Social Media has undoubtedly had a massive impact on how the world works, boasting many benefits by connecting the world both socially and politically. With that being said, I find it very clear to see that social media, or Social Media as we currently know it, also brings about a great deal of space for negative mental health impacts[2]. These negative effects can be seen as the result of “internet trolls”, self-esteem issues caused by comparison culture[1], typical bullying amongst many other forms of unwanted online behaviour. I plan to observe and research into how starting university and entering a new social environment impacts the mental state of young adults, how they feel current iterations of social media impact them mentally and finally how beneficial an institutionalised social media platform, built with the previous research areas in mind, would be to new students embarking on their studies within their new environment.

BACKGROUND SIGNIFICANCE

Having been a user of social media since the ‘MySpace days’ (approx 2005) I have seen various platforms come and go as part of trends and changes within the technological landscape. Although the introduction for such a medium of social interaction brought about its own set of challenges and problems, Ie Hunter Moore / isAnyoneUp, I personally saw the bigger and more widespread issues beginning with the advent of Facebook (approx 2009).

My Research project is set to study the mental health impacts of social media platforms and how an in-house platform for the university could be of a benefit to social life at university.

My research will be split into three areas which are as follows.

1: The mental health impacts of moving to or starting university.

2: The observable mental health impacts of current iterations of social media platforms.

3: With those sections of research in mind, how could an institutionalised platform that is built to cater for the outcomes found be of a positive benefit to university life.

For research section 1, I would have to employ a qualitative analysis in order to gauge how people have been affected in the first starting months at university and observe how they have found integrating into the new social environment. Given that this is many peoples first time away from home and entering into what can be a very daunting experience and that others may find their feet very quickly, I would be expecting quite varied results. It would benefit my research greatly to ask what could improve the social environment of the university experience.

For research section 2, I will observe and address literature of research already conducted to outline some of the major causes of negative mental health issues and how a new system built with such problems in mind might function. Thinking about what features could be modified, removed, or introduced.

Research section 3 will need to involve another round of quantitative analysis where I will propose a new platform with a collection of features

**References**

**[1]** Appel, Helmut; Crusius, Jan; Gerlach, Alexander L. (2015). Social Comparison, Envy, and Depression on Facebook: A Study Looking at the Effects of High Comparison Standards on Depressed Individuals. Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 34(4), pp.278.

**[2]** Siddiqui, S. and Singh, T., 2016. Social media its impact with positive and negative aspects. International journal of computer applications technology and research, 5(2), pp.71-75. http://www.ijcat.com/archives/volume5/issue2/ijcatr05021006.pdf