

Abstract

Social media platforms have revolutionized the way in which human users communicate with one another and perceive one another within the virtual space as well as in their everyday lives. One such platform that can be used to understand many of the impacts of social media on human users is Instagram. Since its launch in October of 2010, Instagram has been a social media platform that has revolutionized human relationships and created cultures within its platform that have spread into the every-day lives of human users. Many cultures, such as the rise of the micro influencer, beautification in regards to presenting oneself through filtered and photoshopped images, and the perception of popularity within the platform through “likes” as being a reflection of one’s social standing, have all emerged from the use of the platform by human users.

Within this paper, using the interpretive flexibility method, I will present the argument that the cultures created due to Instagram are a result of the uses and desires of human users, rather than the Instagram platform itself. The interpretive flexibility method argues that technologies are shaped by their use, and within the case of Instagram, many features as well as cultures stemming from such features have been inspired and shaped by the desires of human users. I will present the many cultures created within Instagram by human users, such as the culture of beautification, the culture of permanence, as well as the many negative impacts to mental health through cyberbullying, by the use of studies and academic journals such as those from the Pew Research Center and JAMA Psychiatry. I will use blog posts and public announcements from Instagram itself to portray the ways in which the features of the platform have been altered over time to meet the demands of its human users in order to provide a historical analysis of the platform itself.

Outline

- I. Introduction/Thesis
 - A. Same or similar to abstract above
- II. Cultures created by human users within the Instagram platform
 - A. Beautification / Body Dysmorphia
 - 1. AR Filters
 - 2. Photoshop
 - 3. Achieving “perfection”
 - B. Micro Influencing
 - 1. Trends / Advertisements
 - 2. Accessibility to becoming a micro influencer / the rise of influencer careers as seen through Instagram shops and sponsorships
 - C. Digital Permanence
 - 1. Stories
 - 2. Archives
 - 3. The desire to document moments throughout the day / the impact this has on the daily routines of human users
 - D. Cyberbullying
 - 1. Negative impacts on mental health
 - 2. The lack of regulation / ease at which one can bring harm to others through the use of anonymous profiles
 - E. Social capital / Likes

1. The impact of social media popularity on the way that one is viewed in their interactions outside of social media

III. Instagram Blog Posts / Public Announcements

- A. The alteration of Instagram features to fit the desires of users as seen through such blog posts and announcements
- B. An analysis of the shifts and changes seen within the platform since early creation
- C. An analysis of the rise in popularity / normalization of the integration of Instagram into the day to day lives of users

IV. Interpretive Flexibility Method

- A. An analysis of the way in which this method can be used to view Instagram as a platform

V. Conclusion

- A. Restate main arguments and points made within the paper, still need to complete research and either maintain my argument or possibly alter it through more findings

Works Cited

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