networking sites. Research<sup>[19]</sup> shows that the audience spends 22 percent of their time on social networking sites, thus proving how popular social media platforms have become. This increase is because of the smart phones that are now in the daily lives of most humans.<sup>[20]</sup>

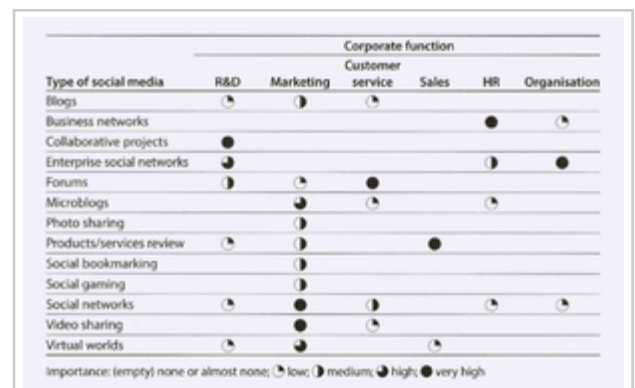


This is the snapchat logo that appears on mobile devices.

## Distinction from other media

### Virality

Some social media sites have greater potential for content that is posted there to spread *virality* over social networks. This is an analogy to the concept of a viral infectious disease in biology, some of which can spread rapidly from an infected person to another person. In a social media context, content or websites that are "viral" (or which "go viral") are those with a greater likelihood that users will reshare content posted (by another user) to their social network, leading to further sharing. In some cases, posts containing controversial content (e.g., Kim Kardashian's nude photos that "broke the Internet" and crashed servers) or fast-breaking news have been rapidly shared and re-shared by huge numbers of users. Many social media sites provide specific functionality to help users reshare content – for example, Twitter's retweet button, Pinterest's pin function, Facebook's share option or Tumblr's reblog function. Businesses have a particular interest in viral marketing tactics because such a campaign can achieve widespread advertising coverage (particularly if the "viral" reposting itself makes the news) for a fraction of the cost of a traditional marketing campaign (e.g., billboard ads, television commercials,



Classification of social media and overview of how important different types of social media (e.g. blogs) are for each of a company's operational functions (e.g. marketing)<sup>[17]</sup>

magazine ads, etc.) Nonprofit organisations and activists may have similar interests in posting content online with the hopes that it goes viral. The social news website Slashdot sometimes has news stories that, once posted on its website, "go viral"; the Slashdot effect refers to this situation.

## Mobile use

Mobile social media refers to the use of social media on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablet computers. This is a group of mobile marketing applications that allow the creation, exchange and circulation of user-generated content.<sup>[21]</sup> Due to the fact that mobile social media run on mobile devices, they differ from traditional social media by incorporating new factors such as the current location of the user (location-sensitivity) or the time delay between sending and receiving messages (time-sensitivity). According to Andreas Kaplan, mobile social media applications can be differentiated among four types:<sup>[21]</sup>



Young people have high usage rates of smartphones, which enables this demographic to be significant users of social media websites.

1. *Space-timers* (location and time sensitive): Exchange of messages with relevance mostly for one specific location at one specific point in time (e.g. Facebook Places; Foursquare)
2. *Space-locators* (only location sensitive): Exchange of messages, with relevance for one specific location, which are tagged to a certain place and read later by others (e.g. Yelp; Qype, Tumblr, Fishbrain)
3. *Quick-timers* (only time sensitive): Transfer of traditional social media applications to mobile devices to increase immediacy (e.g. posting Twitter messages or Facebook status updates)
4. *Slow-timers* (neither location, nor time sensitive): Transfer of traditional social media applications to mobile devices (e.g. watching a YouTube video or reading/editing a Wikipedia article)

## Business potential

Although traditional social media offer a variety of opportunities for companies in a wide range of business sectors, economic-sector mobile social-media makes use of the location- and time-sensitive aspects of social media in order to engage in marketing research, communication, sales promotions/discounts, and relationship development/loyalty programs.<sup>[21]</sup>

- Marketing research: Mobile social media applications offer data about offline consumer movements at a level of detail heretofore limited to online companies. Any firm can know the exact time at which a customer entered one of its outlets, as well as comments made during the visit.<sup>[21]</sup>
- Communication: Mobile social media communication takes two forms: company-to-consumer (in which a company may establish a connection to a consumer based on its location and provide reviews about locations nearby) and user-generated content. For example, McDonald's offered \$5 and \$10 gift-cards to 100 users randomly selected among those checking in at one of its restaurants. This promotion increased check-ins by 33% (from 2,146 to 2,865), resulted in over 50 articles and blog posts, and prompted several hundred thousand news feeds and Twitter messages.<sup>[21]</sup>
- Sales promotions and discounts: Although customers have had to use printed coupons in the past, mobile social media allows companies to tailor promotions to specific users at specific times. For example, when launching its California-Cancun service, Virgin America offered users who checked in through Loopt at one of three designated Border Grill taco trucks in San Francisco and Los Angeles between 11 a.m. and 3

p.m. on August 31, 2010, two tacos for \$1 and two flights to Mexico for the price of one.<sup>[21]</sup>

- Relationship development and loyalty programs: In order to increase long-term relationships with customers, companies can construct loyalty programs that allow customers who check-in regularly at a location to earn discounts or perks. For example, American Eagle Outfitters remunerates such customers with a tiered 10%, 15%, or 20% discount on their total purchase.<sup>[21]</sup>
- e-Commerce: Social media sites are increasingly implementing marketing-friendly strategies, creating platforms that are mutually beneficial for users, businesses, and the networks themselves in the popularity and accessibility of e-commerce, or online purchases. Mobile social media applications such as Amazon.com and Pinterest have started to influence an upward trend in the popularity and accessibility of e-commerce, or online purchases.<sup>[22]</sup>

E-commerce businesses may refer to social media as consumer-generated media (CGM). A common thread running through all definitions of social media is a blending of technology and social interaction for the co-creation of value.

People obtain valuable information, education, news, and other data from electronic and print media. Social media are distinct from industrial or traditional media such as newspapers, magazines, television, and film as they are comparatively inexpensive and accessible. They enable anyone (even private individuals) to publish or access information. Industrial media generally require significant resources to publish information as in most cases the articles go through many revisions before being published. This process adds to the cost and the resulting market price.

Originally social media was only used by individuals but now it is used by businesses, charities and also in politics.

One characteristic shared by both social and industrial media is the capability to reach small or large audiences; for example, either a blog post or a television show may reach no people or millions of people.<sup>[23]</sup> Some of the properties that help describe the differences between social and industrial media are:

1. Quality: In industrial (traditional) publishing—mediated by a publisher—the typical range of quality is substantially narrower than in niche, unmediated markets. The main challenge posed by content in social media sites is the fact that the distribution of quality has high variance: from very high-quality items to low-quality, sometimes abusive content.<sup>[6]</sup>
2. Reach: Both industrial and social media technologies provide scale and are capable of reaching a global audience. Industrial media, however, typically use a centralized framework for organization, production, and dissemination, whereas social media are by their very nature more decentralized, less hierarchical, and distinguished by multiple points of production and utility.
3. Frequency: The number of times an advertisement is displayed on social media platforms.
4. Accessibility: The means of production for industrial media are typically government and/or corporate (privately owned); social media tools are generally available to the public at little or no cost.
5. Usability: Industrial media production typically requires specialized skills and training. Conversely, most social media production requires only modest reinterpretation of existing skills; in theory, anyone with access can operate the means of social media production.
6. Immediacy: The time lag between communications produced by industrial media can be long (days, weeks, or even months) compared to social media (which can be capable of virtually instantaneous responses).
7. Permanence: Industrial media, once created, cannot be altered (once a magazine article is printed and distributed, changes cannot be made to that same article) whereas social media can be altered almost



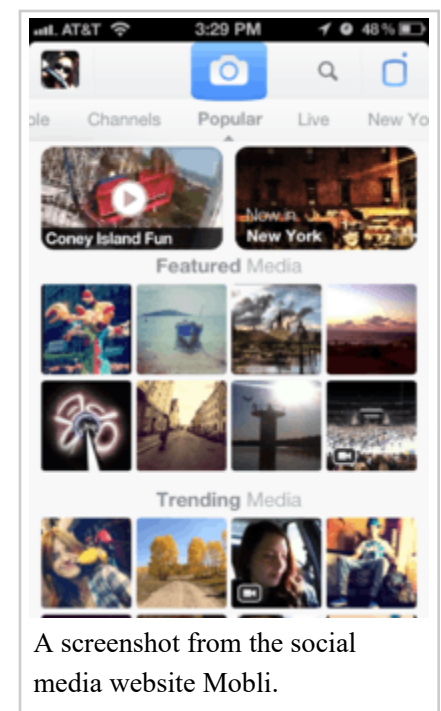
instantaneously by comments or editing.

Community media constitute a hybrid of industrial and social media. Though community-owned, some community radio, TV, and newspapers are run by professionals and some by amateurs. They use both social and industrial media frameworks. Social media have also been recognized for the way they have changed how public relations professionals conduct their jobs.<sup>[24]</sup> They have provided an open arena where people are free to exchange ideas on companies, brands,<sup>[25]</sup> and products. As stated by Doc Searls and David Wagner, two authorities on the effects of Internet on marketing, advertising, and PR, "The best of the people in PR are not PR types at all. They understand that there aren't censors, they're the company's best conversationalists."<sup>[26]</sup> Social media provides an environment where users and PR professionals can converse, and where PR professionals can promote their brand and improve their company's image by listening and responding to what the public is saying about their product.

## Business performance

Social media have a strong influence on business activities and business performance. There are four channels by which social media resources are transformed into business performance capabilities:<sup>[27]</sup>

1. **Social capital:** represents the extent to which social media affects firms' relationships with society and increase corporate social performance capabilities.
2. **Revealed preferences:** represents the extent to which social media exposes customers' likings (e.g., "likes" and followers) and increase financial capabilities (e.g., stock price, revenue, profit).
3. **Social marketing:** represents the extent to which social marketing resources (e.g., online conversations, sharing links, online presence) are used to increase financial capabilities (e.g., sales, acquisition of new customers).
4. **Social corporate networking:** Social corporate networking refers to the informal ties and linkages of corporate staff through social networks. Social corporate networking can increase operational performance capabilities.



A screenshot from the social media website Mobli.

There are four tools that engage experts, customers, suppliers, and employees in the development of products and services using social media. Companies can use these tools to improve their business capacity and performance.<sup>[28]</sup>

1. **Customer relationship management**
2. **Innovation**
3. **Training**
4. **Knowledge management**

## Management

There is an increasing trend towards using social media monitoring tools that allow marketers and companies to search, track, and analyze online conversations on the Web about their brand or products or about related topics

of interest.<sup>[29][30]</sup> This can be useful in public relations management and advertising campaign tracking, allowing the user to measure return on investment, competitor-auditing, and general public engagement. Tools range from free, basic applications to subscription-based, more in-depth tools. Social media tracking also enables companies to respond quickly to online posts that criticize their product or service. By responding quickly to critical online posts, and helping the user to resolve the concerns, this helps the company to lessen the negative effects that online complaints can have about company product or service sales. In the US, for example, if a customer criticizes a major hotel chain's cleanliness or service standards on a social media website, a company representative will usually quickly be alerted to this critical post, so that the company representative can go online and express concern for the sub-par service and offer the complaining person a coupon or discount on their next purchase, plus a promise to forward their concerns to the hotel manager so that the problem will not be repeated.

The "honeycomb framework" defines how social media services focus on some or all of seven functional building blocks.<sup>[4]</sup> These building blocks help explain the engagement needs of the social media audience. For instance, LinkedIn users are thought to care mostly about identity, reputation, and relationships, whereas YouTube's primary features are sharing,<sup>[31]</sup> conversations, groups, and reputation. Many companies build their own social "containers" that attempt to link the seven functional building blocks around their brands. These are private communities that engage people around a more narrow theme, as in around a particular brand, vocation or hobby, rather than social media containers such as Google+, Facebook, and Twitter. PR departments face significant challenges in dealing with viral negative sentiment directed at organizations or individuals on social media platforms (dubbed "sentimentitis"), which may be a reaction to an announcement or event.<sup>[32]</sup> In a 2011 article,<sup>[4]</sup> Jan H. Kietzmann, Kristopher Hermkens, Ian P. McCarthy and Bruno S. Silvestre describe the honeycomb relationship as "present[ing] a framework that defines social media by using *seven functional building blocks*: identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups."

The elements of the honeycomb framework include:

- **Identity:** This block represents the extent to which users reveal their identities in a social media setting. This can include disclosing information such as name, age, gender, profession, location, and also information that portrays users in certain ways.<sup>[4]</sup>
- **Conversations:** This block represents the extent to which users communicate with other users in a social media setting. Many social media sites are designed primarily to facilitate conversations among individuals and groups. These conversations happen for all sorts of reasons. People tweet, blog, make online comments and send messages to other users to meet new like-minded people, to find a romantic partner, to build their self-esteem, or to be on the cutting edge of new ideas or trending topics. Yet others see social media as a way of making their message heard and positively impacting humanitarian causes, environmental problems, economic issues, or political debates.<sup>[4]</sup>
- **Sharing:** This block represents the extent to which users exchange, distribute, and receive content, ranging from a short text post to a link or a digital photo. The term 'social' implies that exchanges between people are crucial. In many cases, however, sociality is about the objects that mediate these ties between people—the reasons why they meet online and associate with each other.<sup>[4]</sup>
- **Presence:** This block represents the extent to which users can know if other users are accessible. It includes knowing where others are, in the virtual world and/or in the real world, and whether they are available.<sup>[4]</sup> Some social media sites have icons that indicate when other users are online.
- **Relationships:** This block represents the extent to which users can be related or linked up to other users. Two or more users have some form of association that leads them to converse, share objects of sociality, send texts or messages, meet up, or simply just list each other as a friend or fan.<sup>[4]</sup>

- **Reputation:** This block represents the extent to which users can identify the standing of others, including themselves, in a social media setting. Reputation can have different meanings on social media platforms. In most cases, reputation is a matter of trust, but because information technologies are not yet good at determining such highly qualitative criteria, social media sites rely on 'mechanical Turks': tools that automatically aggregate user-generated information to determine trustworthiness.<sup>[4]</sup> Reputation management is another aspect and use of social media.
- **Groups:** This block represents the extent to which users can form communities and sub-communities of people with similar backgrounds, demographics or interests. The more 'social' a network becomes, the wider the group of friends, followers, and contacts can be developed.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Building "social authority" and vanity

Social media becomes effective through a process called "building social authority". One of the foundation concepts in social media has become that you cannot completely control your message through social media but rather you can simply begin to participate in the "conversation" expecting that you can achieve a significant influence in that conversation.<sup>[33]</sup> However, this conversation participation must be cleverly executed because although people are resistant to marketing in general, they are even more resistant to direct or overt marketing through social media platforms. This may seem counterintuitive but it is the main reason building social authority with credibility is so important. A marketer can generally not expect people to be receptive to a marketing message in and of itself. In the Edelman Trust Barometer report<sup>[34]</sup> in 2008, the majority (58%) of the respondents reported they most trusted company or product information coming from "people like me" inferred to be information from someone they trusted. In the 2010 Trust Report,<sup>[35]</sup> the majority switched to 64% preferring their information from industry experts and academics. According to Inc. Technology's Brent Leary, "This loss of trust, and the accompanying turn towards experts and authorities, seems to be coinciding with the rise of social media and networks."<sup>[36][37]</sup>

## Data mining

*Main article: Social media mining*

Social media "mining" is a type of data mining, a technique of analyzing data to detect patterns. Social media mining is a process of representing, analyzing, and extracting actionable patterns from data collected from people's activities on social media. Social media mining introduces basic concepts and principal algorithms suitable for investigating massive social media data; it discusses theories and methodologies from different disciplines such as computer science, data mining, machine learning, social network analysis, network science, sociology, ethnography, statistics, optimization, and mathematics. It encompasses the tools to formally represent, measure, model, and mine meaningful patterns from large-scale social media data.<sup>[38]</sup>

## Global usage

According to the article "The Emerging Role of Social Media in Political and Regime Change" by Rita Safranek, the Middle East and North Africa region has one of the most youthful populations in the world, with people under 25 making up between 35-45% of the population in each country. They make up the majority of social media users, including about 17 million Facebook users, 25,000 Twitter accounts and 40,000 active blogs, according to the Arab Advisors Group.<sup>[39]</sup>



## Most popular services

This is a list of the leading social networks based on number of active user accounts as of September 2016.<sup>[40]</sup>

1. Facebook: 1,712,000,000 users.
2. WhatsApp 1,000,000,000 users.
3. Facebook Messenger: 1,000,000,000 users.
4. QQ: 899,000,000 users.
5. WeChat: 806,000,000 users.
6. QZone: 652,000,000 users.
7. Tumblr: 555,000,000 users.
8. Instagram: 500,000,000 users.
9. Twitter: 313,000,000 users.
10. Baidu Tieba: 300,000,000 users.
11. Skype: 300,000,000 users.
12. Sina Weibo: 282,000,000 users.
13. Viber: 249,000,000 users.
14. Line: 218,000,000 users.
15. Snapchat: 200,000,000 users.



Social media websites are popular on mobile platforms such as smartphones.

## Effects of usage for news purposes

Just as television turned a nation of people who *listened* to media content into *watchers* of media content, the emergence of social media has created a nation of media content creators. According to 2011 Pew Research data, nearly 80% of American adults are online and nearly 60% of them use social networking sites.<sup>[41]</sup> More Americans get their news via the Internet than from newspapers or radio, as well as three-fourths who say they get news from e-mail or social media sites updates, according to a report published by CNN. The survey suggests that Facebook and Twitter make news a more participatory experience than before as people share news articles and comment on other people's posts. According to CNN, in 2010 75% of people got their news forwarded through e-mail or social media posts, whereas 37% of people shared a news item via Facebook or Twitter.<sup>[42]</sup> In the United States, 81% of people say they look online for news of the weather, first and foremost. National news at 73%, 52% for sports news, and 41% for entertainment or celebrity news. Based on this study, done for the Pew Center, two-thirds of the sample's online news users were younger than 50, and 30% were younger than 30. The survey involved tracking daily the habits of 2,259 adults 18 or older.<sup>[43]</sup> Thirty-three percent of young adults get news from social networks. Thirty-four percent watched TV news and 13% read print or digital content. Nineteen percent of Americans got news from Facebook, Google+, or LinkedIn. Thirty-six percent of those who get news from social network got it yesterday from survey. More than 36% of Twitter users use accounts to follow news organizations or journalists. Nineteen percent of users say they got information from news organizations of journalists. TV remains most popular source of news, but audience is aging (only 34% of young people).

Of those younger than 25, 29% said they got no news yesterday either digitally or traditional news platforms. Only 5% under 30 said they follow news about political figures and events in DC. Only 14% of respondents could answer all four questions about which party controls the House, current unemployment rate, what nation Angela Merkel leads, and which presidential candidate favors taxing higher-income Americans. Facebook and Twitter now pathways to news, but are not replacements for traditional ones. Seventy percent get social media news from friends and family on Facebook.<sup>[44]</sup>

Social media fosters communication. An Internet research company, PewResearch Center, claims that "more than half of internet users (52%) use two or more of the social media sites measured (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest) to communicate with their family or friends".<sup>[45]</sup> For children, using social media sites can help promote creativity, interaction, and learning. It can also help them with homework and class work.<sup>[46]</sup> Moreover, social media enable them to stay connected with their peers, and help them to interact with each other. Some can get involved with developing fundraising campaigns and political events. However, it can impact social skills due to the absence of face-to-face contact.<sup>[47]</sup> Social media can affect mental health of teens.<sup>[48]</sup> Teens who use Facebook frequently and especially who are susceptible may become more narcissistic, antisocial, and aggressive. Teens become strongly influenced by advertising, and it influences buying habits. Since the creation of Facebook in 2004, it has become a distraction and a way to waste time for many users.<sup>[49]</sup> A head teacher in the United Kingdom commented in 2015 that social media caused more stress to teenage children than examinations, with constant interaction and monitoring by peers ending the past practice where what pupils did in the evening or at weekends was separate from the arguments and peer pressure at school.<sup>[50]</sup>

In a 2014 study, high school students ages 18 and younger were examined in an effort to find their preference for receiving news. Based on interviews with 61 teenagers, conducted from December 2007 to February 2011, most of the teen participants reported reading print newspapers only "sometimes," with fewer than 10% reading them daily. The teenagers instead reported learning about current events from social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and blogs.<sup>[51]</sup> Another study showed that social media users read a set of news that is different from what newspaper editors feature in the print press.<sup>[52]</sup> Using nanotechnology as an example, a study was conducted that<sup>[53]</sup> studied tweets from Twitter and found that some 41% of the discourse about nanotechnology focused on its negative impacts, suggesting that a portion of the public may be concerned with how various forms of nanotechnology are used in the future. Although optimistic-sounding and neutral-sounding tweets were equally likely to express certainty or uncertainty, the pessimistic tweets were nearly twice as likely to appear certain of an outcome than uncertain. These results imply the possibility of a preconceived negative perception of many news articles associated with nanotechnology. Alternatively, these results could also imply that posts of a more pessimistic nature that are also written with an air of certainty are more likely to be shared or otherwise permeate groups on Twitter. Similar biases need to be considered when the utility of new media is addressed, as the potential for human opinion to over-emphasize any particular news story is greater despite the general improvement in addressed potential uncertainty and bias in news articles than in traditional media.<sup>[54]</sup>

On October 2, 2013, the most common hashtag throughout the United States was "#governmentshutdown", as well as ones focusing on political parties, Obama, and healthcare. Most news sources have Twitter, and Facebook, pages, like CNN and the New York Times, providing links to their online articles, getting an increased readership. Additionally, several college news organizations and administrators have Twitter pages as a way to share news and connect to students.<sup>[55]</sup> According to "Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2013",<sup>[56]</sup> in the US, among those who use social media to find news, 47% of these people are under 45 years old, and 23% are above 45 years old. However social media as a main news gateway does not follow the same pattern across countries. For example, in this report, in Brazil, 60% of the respondents said social media was one of the five most important ways to find news online, 45% in Spain, 17% in the UK, 38% in Italy, 14% in France, 22% in Denmark, 30% in the U.S., and 12% in Japan.<sup>[56]</sup> Moreover, there are differences among countries about commenting on news in social networks, 38% of the respondents in Brazil said they commented on news in social network in a week. These percentages are 21% in the U.S. and 10% in the UK. The authors argued that differences among countries may be due to culture difference rather than different levels of access to technical tools.<sup>[56]</sup>

## History and memory effects

News media and television journalism have been instrumental in the shaping of American collective memory for much of the twentieth century.<sup>[57][58]</sup> Indeed, since the United States' colonial era, news media has influenced collective memory and discourse about national development and trauma. In many ways, mainstream journalists have maintained an authoritative voice as the storytellers of the American past. Their documentary style narratives, detailed exposes, and their positions in the present make them prime sources for public memory. Specifically, news media journalists have shaped collective memory on nearly every major national event – from the deaths of social and political figures to the progression of political hopefuls. Journalists provide elaborate descriptions of commemorative events in U.S. history and contemporary popular cultural sensations. Many Americans learn the significance of historical events and political issues through news media, as they are presented on popular news stations.<sup>[59]</sup> However, journalistic influence is growing less important, whereas social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, provide a constant supply of alternative news sources for users.

As social networking becomes more popular among older and younger generations, sites such as Facebook and YouTube, gradually undermine the traditionally authoritative voices of news media. For example, American citizens contest media coverage of various social and political events as they see fit, inserting their voices into the narratives about America's past and present and shaping their own collective memories.<sup>[60][61]</sup> An example of this is the public explosion of the Trayvon Martin shooting in Sanford, Florida. News media coverage of the incident was minimal until social media users made the story recognizable through their constant discussion of the case. Approximately one month after the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin, its online coverage by everyday Americans garnered national attention from mainstream media journalists, in turn exemplifying media activism. In some ways, the spread of this tragic event through alternative news sources parallels that of the Emmitt Till – whose murder became a national story after it circulated African American and Communists newspapers. Social media was also influential in the widespread attention given to the revolutionary outbreaks in the Middle East and North Africa during 2011.<sup>[62][63][64]</sup> However, there is some debate about the extent to which social media facilitated this kind of change.<sup>[65]</sup> Another example of this shift is in the ongoing Kony 2012 campaign, which surfaced first on YouTube and later garnered a great amount of attention from mainstream news media journalists. These journalists now monitor social media sites to inform their reports on the movement. Lastly, in the past couple of presidential elections, the use of social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter were used to predict election results. U.S. President Barack Obama was more liked on Facebook than his opponent Mitt Romney and it was found by a study done by Oxford Institute Internet Experiment that more people liked to tweet about comments of President Obama rather than Romney.<sup>[66]</sup>

## Criticisms

Criticisms of social media range from criticisms of the ease of use of specific platforms and their capabilities, disparity of information available, issues with trustworthiness and reliability of information presented,<sup>[68]</sup> the impact of social media use on an individual's concentration,<sup>[69]</sup>

ownership of media content, and the meaning of interactions created by social media. Although some social media platforms offer users the opportunity to cross-post simultaneously, some social network platforms have been criticized for poor interoperability between platforms, which leads to the creation of information silos, viz. isolated pockets of data contained in one social media platform.<sup>[70]</sup> However, it is also argued that social media

**We worry that social media is kind of the virtual bathhouse**— *Dr. Lynn Fitzgibbons, an infectious disease physician Santa Barbara County Public Health Department*<sup>[67]</sup>

have positive effects such as allowing the democratization of the Internet<sup>[71]</sup> while also allowing individuals to advertise themselves and form friendships.<sup>[72]</sup> Others<sup>[73]</sup> have noted that the term "social" cannot account for technological features of a platform alone, hence the level of sociability should be determined by the actual performances of its users. There has been a dramatic decrease in face-to-face interactions as more and more social media platforms have been introduced with the threat of cyber-bullying and online sexual predators being more prevalent.<sup>[74]</sup> Social media may expose children to images of alcohol, tobacco, and sexual behaviors.<sup>[75]</sup> In regards to cyber-bullying, it has been proven that individuals who have no experience with cyber-bullying often have a better well-being than individuals who have been bullied online.<sup>[76]</sup>

Twitter is increasingly a target of heavy activity of marketers. Their actions, focused on gaining massive numbers of followers, include use of advanced scripts and manipulation techniques that distort the prime idea of social media by abusing human trustfulness.<sup>[77]</sup> Twitter also promotes social connections among students. It can be used to enhance communication building and critical thinking. Domizi (2013) utilised Twitter in a graduate seminar requiring students to post weekly tweets to extend classroom discussions. Students reportedly used Twitter to connect with content and other students. Additionally, students found it "to be useful professionally and personally."<sup>[78]</sup> British-American entrepreneur and author Andrew Keen criticizes social media in his book *The Cult of the Amateur*, writing, "Out of this anarchy, it suddenly became clear that what was governing the infinite monkeys now inputting away on the Internet was the law of digital Darwinism, the survival of the loudest and most opinionated. Under these rules, the only way to intellectually prevail is by infinite filibustering."<sup>[79]</sup> This is also relative to the issue "justice" in the social network. For example, the phenomenon "Human flesh search engine" in Asia raised the discussion of "private-law" brought by social network platform. Comparative media professor José van Dijck contends in her book "The Culture of Connectivity" (2013) that to understand the full weight of social media, their technological dimensions should be connected to the social and the cultural. She critically describes six social media platforms. One of her findings is the way Facebook had been successful in framing the term 'sharing' in such a way that third party use of user data is neglected in favour of intra-user connectedness.

## Disparity

The digital divide is a measure of disparity in the level of access to technology between households, socioeconomic levels or other demographic categories.<sup>[80][81]</sup> People who are homeless, living in poverty, elderly people and those living in rural or remote communities may have little or no access to computers and the Internet; in contrast, middle class and upper-class people in urban areas have very high rates of computer and Internet access. Other models argue that within a modern information society, some individuals produce Internet content while others only consume it,<sup>[82][83]</sup> which could be a result of disparities in the education system where only some teachers integrate technology into the classroom and teach critical thinking.<sup>[84]</sup> While social media has differences among age groups, a 2010 study in the United States found no racial divide.<sup>[85]</sup> Some zero-rating programs offer subsidized data access to certain websites on low-cost plans. Critics say that this is an anti-competitive program that undermines net neutrality and creates a "walled garden"<sup>[86]</sup> for platforms like Facebook Zero. A 2015 study found that 65% of Nigerians, 61% of Indonesians, and 58% of Indians agree with the statement that "Facebook is



People who live in poverty, such as homeless people, have low levels of access to computers and Internet and/or a lack of familiarity with these technologies. This means that these marginalized people are not able to use social media tools to find information, jobs, housing, and other necessities.

the Internet" compared with only 5% in the US.<sup>[87]</sup>

Eric Ehrmann contends that social media in the form of public diplomacy create a patina of inclusiveness that covers<sup>[88]</sup> traditional economic interests that are structured to ensure that wealth is pumped up to the top of the economic pyramid, perpetuating the digital divide and post Marxian class conflict. He also voices concern over the trend that finds social utilities operating in a quasi-libertarian global environment of oligopoly that requires users in economically challenged nations to spend high percentages of annual income to pay for devices and services to participate in the social media lifestyle. Neil Postman also contends that social media will increase an information disparity between "winners" – who are able to use the social media actively – and "losers" – who are not familiar with modern technologies or who do not have access to them. People with high social media skills may have better access to information about job opportunities, potential new friends, and social activities in their area, which may enable them to improve their standard of living and their quality of life.

## Trustworthiness

Because large-scale collaborative co-creation is one of the main ways of forming information in the social network, the user generated content is sometimes viewed with skepticism; readers do not trust it as a reliable source of information. Aniket Kittur, Bongowon Suh, and Ed H. Chi took wikis under examination and indicated that, "One possibility is that distrust of wiki content is not due to the inherently mutable nature of the system but instead to the lack of available information for judging trustworthiness."<sup>[89]</sup> To be more specific, the authors mention that reasons for distrusting collaborative systems with user-generated content, such as Wikipedia, include a lack of information regarding accuracy of contents, motives and expertise of editors, stability of content, coverage of topics and the absence of sources.<sup>[90]</sup>

Social media is also an important source of news. According to 'Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2013', social media are one of the most important ways for people find news online (the others being traditional brands, search engines and news aggregators).<sup>[56]</sup> The report suggested that in the United Kingdom, trust in news which comes from social media sources is low, compared to news from other sources (e.g. online news from traditional broadcaster or online news from national newspapers). People who aged at 24-35 trust social media most, whereas trust declined with the increase of age.

Rainie and Wellman have argued that media making now has become a participation work,<sup>[91]</sup> which changes communication systems. The center of power is shifted from only the media (as the gatekeeper) to the peripheral area, which may include government, organizations, and out to the edge, the individual.<sup>[92]</sup> These changes in communication systems raise empirical questions about trust to media effect. Prior empirical studies have shown that trust in information sources plays a major role in people's decision making.<sup>[93]</sup> People's attitudes more easily change when they hear messages from trustworthy sources. In the Reuters report, 27% of respondents agree that they worry about the accuracy of a story on a blog.<sup>[56]</sup> However, 40% of them believe the stories on blogs are more balanced than traditional papers because they are provided with a range of opinions. Recent research has shown that in the new social media communication environment, the civil or uncivil nature of comments will bias people's information processing even if the message is from a trustworthy source,<sup>[94]</sup> which bring the practical and ethical question about the responsibility of communicator in the social media environment.

## Concentration

As media theorist Marshall McLuhan pointed out in the 1960s, media are not just passive channels of

information or "dumb pipes". The media supply the stuff of thought, but they also shape the process of thought, as captured in his maxim "The medium is the message". For example, in the 1990s and 2000s, the increasing popularity of 24-hour all news channels such as CNN led to an increasing demand by news organizations for audience-grabbing headlines. As a result, even minor gaffes or misstatements by celebrities or public officials were made into leading news stories, to satisfy audience demand. Thus, in this example, the medium of 24-hour all-news channels started to shape the "message" that was sent on the media channel.

## Passive participation

For Malcolm Gladwell, the role of social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, in revolutions and protests is overstated.<sup>[95]</sup> On one hand, social media make it easier for individuals, and in this case activists, to express themselves. On the other hand, it is harder for that expression to have an impact.<sup>[95]</sup> Gladwell distinguishes between social media activism and high risk activism, which brings real changes. Activism and especially high-risk activism involves strong-tie relationships, hierarchies, coordination, motivation, exposing oneself to high risks, making sacrifices.<sup>[95]</sup> Gladwell discusses that social media are built around weak ties and he argues that "social networks are effective at increasing participation — by lessening the level of motivation that participation requires".<sup>[95]</sup> According to him "Facebook activism succeeds not by motivating people to make a real sacrifice, but by motivating them to do the things that people do when they are not motivated enough to make a real sacrifice".<sup>[95]</sup>

Furthermore, social media's role in democratizing media participation, which proponents herald as ushering in a new era of participatory democracy, with all users able to contribute news and comments, may fall short of the ideals. Social media has been championed as allowing anyone with an Internet connection to become a content creator<sup>[72]</sup> and empowering the "active audience".<sup>[96]</sup> But international survey data suggest online media audience members are largely passive consumers, while content creation is dominated by a small number of users who post comments and write new content.<sup>[56]:78</sup> Others<sup>[97]</sup> argue that the effect of social media will vary from one country to another, with domestic political structures playing a greater role than social media in determining how citizens express opinions about "current affairs stories involving the state". According to the "Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2013", the percent of online news users who blog about news issues ranges from 1–5%. Greater percentages use social media to comment on news, with participation ranging from 8% in Germany to 38% in Brazil. But online news users are most likely to just talk about online news with friends offline or use social media to share stories without creating content.<sup>[56]:78</sup>

## Reliability

Evgeny Morozov, 2009–2010 Yahoo fellow at Georgetown University, contends that the information uploaded to Twitter may have little relevance to the rest of the people who do not use Twitter. In the article "Iran: Downside to the "Twitter Revolution"" in the magazine *Dissent*,<sup>[98]</sup> he says:

"Twitter only adds to the noise: it's simply impossible to pack much context into its 140 characters. All other biases are present as well: in a country like Iran it's mostly pro-Western, technology-friendly and iPod-carrying young people who are the natural and most frequent users of Twitter. They are a tiny and, most important, extremely untypical segment of the Iranian population (the number of Twitter users in Iran — a country of more than seventy million people.)"

Even in the United States, the birth-country of Twitter, currently in 2015 the social network has 306 million accounts.<sup>[99]</sup> Because there are likely to be many multi-account users, and the United States in 2012 had a



population of 314.7 million,<sup>[100]</sup> the adoption of Twitter is somewhat limited. Professor Matthew Auer of Bates College casts doubt on the conventional wisdom that social media are open and participatory. He also speculates on the emergence of "anti-social media" used as "instruments of pure control."<sup>[101]</sup>

## Ownership of social media content

Social media content is generated through social media interactions done by the users through the site. There has always been a huge debate on the ownership of the content on social media platforms because it is generated by the users and hosted by the company. Added to this is the danger to security of information, which can be leaked to third parties with economic interests in the platform, or parasites who comb the data for their own databases.<sup>[102]</sup> The author of *Social Media Is Bullshit*, Brandon Mendelson, claims that the "true" owners of content created on social media sites only benefits the large corporations who own those sites and rarely the users that created them.<sup>[103]</sup>

## Privacy

Privacy rights advocates warn users on social media about the collection of their personal data. Some information is captured without the user's knowledge or consent through electronic tracking and third party applications. Data may also be collected for law enforcement and governmental purposes,<sup>[101]</sup> by social media intelligence using data mining techniques.<sup>[102]</sup> Data and information may also be collected for third party use. When information is shared on social media, that information is no longer private. There have been many cases in which young persons especially, share personal information, which can attract predators. It is very important to monitor what you share, and to be aware of who you could potentially be sharing that information with. Teens especially share significantly more information on the internet now than they have in the past. Teen are much more likely to share their personal information, such as email address, phone number, and school names.<sup>[104]</sup> Studies suggest that teens are not aware of what they are posting and how much of that information can be accessed by third parties. Other privacy concerns with employers and social media are when employers use social media as a tool to screen a prospective employee. This issue raises many ethical questions that some consider an employer's right and others consider discrimination. Except in the states of California, Maryland, and Illinois, there are no laws that prohibit employers from using social media profiles as a basis of whether or not someone should be hired.<sup>[105]</sup> Title VII also prohibits discrimination during any aspect of employment including hiring or firing, recruitment, or testing.<sup>[106]</sup> Social media has been integrating into the workplace and this has led to conflicts within employees and employers.<sup>[107]</sup> Particularly, Facebook has been seen as a popular platform for employers to investigate in order to learn more about potential employees. This conflict first started in Maryland when an employer requested and received an employee's Facebook username and password. State lawmakers first introduced legislation in 2012 to prohibit employers from requesting passwords to personal social accounts in order to get a job or to keep a job. This led to Canada, Germany, the U.S. Congress and 11 U.S. states to pass or propose legislation that prevents employers' access to private social accounts of employees.<sup>[108]</sup> It is not only an issue in the workplace, but an issue in schools as well. There have been situations where students have been forced to give up their social media passwords to school administrators.<sup>[105]</sup> There are inadequate laws to protect a student's social media privacy, and organizations such as the ACLU are pushing for more privacy protection, as it is an invasion. They urge students who are pressured to give up their account information to tell the administrators to contact a parent and/or lawyer before they take the

matter any further. Although they are students, they still have the right to keep their password-protected information private.<sup>[106]</sup>

Many Western European countries have already implemented laws that restrict the regulation of social media in the workplace. States including Arkansas, California, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin have passed legislation that protects potential employees and current employees from employers that demand them to give forth their username or password for a social media account.<sup>[109]</sup> Laws that forbid employers from disciplining an employee based on activity off the job on social media sites have also been put into act in states including California, Colorado, Connecticut, North Dakota, and New York. Several states have similar laws that protect students in colleges and universities from having to grant access to their social media accounts. Eight states have passed the law that prohibits post secondary institutions from demanding social media login information from any prospective or current students and privacy legislation has been introduced or is pending in at least 36 states as of July 2013.<sup>[110]</sup> As of May 2014, legislation has been introduced and is in the process of pending in at least 28 states and has been enacted in Maine and Wisconsin.<sup>[111]</sup> In addition, the National Labor Relations Board has been devoting a lot of their attention to attacking employer policies regarding social media that can discipline employees who seek to speak and post freely on social media sites.

There are arguments that privacy is dead and that with social media growing more and more, social media users have become quite unconcerned with privacy. Others argue, however, that people are still very concerned about their privacy, but are being ignored by the companies running these social networks, who can sometimes make a profit off of sharing someone's personal information. There is also a disconnect between social media user's words and their actions. Studies suggest that surveys show that people want to keep their lives private, but their actions on social media suggest otherwise.

## Effects on interpersonal relationships

Data suggest that participants use social media to fulfill perceived social needs, but are typically disappointed.<sup>[107]</sup> Lonely individuals are drawn to the Internet for emotional support. This could interfere with "real life socializing" by reducing face-to-face relationships.<sup>[108]</sup> Some of these views are summed up in an Atlantic article by Stephen Marche entitled *Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?*, in which the author argues that social media provides more breadth, but not the depth of relationships that humans require and that users begin to find it difficult to distinguish between the meaningful relationships which we foster in the real world, and the numerous casual relationships that are formed through social media.<sup>[109]</sup> Sherry Turkle explores similar issues in her book *Alone Together* as she discusses how people confuse social media usage with authentic communication. She posits that people tend to act differently online and are less afraid to hurt each other's feelings. Some online behaviors can cause stress and anxiety, due to the permanence of online posts, the fear of being hacked, or of colleges and employers exploring social media pages. Turkle also speculates that people are beginning to prefer texting to face-to-face communication, which can contribute to feelings of loneliness.<sup>[110]</sup> Some researchers have also found that only exchanges that involved direct communication and reciprocation of messages to each other increased feelings of connectedness. However, passively using social media without sending or receiving messages to individuals does not make people feel less lonely unless they were lonely to begin with.<sup>[111]</sup>

A study published in the Public Library of Science in 2013 revealed that the perception of Facebook being an important resource for social connection was diminished by the number of people found to have developed low self-esteem, and the more they used the network the lower their level of self-esteem.<sup>[112]</sup> A current controversial

topic is whether or not social media addiction should be explicitly categorized as a psychological ailment.<sup>[113]</sup> Extended use of social media has led to increased Internet addiction, cyberbullying, sexting, sleep deprivation, and the decline of face-to-face interaction.<sup>[114]</sup> Several clinics in the UK classify social media addiction is a certifiable medical condition with one psychiatric consultant claiming that he treats as many as one hundred cases a year.<sup>[115]</sup> Lori Ann Wagner, a psychotherapist, argues that humans communicate best face to face with their five senses involved.<sup>[116]</sup> In addition, a study on social media done by PhD's Hsuan-Ting Kim and Yonghwan Kim, suggests that social networking sites have begun to raise concern because of the expectations people seek to fulfill from these sites and the amount of time users are willing to invest.<sup>[117]</sup>

However, there are also positive effects as there are negative ones. Social media is a great way to make sure that people know that one is in a relationship or not, advertising in their about section. This can reduce the complications and confusions that may have been a problem when social media was not so popular. It is a great way of sharing big dates that may have occurred in ones life, such as a pregnancy announcement or engagement. Not all aspects about social media negatively effect interpersonal relationships. Some aspects encourage the relationships and build them to be stronger.

## Commercialization

As social media usage has become increasingly widespread, social media has to a large extent come to be subjected to commercialization by marketing companies and advertising agencies.<sup>[118]</sup> Christofer Laurell, a digital marketing researcher, suggested that the social media landscape currently consists of three types of places because of this development: consumer-dominated places, professionally dominated places and places undergoing commercialization.<sup>[119]</sup> As social media becomes commercialized, this process have been shown to create novel forms of value networks stretching between consumer and producer<sup>[120]</sup> in which a combination of personal, private and commercial contents are created.<sup>[121]</sup> The commercial development of social media has been criticized as the actions of consumers in these settings has become increasingly value-creating, for example when consumers contribute to the marketing and branding of specific products by posting positive reviews. As such, value-creating activities also increase the value of a specific product, which could, according to the marketing professors Bernad Cova and Daniele Dalli, lead to what they refer to as "double exploitation".<sup>[122]</sup> Companies are getting consumers to create content for the companies' websites for which the consumers are not paid.



Social media websites can also use "traditional" marketing approaches, as seen in these LinkedIn-branded chocolates.

## Negative effects

There are several negative effects to social media which receive criticism, for example regarding privacy issues,<sup>[123]</sup> information overload<sup>[124]</sup> and Internet fraud. Social media can also have negative social effects on users. Angry or emotional conversations can lead to real-world interactions outside of the Internet, which can get users into dangerous situations. Some users have experienced threats of violence online and have feared these threats manifesting themselves offline. Studies also show that social media have negative effects on peoples' self-esteem and self-worth. The authors of "Who Compares and Despairs? The Effect of Social Comparison Orientation on Social Media Use and its Outcomes"<sup>[125]</sup> found that people with a higher social comparison orientation appear to use social media more heavily than people with low social comparison

orientation. This finding was consistent with other studies that found people with high social comparison orientation make more social comparisons once on social media. People compare their own lives to the lives of their friends through their friends' posts. People are motivated to portray themselves in a way that is appropriate to the situation and serves their best interest. Often the things posted online are the positive aspects of people's lives, making other people question why their own lives are not as exciting or fulfilling. This can lead to depression and other self-esteem issues.

Three researchers at Blanquerna University, Spain, examined how adolescents interact with social media and specifically Facebook. They suggest that interactions on the website encourage representing oneself in the traditional gender constructs, which helps maintain gender stereotypes.<sup>[126]</sup> The authors noted that girls generally show more emotion in their posts and more frequently change their profile pictures, which according to some psychologists can lead to self-objectification.<sup>[127]</sup> On the other hand, the researchers found that boys prefer to portray themselves as strong, independent, and powerful.<sup>[128]</sup> For example, men often post pictures of objects and not themselves, and rarely change their profile pictures; using the pages more for entertainment and pragmatic reasons. In contrast girls generally post more images that include themselves, friends and things they have emotional ties to, which the researchers attributed that to the higher emotional intelligence of girls at a younger age. The authors sampled over 632 girls and boys from the ages of 12-16 from Spain in an effort to confirm their beliefs. The researchers concluded that masculinity is more commonly associated with a positive psychological well-being, while femininity displays less psychological well-being.<sup>[129]</sup> Furthermore, the researchers discovered that people tend not to completely conform to either stereotype, and encompass desirable parts of both. Users of Facebook generally use their profile to reflect that they are a "normal" person. Social media was found to uphold gender stereotypes both feminine and masculine. The researchers also noted that the traditional stereotypes are often upheld by boys more so than girls. The authors described how neither stereotype was entirely positive, but most people viewed masculine values as more positive.

Terri H. Chan, the author of "Facebook and its Effects on Users' Empathic Social Skills and Life Satisfaction: A Double Edged Sword Effect",<sup>[130]</sup> claims that the more time people spend on Facebook, the less satisfied they feel about their life. Self-presentational theory explains that people will consciously manage their self-image or identity related information in social contexts. According to Gina Chen, the author of *Losing Face on Social Media: Threats to Positive Face Lead to an Indirect Effect on Retaliatory Aggression Through Negative Affect*,<sup>[131]</sup> when people are not accepted or are criticized online they feel emotional pain. This may lead to some form of online retaliation such as online bullying.<sup>[132]</sup> Trudy Hui Hui Chua and Leanne Chang's article, "Follow Me and Like My Beautiful Selfies: Singapore Teenage Girls' Engagement in Self-Presentation and Peer Comparison on Social Media"<sup>[133]</sup> states that teenage girls manipulate their self-presentation on social media to achieve a sense of beauty that is projected by their peers. These authors also discovered that teenage girls compare themselves to their peers on social media and present themselves in certain ways in effort to earn regard and acceptance, which can actually lead to problems with self-confidence and self-satisfaction.<sup>[133]</sup>

According to writer Christine Rosen in "Virtual Friendship, and the New Narcissism," many social media sites encourage status-seeking.<sup>[134]</sup> According to Rosen, the practice and definition of "friendship" changes in virtuality. Friendship "in these virtual spaces is thoroughly different from real-world friendship. In its traditional sense, friendship is a relationship which, broadly speaking, involves the sharing of mutual interests, reciprocity, trust, and the revelation of intimate details over time and within specific social (and cultural) contexts. Because friendship depends on mutual revelations that are concealed from the rest of the world, it can only flourish within the boundaries of privacy; the idea of public friendship is an oxymoron." Rosen also cites Brigham Young University researchers who "recently surveyed 184 users of social networking sites and found that heavy users 'feel less socially involved with the community around them.'" Critic Nicholas G. Carr in "Is Google

Making Us Stupid?" questions how technology affects cognition and memory.<sup>[135]</sup> "The kind of deep reading that a sequence of printed pages promotes is valuable not just for the knowledge we acquire from the author's words but for the intellectual vibrations those words set off within our own minds. In the quiet spaces opened up by the sustained, undistracted reading of a book, or by any other act of contemplation, for that matter, we make our own associations, draw our own inferences and analogies, foster our own ideas... If we lose those quiet spaces, or fill them up with "content," we will sacrifice something important not only in our selves but in our culture."

Bo Han, a social media researcher at Texas A&M University-Commerce, finds that users are likely to experience the "social media burnout" issue.<sup>[136]</sup> Ambivalence, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization are usually the main symptoms if a user experiences social media burnout. Ambivalence refers to a user's confusion about the benefits she can get from using a social media site. Emotional exhaustion refers to the stress a user has when using a social media site. Depersonalization refers to the emotional detachment from a social media site a user experiences. The three burnout factors can all negatively influence the user's social media continuance. This study provides an instrument to measure the burnout a user can experience, when her social media "friends" are generating an overwhelming amount of useless information (e.g., "what I had for dinner", "where I am now").

## Positive effects

In the book *Networked – The New Social Operating System* by Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman, the two authors reflect on mainly positive effects of social media and other Internet-based social networks. According to the authors, social media are used to document memories, learn about and explore things, advertise oneself and form friendships. For instance, they claim that the communication through Internet based services can be done more privately than in real life. Furthermore, Rainie and Wellman discuss that everybody has the possibility to become a content creator. Content creation provides networked individuals opportunities to reach wider audiences. Moreover, it can positively affect their social standing and gain political support. This can lead to influence on issues that are important for someone. As a concrete example of the positive effects of social media, the authors use the Tunisian revolution in 2011, where people used Facebook to gather meetings, protest actions, etc.<sup>[72]</sup> Rainie and Wellman (Ibid) also discuss that content creation is a voluntary and participatory act. What is important is that networked individuals create, edit, and manage content in collaboration with other networked individuals. This way they contribute in expanding knowledge. Wikis are examples of collaborative content creation.

A survey conducted (in 2011), by Pew Internet Research, discussed in Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman's *Networked – The New Social Operating System*, illustrates that 'networked individuals' are engaged to a further extent regarding numbers of content creation activities and that the 'networked individuals' are increasing over a larger age span. These are some of the content creation activities that networked individuals take part in:

- writing material, such as text or online comments, on a social networking site such as Facebook: 65% of Internet users do this
- sharing digital photos: 55%
- contributing rankings and reviews of products or services: 37%
- creating "tags" of content, such as tagging songs by genre: 33%
- posting comments on third-party websites or blogs: 26%
- taking online material and remixing it into a new creation: 15% of Internet users do this with photos, video, audio, or text
- creating or working on a blog: 14%

Another survey conducted (in 2015) by Pew Internet Research shows that the Internet users among American adults who uses at least one social networking site has increased from 10% to 76% since 2005. Pew Internet Research illustrates furthermore that it nowadays is no real gender difference among Americans when it comes to social media usage. Women were even more active on social media a couple of years ago, however today's numbers point at women: 68%, and men: 62%.<sup>[137]</sup> Social media have been used to assist in searches for missing persons. When 21-year-old University of Cincinnati student Brogan Dulle disappeared in May 2014 from near his apartment in the Clifton neighborhood of Cincinnati, Ohio, his friends and family used social media to organize and fund a search effort.<sup>[138][139][140]</sup> The disappearance made international news<sup>[141]</sup><sup>[142][143][144][145][146][147][148]</sup> when their efforts went viral<sup>[138][149]</sup> on Facebook, Twitter, GoFundMe, and *The Huffington Post* during the week-long search. Dulle's body was eventually found in a building next door to his apartment.<sup>[150][151][152][153]</sup>

## Impact on job seeking

Use of social media by young people has caused significant problems for some applicants who are active on social media when they try to enter the job market. A survey of 17,000 young people in six countries in 2013 found that 1 in 10 people aged 16 to 34 have been rejected for a job because of online comments they made on social media websites.<sup>[154]</sup> A 2014 survey of recruiters found that 93% of them check candidates' social media postings.<sup>[155]</sup> Moreover, professor Stijn Baert of Ghent University conducted a field experiment in which fictitious job candidates applied for real job vacancies in Belgium. They were identical except in one respect: their Facebook profile photos. It was found that candidates with the most wholesome photos were a lot more likely to receive invitations for job interviews than those with the more controversial photos. In addition, Facebook profile photos had a greater impact on hiring decisions when candidates were highly educated.<sup>[156]</sup> These cases have created some privacy implications as to whether or not companies should have the right to look at employee's Facebook profiles. In March 2012, Facebook decided they might take legal action against employers for gaining access to employee's profiles through their passwords.<sup>[157]</sup> According to Facebook Chief Privacy Officer for policy, Erin Egan, the company has worked hard to give its users the tools to control who sees their information. He also said users shouldn't be forced to share private information and communications just to get a job. According to the network's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities, sharing or soliciting a password is a violation of Facebook policy. Employees may still give their password information out to get a job, but according to Erin Egan, Facebook will continue to do their part to protect the privacy and security of their users.<sup>[158]</sup>

## College admission

Before social media, admissions officials in the United States used SAT and other standardized test scores, extra-curricular activities, letters of recommendation, and high school report cards to determine whether to accept or deny an applicant. In the 2010s, while colleges and universities still use these traditional methods to evaluate applicants, these institutions are increasingly accessing applicants' social media profiles to learn about their character and activities. According to Kaplan, Inc, a corporation that provides higher education preparation, in 2012 27% of admissions officers used Google to learn more about an applicant, with 26% checking Facebook.<sup>[159]</sup> Students whose social media pages include offensive jokes or photos, racist or homophobic comments, photos depicting the applicant engaging in illegal drug use or drunkenness, and so on, may be screened out from admission processes.



## Political effects

*See also: Social impact of YouTube and Use of social media in the Wisconsin protests*

People are increasingly getting political news and information from social media platforms. A 2014 study showed that 62% of web users turn to Facebook to find political news.<sup>[160]</sup> This social phenomenon allows for political information, true or not, to spread quickly and easily among peer networks. Furthermore, social media sites are now encouraging political involvement by uniting like-minded people, reminding users to vote in elections, and analyzing users' political affiliation data to find cultural similarities and differences.<sup>[161]</sup> Social media can help taint the reputation of political figures fairly quickly with information that may or may not be true. Information spreads like wildfire and before a politician can even get an opportunity to address the information, either to confirm, deny, or explain, the public has already formed an opinion about the politician based on that information. However, when conducted on purpose, the spread of information on social media for political means can help campaigns immensely. The Barack Obama presidential campaign, 2008, is considered to be one of the most successful in terms of social media. On the other hand, negative word-of-mouth in social media concerning a political figure can be very unfortunate for a politician and can cost the politician his/her career if the information is very damaging.<sup>[162]</sup> For example, Anthony Weiner's misuse of the social media platform Twitter to send inappropriate messages eventually led to his resignation from U.S. Congress.<sup>[163]</sup>

Open forums online have led to some negative effects in the political sphere. Some politicians have made the mistake of using open forums to try and reach a broader audience and thus more potential voters. What they forgot to account for was that the forums would be open to everyone, including those in opposition. Having no control over the comments being posted, negative included, has been damaging for some with unfortunate oversight. Additionally, a constraint of social media as a tool for public political discourse is that if oppressive governments recognize the ability social media has to cause change, they shut it down.<sup>[164]</sup> During the peak of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, the Internet and social media played a huge role in facilitating information. At that time, Hosni Mubarak was the president of Egypt and head the regime for almost 30 years. Mubarak was so threatened by the immense power that the Internet and social media gave the people that the government successfully shut down the Internet, using the Ramses Exchange, for a period of time in February 2011.<sup>[165]</sup>

Social media as an open forum gives a voice to those who have previously not had the ability to be heard. In 2015, some countries are still becoming equipped with Internet accessibility and other technologies. Social media is giving everyone a voice to speak out against government regimes. In 2014, the rural areas in Paraguay were only just receiving access to social media, such as Facebook. In congruence with the users worldwide, teens and young adults in Paraguay are drawn to Facebook and others types of social media as a means to self-express. Social media is becoming a main conduit for social mobilization and government critiques because, "the government can't control what we say on the Internet."<sup>[166]</sup>

Younger generations are becoming more involved in politics due to the increase of political news posted on various types of social media. Due to the heavier use of social media among younger generations, they are exposed to politics more frequently, and in a way that is integrated into their online social lives. While informing younger generations of political news is important, there are many biases within the realms of social media. It can be difficult for outsiders to truly understand the conditions of dissent when they are removed from direct involvement.<sup>[167]</sup> Social media can create a false sense of understanding among people who are not directly involved in the issue. An example of social media creating misconceptions can be seen during the Arab Spring protests. Today's generation rely heavily on social media to understand what is happening in the world, and consequently people are exposed to both true and false information. For example, Americans have several

misconceptions surrounding the events of the Arab Springs movement.<sup>[168]</sup> Social media can be used to create political change, both major and minor. For example, in 2011 Egyptians used Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube as a means to communicate and organize demonstrations and rallies to overthrow President Hosni Mubarak. Statistics show that during this time the rate of Tweets from Egypt increased from 2,300 to 230,000 per day and the top 23 protest videos had approximately 5.5 million views.<sup>[169]</sup>

## Positive and negative effects of Twitter

People around the world are taking advantage of social media as one of their key components of communication. According to King, 67 percent of US citizens ages 12 and up use social media of some type.<sup>[170]</sup> With the expansion of social media networks there are many positive and negative alternatives. As the use of Twitter increases, its influence impacts users as well. The potential role of Twitter as a means of both service feedback and a space in which mental health can be openly discussed and considered from a variety of perspectives.<sup>[171]</sup> The study conducted shows a positive outlook for using Twitter to discuss health issues with a patient and a professional, in this case alcohol. On the other hand, there can be negatives that arise from the use of social media. If a clinician prescribes abstinence from alcohol but then posts pictures on social media of one's own drunken exploits, the clinician's credibility is potentially lost in the eyes of the patient.<sup>[172]</sup> In these two studies, both negative and positive outcomes were examined. Although social media can be beneficial, it is important to understand the negative consequences as well.

## Use by extremist groups

The world is becoming increasingly connected via the power of the Internet; Facebook launched internet.org, an initiative to gain even the most remote parts of society access to the World Wide Web. Political movements have begun to see social media as a major organizing and recruiting tool<sup>[173]</sup> and the reverse can be said for society. In 2014, 62% of all web users turned to sites such as Facebook to gain access to political news.<sup>[160]</sup> Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as ISIS, has used social media to promote their cause, going as far as the production of their own online magazine named the Islamic State Report in an attempt to recruit more fighters.<sup>[174][175]</sup> Other extremist groups such as al-Qaeda and the Taliban are increasingly using social media to raise funds, recruit and radicalize persons, and it has become increasingly effective. In Canada, two girls from the city of Montreal have left their country in an effort to join ISIS in Syria after exploring ISIS on social media and eventually being recruited. On Twitter, there is an app called the Dawn of Glad Tidings that users can download and keep up to date on news about ISIS. Hundreds of users around the world have signed up for the app which once downloaded will post tweets and hash-tags to your account that are in support of ISIS. As ISIS marched on the northern region of Iraq, tweets in support of their efforts reached a high of 40,000 a day.<sup>[175]</sup> ISIS support on-line is a defiant factor in the radicalization of youth. Mass media has yet to adopt the view that social media plays a vital link in the radicalization of persons in an effort to discredit social media as a legitimate news source. When tweets supportive of ISIS make their way onto Twitter, they result in 72 re-tweets to the original, which further spreads the destructive message of ISIS.<sup>[175]</sup> These tweets have made their way to the account known as active hashtags, which further helps broadcast ISIS' message as the account sends out to its followers the most popular hashtags of the day. Social media is a key factor in the modern recruiting practices of groups like ISIS.

## Patents

*Main article: Software patent*

There has been rapid growth in the number of US patent applications that cover new technologies related to social media, and the number of them that are published has been growing rapidly over the past five years. There are now over 2000 published patent applications.<sup>[177]</sup> As many as 7000 applications may be currently on file including those that haven't been published yet. Only slightly over 100 of these applications have issued as patents, however, largely due to the multi-year backlog in examination of business method patents, patents which outline and claim new methods of doing business.<sup>[178]</sup>

## In the classroom

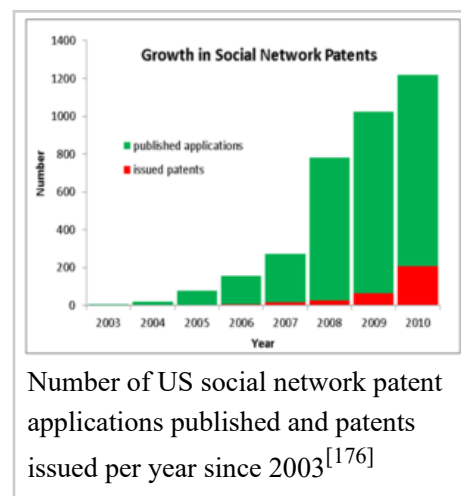
Having social media in the classroom has been a controversial topic in the 2010s. Many parents and educators have been fearful of the repercussions of having social media in the classroom.<sup>[179]</sup> There are concerns that social media tools can be misused for cyberbullying or sharing inappropriate content. As result, cell phones have been banned from some classrooms, and some schools have blocked many popular social media websites. However, despite apprehensions, students in industrialized countries are (or will be) active social media users. As a result, many schools have realized that they need to loosen restrictions, teach digital citizenship skills, and even incorporate these tools into classrooms. The Peel District School Board (PDSB) in Ontario is one of many school boards that has begun to accept the use of social media in the classroom. In 2013, the PDSB introduced a "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) policy and have unblocked many social media sites.<sup>[180]</sup> Fewkes and McCabe (2012) have researched about the benefits of using Facebook in the classroom.<sup>[181]</sup> Some schools permit students to use smartphones or tablet computers in class, as long as the students are using these devices for academic purposes, such as doing research.

## Wikipedia

In early 2013, Steve Joordens, a professor at the University of Toronto, encouraged the 1,900 students enrolled in his introductory psychology course to add content to Wikipedia pages featuring content that related to the course. Like other educators,<sup>[182]</sup> Joordens argued that the assignment would not only strengthen the site's psychology-related content, but also provide an opportunity for students to engage in critical reflection about the negotiations involved in collaborative knowledge production. However, Wikipedia's all-volunteer editorial staff complained that the students' contributions resulted in an overwhelming number of additions to the site, and that some of the contributions were inaccurate.<sup>[183]</sup>

## Facebook and the classroom

Using Facebook in class allows for both an asynchronous and synchronous, open speech via a familiar and regularly accessed medium, and supports the integration of multimodal content such as student-created photographs and video and URLs to other texts, in a platform that many students are already familiar with. Further, it allows students to ask more minor questions that they might not otherwise feel motivated to visit a professor in person during office hours to ask.<sup>[184]</sup> It also allows students to manage their own privacy settings, and often work with the privacy settings they have already established as registered users. Facebook is one alternative means for shyer students to be able to voice their thoughts in and outside of the classroom. It allows students to collect their thoughts and articulate them in writing before committing to their expression.<sup>[184]</sup> Further, the level of informality typical to Facebook can also aid students in self-expression and encourage more



frequent student-and-instructor and student-and-student communication. At the same time, Towner and Munoz note that this informality may actually drive many educators and students away from using Facebook for educational purposes.

From a course management perspective, Facebook may be less efficient as a replacement for more conventional course management systems, both because of its limitations with regards to uploading assignments and due to some students' (and educators') resistance to its use in education. Specifically, there are features of student-to-student collaboration that may be conducted more efficiently on dedicated course management systems, such as the organization of posts in a nested and linked format. That said, a number of studies suggest that students post to discussion forums more frequently and are generally more active discussants on Facebook posts versus conventional course management systems like WebCT or Blackboard (Chu and Meulemans, 2008; Salaway, et al., 2008; Schroeder and Greenbowe, 2009).<sup>[185][186][187]</sup>

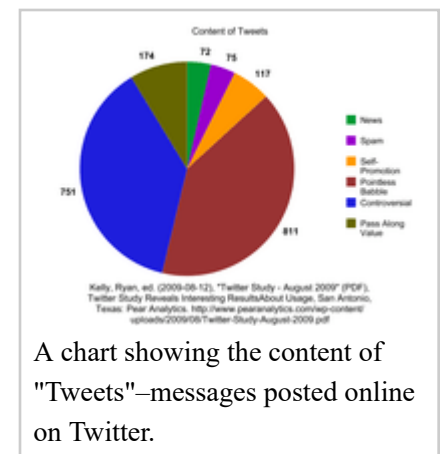
Further, familiarity and comfortability with Facebook is often divided by socio-economic class, with students whose parents obtained a college degree, or at least having attended college for some span of time, being more likely to already be active users.<sup>[188]</sup> Instructors ought to seriously consider and respect these hesitations, and refrain from "forcing" Facebook on their students for academic purposes.<sup>[189][190]</sup> Instructors also ought to consider that rendering Facebook optional, but continuing to provide content through it to students who elect to use it, places an unfair burden on hesitant students, who then are forced to choose between using a technology they are uncomfortable with and participating fully in the course. A related limitation, particularly at the level of K-12 schooling, is the distrust (and in some cases, outright prohibition) of the use of Facebook in formal classroom settings in many educational jurisdictions. However, this hesitancy towards Facebook use is continually diminishing in the United States, as the Pew Internet & American Life Project's annual report for 2012 shows that the likelihood of a person to be a registered Facebook user only fluctuates by 13 percent between different levels of educational attainment, 9 percent between urban, suburban, and rural users, only 5 percent between different household income brackets. The largest gap occurs between age brackets, with 86 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds reported as registered users as opposed to only 35 percent of 65-and-up-year-old users.<sup>[191]</sup>

## Twitter

Twitter can be used to enhance communication building and critical thinking. Domizi (2013) utilized Twitter in a graduate seminar requiring students to post weekly tweets to extend classroom discussions. Students reportedly used Twitter to connect with content and other students. Additionally, students found it "to be useful professionally and personally".<sup>[192]</sup> Junco, Heibergert, and Loken (2011) completed a study of 132 students to examine the link between social media and student engagement and social media and grades. They divided the students into two groups, one used Twitter and the other did not. Twitter was used to discuss material, organize study groups, post class announcements, and connect with classmates. Junco and his colleagues (2011) found that the students in the Twitter group had higher GPAs and greater engagement scores than the control group.<sup>[193]</sup> Gao, Luo, and Zhang (2012) reviewed literature about Twitter published between 2008 and 2011. They concluded that Twitter allowed students to



Wikipedia is an online user-edited encyclopedia. Its users can register as "editors", which allows them to create a user profile.



A chart showing the content of "Tweets"—messages posted online on Twitter.

participate with each other in class (back channel), and extend discussion outside of class. They also reported that students used Twitter to get up-to-date news and connect with professionals in their field. Students reported that microblogging encouraged students to "participate at a higher level".<sup>[194]</sup> Because the posts cannot exceed 140 characters, students were required to express ideas, reflect, and focus on important concepts in a concise manner. Some students found this very beneficial. Other students did not like the character limit. Also, some students found microblogging to be overwhelming (information overload). The research indicated that many students did not actually participate in the discussions, "they just lurked".<sup>[194]</sup>

## Impact of retweeting on Twitter

A popular component and feature of Twitter is retweeting. Twitter allows other people to keep up with important events, stay connected with their peers, and can contribute in various ways throughout social media.<sup>[195]</sup> When certain posts become popular, they start to get tweeted over and over again, becoming viral. Ellen DeGeneres is a prime example of this. She was a host during the 86th Academy Awards,<sup>[196]</sup> when she took the opportunity to take a selfie with about twelve other celebrities that joined in on the highlight of the night,<sup>[197]</sup> including Jennifer Lawrence, Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts.<sup>[198]</sup> This picture went viral within forty minutes and was retweeted 1.8 million times within the first hour.<sup>[196]</sup> This was an astonishing record for Twitter and the use of selfies, which other celebrities have tried to recreate. Retweeting is beneficial strategy, which notifies individuals on Twitter about popular trends, posts, and events.<sup>[199]</sup>

## YouTube

*See also: Social impact of YouTube*

YouTube is a frequently used social media tool in the classroom (also the second most visited website in the world).<sup>[200]</sup> Students can watch videos, answer questions, and discuss content. Additionally, students can create videos to share with others. Sherer and Shea (2011) claimed that YouTube increased participation, personalization (customization), and productivity. YouTube also improved students' digital skills and provided opportunity for peer learning and problem solving.<sup>[201]</sup> Eick et al. (2012) found that videos kept students' attention, generated interest in the subject, and clarified course content.<sup>[202]</sup> Additionally, the students reported that the videos helped them recall information and visualize real world applications of course concepts.



## LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional social network that enables employers and workers to connect. It was created by Reid Hoffman in 2002 and was launched on May 5, 2003. LinkedIn is now the world's largest professional social network with over 300 million members in over 200 countries. The mission of LinkedIn is to, "connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful."<sup>[203]</sup> A lot of people describe LinkedIn as a "professional Facebook", but it is important to remember that LinkedIn is *not* Facebook. Users tend to avoid informal nicknames and any inappropriate pictures in their profile. Instead, they use a standard headshot as a profile picture and keep the content and information as professional and career-focused as possible.<sup>[204]</sup> Most LinkedIn users put their CV online. Some also provide a list of the courses they have taken in college or university. Users can also post articles that they have written, which enables prospective employers to see their

written work.

There are over 39 million students and recent college graduates on LinkedIn, becoming the fastest-growing demographic on the site.<sup>[205]</sup> There are many ways that LinkedIn can be used in the classroom. First and foremost, using LinkedIn in the classroom encourages students to have a professional online social presence and can help them become comfortable in searching for a job or internship. "The key to making LinkedIn a great social learning tool is to encourage learners to build credibility through their profiles, so that experts and professionals won't think twice about connecting with them and share knowledge."<sup>[206]</sup> Dedicating class time solely for the purpose of setting up LinkedIn accounts and showing students how to navigate it and build their profile will set them up for success in the future. Next, professors can create assignments that involve using LinkedIn as a research tool. The search tool in LinkedIn gives students the opportunity to seek out organizations they are interested in and allow them to learn more. Giving students the class time to work on their LinkedIn profile allows them to network with each other, and stresses the importance of networking. Finally, professors can design activities that revolve around resume building and interviews. A person's LinkedIn and resume are what employers look at first, and they need to know how to make a strong first impression. It's important to learn how to construct a strong resume as soon as possible, as well as learn strong interviewing skills. Not only is the information and skills learned in the classroom important, but it is also important to know how to apply the information and skills to their LinkedIn profile so they can get a job in their field of study. These skills can be gained while incorporating LinkedIn into the classroom.<sup>[206]</sup>

## Advertising

### Tweets containing advertising

In 2013, the United Kingdom Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) began to advise celebrities and sports stars to make it clear if they had been paid to tweet about a product or service by using the hashtag #spon or #ad within tweets containing endorsements. In July 2013, Wayne Rooney was accused of misleading followers by not including either of these tags in a tweet promoting Nike. The tweet read: "The pitches change. The killer instinct doesn't. Own the turf, anywhere. @NikeFootball #myground."<sup>[207]</sup> The tweet was investigated by the ASA but no charges were pressed. The ASA stated that "We considered the reference to Nike Football was prominent and clearly linked the tweet with the Nike brand."<sup>[207]</sup> When asked about whether the number of complaints regarding misleading social advertising had increased, the ASA stated that the number of complaints had risen marginally since 2011 but that complaints were "very low" in the "grand scheme."<sup>[208]</sup>

## Censorship incidents

*Main article: Internet censorship*

Social media often features in political struggles to control public perception and online activity. In some countries, Internet police or secret police monitor or control citizens' use of social media. For example, in 2013 some social media was banned in Turkey after the Taksim Gezi Park protests. Both Twitter and YouTube were temporarily suspended in the country by a court's decision. A new law, passed by Turkish Parliament, has granted immunity to Telecommunications Directorate (TİB) personnel. The TİB was also given the authority to block access to specific websites without the need for a court order.<sup>[209]</sup> Yet TİB's 2014 blocking of Twitter was ruled by the constitutional court to violate free speech.<sup>[210]</sup> More recently, in the 2014 Thai coup d'état, the public was explicitly instructed not to 'share' or 'like' dissenting views on social media or face prison. In July



that same year, in response to Wikileaks' release of a secret suppression order made by the Victorian Supreme Court, media lawyers were quoted in the Australian media to the effect that "anyone who tweets a link to the Wikileaks report, posts it on Facebook, or shares it in any way online could also face charges".<sup>[211]</sup>

## Effects on youth communication

Social media has affected the way the youth generations communicate. The introduction of social media has brought forth various forms of lingo.<sup>[212]</sup> Abbreviations have been introduced to cut down on time. The commonly known "LOL" has become globally recognized as the abbreviation for "laugh out loud" thanks to social media.<sup>[212]</sup> Online linguistics has changed the way youth communicate and will continue to do so in the future, as each year new catchphrases and neologisms such as "YOLO", which stands for "you only live once", and "BAE", which stands for "before anyone else" arise and start "trending" around the world.<sup>[213]</sup> Other trends that influence the way youth communicate is through the globally known hashtags. With the introduction of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, the hashtag was created in order to easily organize and search information. As hashtags such as #tbt ("throwback Thursday") become a part of online communication, it influenced the way in which youth share and communicate in their daily lives.<sup>[212]</sup> Because of these changes in linguistics and communication etiquette, researchers of media semiotics have found that this has altered youth's communications habits and more.<sup>[212]</sup> Not only does social media change the way people around the world communicate, it also alters the way we understand each other. Social media has allowed for mass cultural exchange and intercultural communication. As different cultures have different value systems, cultural themes, grammar, and worldviews, they also communicate differently.<sup>[214]</sup> The emergence of social media platforms collided different cultures and their communication methods together, forcing them to realign in order to communicate with ease with other cultures.<sup>[214]</sup> As different cultures continue to connect through social media platforms, thinking patterns, expression styles and cultural content that influence cultural values are chipped away.<sup>[214]</sup>



Banner in Bangkok, observed on the 30th of June 2014, informing the Thai public that 'like' or 'share' activity on social media may land them in jail

## See also


- Arab Spring, where social media played a defining role
- Brand infiltration
- Citizen media
- Coke Zero Facial Profiler
- Connectivism (learning theory)
- Connectivity of social media
- Culture jamming
- Human impact of Internet use
- Internet and political revolutions
- List of photo sharing websites
- List of video sharing websites
- List of social networking websites
- Media psychology
- Metcalfe's law
- MMORPG
- Networked learning
- New media
- Online presence management
- Online research community
- Participatory media
- Social media marketing
- Social media mining
- Social media optimization
- Social media surgery

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