UNIT – 3 NOTES

Introduction to Social networks.

Social networks are **websites and apps that allow users and organizations to connect, communicate, share information, and form relationships**. People can connect with others in the same area, families, friends, and those with the same interests. Social networks are one of the most important uses of the internet today.

Social Networking

Social Networking refers to grouping of individuals and organizations together via some medium, in order to share thoughts, interests, and activities.

There are several web based social network services are available such as facebook, twitter, linkedin, Google+ etc. which offer easy to use and interactive interface to connect with people with in the country an overseas as well. There are also several mobile based social networking services in for of apps such as Whatsapp, hike, Line etc.

Available Social networking Services

The following table describes some of the famous social networking services provided over web and mobile:

S.N.	Service Description
1.	**Facebook** Allows to share text, photos, video etc. It also offers interesting online games.
2.	**Google+** It is pronounced as Google Plus. It is owned and operated by Google.
3.	**Twitter** Twitter allows the user to send and reply messages in form of tweets. These tweets are the small messages, generally include 140+ characters.
4.	**Faceparty** Faceparty is a UK based social networking site. It allows the users to create profiles and interact with each other using forums messages.
5.	**Linkedin** Linkedin is a business and professional networking site.
6.	**Flickr** Flickr offers image hosting and video hosting.
7.	**Ibibo** Ibibo is a talent based social networking site. It allows the users to promote one's self and also discover new talent.
8.	**Whatsapp** It is a mobile based messaging app. It allows to send text, video, and audio messages
9.	**Line** It is same as whatsapp. Allows to make free calls and messages.
10.	**Hike** It is also mobile based messager allows to send messages and exciting emoticons.

Where Social Networking Helps

Following are the areas where social networking has become most popular:

Online Marketing

Website like facebook allows us to create a page for specific product, community or firm and promiting over the web.

Online Jobs

Website like linkedin allows us to create connection with professionals and helps to find the suitable job based on one's specific skills set.

Online News

On social networking sites, people also post daily news which helps us to keep us updated.

Chatting

Social networking allows us to keep in contact with friends and family. We can communicate with them via messages.

Share Picture, Audio and video

One can share picture, audio and video using social networking sites.

How does social networking work?

The term *social networking* entails having connections in both the real and the digital worlds. Today, this term is mainly used to reference online social communications. The internet has made it possible for people to find and connect with others who they may never have met otherwise.

Online social networking is dependent on technology and internet connectivity. Users can access social networking sites using their PCs, tablets or smartphones. Most social networking sites run on a back end of searchable databases that use advanced programming languages, such as Python, to organize, store and retrieve data in an easy-to-understand format. For example, Tumblr uses such products and services in its daily operations as Google Analytics, Google Workspace and WordPress.

What is the purpose of social networking?

Social networking fulfils the following four main objectives:

- **Sharing.** Friends or family members who are geographically dispersed can connect remotely and share information, updates, photos and videos. Social networking also enables individuals to meet other people with similar interests or to expand their current social networks.

- **Learning.** Social networks serve as great learning platforms. Consumers can instantly receive breaking news, get updates regarding friends and family, or learn about what's happening in their community.

- **Interacting.** Social networking enhances user interactions by breaking the barriers of time and distance. With cloud-based video communication technologies such as WhatsApp or Instagram Live, people can talk face to face with anyone in the world.

- **Marketing.** Companies may tap into social networking services to enhance brand awareness with the platform's users, improve customer retention and conversion rates, and promote brand and voice identity.

What are the different types of social networking?

While there are various categories of social networking sites, the six most common types are the following:

- **Social connections.** This is a type of social network where people stay in touch with friends, family members, acquaintances or brands through online profiles and updates, or find new friends through similar interests. Some examples are Facebook, Myspace and Instagram.

- **Professional connections**. Geared toward professionals, these social networks are designed for business relationships. These sites can be used to make new professional contacts, enhance existing business connections and explore job opportunities, for example. They may include a general forum where professionals can connect with co-workers or offer an exclusive platform based on specific occupations or interest levels. Some examples are LinkedIn, Microsoft Yammer and Microsoft Viva.

- **Sharing of multimedia.** Various social networks provide video- and photography-sharing services, including YouTube and Flickr.

- **News or informational.** This type of social networking allow users to post news stories, informational or how-to content and can be general purpose or dedicated to a single topic. These social networks include communities of people who are looking for answers to everyday problems and they have much in common with web forums. Fostering a sense of helping others, members provide answers to questions, conduct discussion forums or teach others how to perform various tasks and projects. Popular examples include Reddit, Stack Overflow or Digg.

- **Communication.** Here, social networks focus on allowing the user to communicate directly with each other in one-on-one or group chats. They have less focus on posts or updates and are like instant messaging apps. Some examples are WhatsApp, WeChat and Snapchat.

- **Educational.** Educational social networks offer remote learning, enabling students and teachers to collaborate on school projects, conduct research, and interact through blogs and forums. Google Classroom, LinkedIn Learning and ePals are popular examples.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of social networking?

Social networking can be a double-edged sword. On one end, it provides unsurpassed social benefits, yet it can also make people more vulnerable to the spread of misinformation, as well as privacy and security threats.

Social networking offers the following benefits to consumers and businesses:

- **Brand awareness.** Social networking enables companies to reach out to new and existing clients. This helps to make brands more relatable and promotes brand awareness.

- **Instant reachability.** By erasing the physical and spatial boundaries between people, social networking websites can provide instant reachability.

- **Builds a following.** Organizations and businesses can use social networking to build a following and expand their reach globally.

- **Business success.** Positive reviews and comments generated by customers on social networking platforms can help improve business sales and profitability.

- **Increased website traffic.** Businesses can use social networking profiles to boost and direct inbound traffic to their websites. They can achieve this, for example, by adding inspiring visuals, using plugins and shareable social media buttons, or encouraging inbound linking.

Social networking also has the following downsides:

- **Rumors and misinformation.** Incorrect information can slip through the cracks of social networking platforms, causing havoc and uncertainty among consumers. Often, people take anything posted on social networking sites at face value instead of verifying the sources.

- **Negative reviews and comments.** A single negative review can adversely affect an established business, especially if the comments are posted on a platform with a large following. A tarnished business reputation can often cause irreparable damage.

- **Data security and privacy concerns.** Social networking sites can inadvertently put consumer data at risk. For instance, if a social networking site experiences a data breach, the users of that platform automatically fall under the radar as well. According to Business Insider,

a data breach in April 2021 leaked the personal data of more than 500 million Facebook users.

- **Time-consuming process.** Promoting a business on social media requires constant upkeep and maintenance. Creating, updating, preparing and scheduling regular posts can take a considerable amount of time. This can be especially cumbersome for small businesses that may not have the extra staff and resources to dedicate to social media marketing.

Social networks in business

There are many ways a business or organization can use social networks. Globally, the average person spends over two hours a day using social networks. This represents a great opportunity and market.

Most social networks are run as for-profit companies. They make most of their revenue from selling ads or promoted content. Facebook's parent company Meta has an almost $300 billion market cap.

Social networks can be used for customer research, engagement and marketing. They offer a way to directly connect businesses and customers. Brands can build a community around themselves. Social networks collect information about users' likes and dislikes, allowing for extremely targeted advertising. Social media listening allows an organization to learn what people are saying about their company.

Some businesses are implementing internal social networks. In very large organizations this can increase employee engagement and satisfaction. Also, as teams become more geographically diverse or have members working from home, private social networks can promote collaboration and information sharing.

Some business are beginning to use social networks in their recruitment strategies.

Examples of social networking

Every established organization advertises on social networking these days. Here are four examples of social networking websites:

- **Yelp.** Picking a restaurant, dentist, doctor or hair salon is not always easy, so social networking sites like Yelp offer crowdsourced customer reviews of these types of businesses or providers.

- **Pinterest.** Bookmarking sites like Pinterest enable users to share photos and organize links to a variety of online resources and websites. Similar to a digital scrapbook, Pinterest enables users to save specific *pins* to *pinboards*, making it easier to search for specific topics and share them with followers.

- **Rover.** A popular pet-sitter services portal, Rover enables pet owners to connect with pet sitters, dog walkers and pet-boarding services.

- **Airbnb.** Airbnb helps travelers search for a place to stay based on their preferences, including multishared spaces, shared spaces with private rooms and entire properties. Places on Airbnb are mostly rented out by homeowners.

What are the top 10 social networking sites?

Although there are numerous social networking websites, the following sites are the most popular:

1. **Facebook.** Facebook users create profiles, share information, send messages and post status updates on their *walls*. Ranked the most active social networking platform by DataReportal, Facebook has more than 2.9 billion active users. In 2021, the company was renamed Meta to reflect its business beyond just social media.

2. **YouTube.** This popular video-sharing website enables users to share, upload and post videos and vlogs. According to Global Media Insight, YouTube has more than 2 billion monthly active users.

3. **WhatsApp.** This free instant messaging app lets users send text messages, make video and voice calls, and share documents. According to WhatsApp, it has more than 2 billion users worldwide.

4. **Instagram.** This free social media platform enables users to share long- and short-form videos and photos. It is primarily designed for iOS and Android smartphone users, but a desktop version is also available. However, sharing and uploading of content is only available through the Instagram app. Also owned by Meta, Instagram has over 2 billion monthly active users as of December 2021, according to CNBC.

5. **TikTok.** This app is used for sharing and making personalized short videos. TikTok caters to a younger audience and is well known for being a lively and fun-to-use social networking platform. According to the *Business of Apps* newsletter, TikTok has more than 1.2 billion users as of the end of 2021.

6. **Tumblr.** This <u>microblogging</u> site enables users to publish multimedia and other content types inside short blog posts. Users can also follow other users and make their blogs private. According to FinancesOnline, as of February 2021, Tumblr has more than 518 million user accounts.

7. **Twitter.** Launched in 2006, this social media platform enables users to share their thoughts and opinions with a broad audience by posting messages known as *tweets* that contain up to 280 characters. According to DataReportal, as of January 2022, Twitter has more than 436 million users.

8. **Pinterest.** The Pinterest bookmarking site enables users to save and organize links to favorite online resources and destinations through *tagging*. According to Pinterest Inc., the platform has 431 million global monthly active users as of December 2021 -- a 6% decrease over the previous year.

9. **Reddit.** Founded in 2005, Reddit provides a diverse collection of forums and subforums -- also known as subreddits -- on a variety of topics, including sports, breaking news and technology. Here, users can comment on each other's posts, as well as share news and content. According to Reddit, it has more than 50 million daily active users. This translates into 430 million monthly users as of 2019, according to *The Small Business Blog*.

10. **Snapchat.** This multimedia app can be used on smartphones running Android or iOS. Founded in 2011, Snapchat enables users to send pictures or videos called *snaps* to friends. These snaps vanish after they have been viewed. According to Snap Inc., Snapchat has 319 million daily active users as of the end of 2021.

Controversies in social networks

Social networks are used daily by much of the world's population. There are therefore many controversies that surround their use and management.

<u>Social media addiction</u> is becoming common. People can begin to feel a sense of anxiety if they don't check their social media accounts, or they may compulsively refresh them. Social

networking posts are also highly curated, people only post the good things that happen to them. This can cause a warped view of reality where the viewer thinks that others have better lives than they do. This leads to a fear of missing out (FOMO) on social events.

Cyberbullying is when someone makes social media posts with the intention to harm someone else. This can take the form of publicly posting the private information of someone or sending abusive messages. Tragically, cyberbullying has led to the suicide of some individuals. It is now a major concern in public schools. Doxing is when someone publicly posts the personally identifiable information, such as an address or phone number, of someone else.

As mentioned in disadvantages, privacy is a major concern for many social network users. Anything that is posted can be used by the site to sell advertisements. This can include location information, embarrassing details or private data. This information could also be requested by law enforcement officials. Additionally, some social networks have confusing privacy settings, causing people to accidentally make information public. Since they store a lot of personal information, social networks are also susceptible to data breaches.

Censorship is a hot-button issue for many social networks. Social networks are private companies, so the content posted by individuals isn't necessarily protected by governmental free speech laws, but instead is at the discretion of the site's terms of service (ToS) or administrators. This can put the site into the position of arbitrating what is or is not allowed on the site. This can be particularly divisive when it comes to political issues, hate speech and calls to violence that may be posted by public figures. Some say that the sites have a moral responsibility to take a hard stand against all negative speech, while others say that all speech should be allowed by the platforms and any content removal is censorship.

Misinformation can be easily spread on social networks. Users are encouraged to share the latest news or discuss new topics. This can cause rumors or hearsay to be shared as truth. Others share their opinions as fact. It has also been reported that users, organizations and even governments may intentionally share false information, sometimes while pretending to be someone else. This has caused some social networks to begin adding fact checking alerts to some posts that may contain misinformation.

Types of social media

1. Social Networks - Connect with people

2. Messaging Apps - Message privately

3. Photo/Media Sharing - Share photos, videos and more

4. Blogging & Publishing Networks - Long format content

5. Interactive Apps - Connect, create and share content

6. Discussion Forums - Share knowledge, news and ideas

7. Bookmarking & Content Curation - Discover, save and share content

8. Review Network - View and publish reviews

9. Social Shopping Networks - Shop online

10. Interest Based Networks - Explore hobbies and interests

11. Sharing economy networks - Trade goods and services

12. Audio only apps - Join discussions, share ideas and knowledge on audio

13. Anonymous Social Networks - Post anonymously

1. Social Networks

The primary goal of social networks is to help you connect with people, build communities and groups, share ideas, interests, and information. What started as simple services, have now become a mandatory part of any social media marketing strategy. The benefits of using social networks to grow your brand in terms of awareness, relationship building, market research, lead generation et al, are endless!

A. Facebook:

This social media giant requires no introduction. With 2.7+ billion monthly active users, Facebook lets you connect with people and brands, create or join groups, share photos, videos, links, go live and find events nearby. It also has a marketplace that lets you buy and sell locally as well. Since Facebook was primarily created to connect people, brands have a tough time with visibility. But that can be compensated for if you have a good marketing budget as Facebook gives you the opportunity to create great ad campaigns.

For instance, in September 2020, GoPro launched the #GoProMillionDollarChallenge that asked its 10.9 million users to "capture meaningful moments" from their GoPro HERO9 Black and share it using the hashtag. The result was around 29,000 submissions from over 125 countries out of which, 56 of those submissions composed 2 minutes of a highlight clip with 668k views and still counting. The creators were awarded $17,857 each.

While you might not have that kind of marketing budget, the key takeaway here is that GoPro is still heavy on using user-generated content that fuels their page, appeals to their target audience and keeps them engaged.

If you're new to Facebook ads

B.Twitter

Twitter is a type of social media that lets you share text-based content, videos and images. Over the years, it has become a source to get the latest updates on any current topic including news, entertainment, sports and even politics. The real advantage of Twitter is that it lets you share content in real time. One drawback is the 280 character limit unlike most other sites that do not have this limit but it lets you keep your message short and crisp.

Twitter has currently become the go-to for customer service as you find people directly messaging brands for quick online resolutions. It's a great way to build your brand image and show your consumers that you care. The international sports brand Nike created an account @NikeService that responds to customer queries in English, Spanish and French, even providing real time updates.

, check out this step-by-step tutorial that will get you upto speed.

C.LinkedIn

It is not all about searching for a job or uploading your resume for prospective job hunters. This professional social media site lets you share content in the form of text, links, photos or videos, network by connecting with users and businesses, build your brand and position yourself as a thought leader and authority in your industry.

For instance, when you head over to HP's page, you know exactly who they are and what they do. They've kept things fresh with their visual content, even while sharing a job posting.

2. Messaging Apps

We've all been guilty of forwarding a joke or a meme through WhatsApp or a quick sticker exchange on WeChat but these types of social media apps have evolved to be more than just a way to share text messages. With features for calling, creating groups, broadcasting messages to multiple users, exchanging money and the option of creating chatbots, messaging apps could help your business in more ways than one.

Currently, businesses such as Booking.com use WhatsApp to share booking confirmations with their users, providing a quick and easy customer experience. In 2016, Whole Foods Market launched a Facebook Messenger chatbot that shared recipe recommendations if you typed in a single ingredient or sent a food emoji.

There are infinite ways in which you could leverage messaging apps to give your audience a direct communication channel to respond to queries, resolve complaints, share updates and build trust.

3. Photo & Media Sharing Apps

A. Instagram

What started out as just a picture sharing site has now culminated into a media sharing giant. Through Instagram, you can share photos, videos, and stories with a myriad of different filters which you can save as Highlights under your bio. You can also publish 30 second vertical videos called Reels, post on IGTV for long format video content and even go live!

It also lets you connect your account to Facebook, Twitter and other social media apps and cross share your content directly. You can even connect privately with other users through direct messaging.

As a brand, you can create an Instagram Business Profile and get analytics for your posts to improve your marketing strategy. What's more? You can even advertise and promote your posts via Facebook Business Manager or boost posts directly through the app.

FitBit's posts currently excel at delivering a mix of great, clean visuals, information and adding value to their community of followers in the form of health tips, fitness hacks and self-care.

B.Imgur

Launched in 2009, Imgur (pronounced image-ur) is an image and GIF sharing media network that lets you create and browse visual content that mainly consists of memes. There are no 'friends' or 'followers' on Imgur, just users, and the content on Imgur is promoted via upvotes by its users. Content that is found to be of little value, is downvoted. This democratic approach to content is what makes Imgur a very niche community.

To crack this niche community, mostly made of millennial men belonging to the age group between 24-36, Imgur pairs its in-house creative team with advertisers to ensure the message is well-suited for the platform. For instance, eBay experimented on Imgur, where, instead of directly selling their product, they shared Father's Day gifting ideas that paired videos and photos of drones with product links to their site. The ads were successful because they were not heavily branded.

If your brand has meme worthy content or great ideas to share, Imgur might just be an untapped reservoir of potential growth for your brand.

C. YouTube

While not officially a search engine, after Google, the second most number of searches happen on YouTube. Their statistics speak for themself. YouTube hosts a variety of video content ranging from how tos, to TV shows, to commercials - if its in a video format, you will find it on YouTube. Creating and sharing your video content is easy and you have the option of going live too. As a business, YouTube offers you excellent SEO and provides all the analytics you need - all for free. More so, you can even advertise on YouTube to increase your reach.

The key to winning on YouTube is either providing value to your subscribers or entertaining them. For instance, LEGO's video content caters to both children and adults alike. From educational videos (using LEGO) to animated series, LEGO has mastered the art of keeping its audience engaged.

Similarly, depending on what your business does, you can create tutorials, how-tos, plan a product launch and publish the video as a premier while uploading videos, plan live sessions or create interesting videos around your product. The creative possibilities of using YouTube to leverage your business are endless.

D.Vimeo

Vimeo is a video sharing platform that provides businesses with tools they need to create, share and market high-quality videos. It offers you a more community driven audience that prefers quality and shares valuable inputs. You also don't have to worry about pre-roll ads because

Vimeo doesn't allow it. It has great customizable options and good audio-video quality. By subscribing for their paid packages, you can access premium features that include technical support, using a custom player logo, powerful analytics et al.

If you're new to <u>video marketing</u> and have little expertise, a paid Vimeo account can offer you personalized support from their team. It also offers you very specific privacy options which can be quite useful if you want to embed your video on just one site, password protect it or adjust viewer permissions. If you have videos that are very specific to your brand like introductions, explainers, product videos or testimonials, Vimeo is the way to go, given the quality and customizations it offers.

4. Blogging & Publishing Networks

If your business does not have a blog, you might want to consider getting one. Having a tight <u>content marketing strategy</u> enables you to establish yourself as a thought leader by carving out a niche of readers who find value in your content. More so, it can <u>help you with SEO</u>, increase awareness about your business by sharing insights and knowledge as well as generate content you can cross-promote on other social media channels such as Facebook and LinkedIn. A blog can become the backbone of your content marketing strategy.

For instance, the <u>Etsy Blog</u> publishes the success stories of its users among other content that ties back to their store. It's a brilliant way to attract more users and meet your business objective

If you choose to host on your website, <u>Wordpress</u> and <u>HubSpot</u> is your best option. You can build a truly customized website that speaks your brand language. With the option of various plugins, you can drive the engagement you want without worrying too much about server management and the tedious backend checks.

If you choose to host your blog independently, then <u>Tumblr</u> and <u>Medium</u> are definitely the types of social media you should go for. Tumblr is a microblogging website that lets you post multimedia and other content such as text, quotes, links, chats and even audio to a short-form blog that other users can discover and share. Posts here can be liked, commented on and reshared. Tumblr is a great website if you're looking to publish less wordy, entertaining content that appeals to a younger audience.

Medium, unlike Tumblr and Wordpress, is a publishing platform that means business. It isn't flexible in design as all you'll get is your own profile and the formatting options are limited unlike Wordpress. The real advantage with Medium is the visibility. Albeit, it is not free, but it ranks much higher in search engines and has a more premium appeal due to the quality of content and the writers it hosts.

5. Interactive Apps

These types of social media allow users to share photos and videos with a variety of experimental features that include AR/VR filters, music overlays and other interactive features.

A. Snapchat

<u>Snapchat</u> was responsible for popularizing the stories format when it launched. It lets you share pics and short videos known as 'snaps', with the peers you've added, using multiple filters. A snap you share to your stories is viewable for 24 hours. Within private messages, your snaps disappear after the person you've sent it to has viewed them.

Snapchat has an interesting feature called Discover where you can view your friends' stories, Our Stories - which is a collection of Snapchats submitted by different users, Publisher stories by Snapchat's media partners and Shows which are stories by TV Network partners. VICE was one of the first users to partner with Snapchat and be featured on their Discover page. Currently with 8.2m subscribers, they share news, documentaries and utilize the quiz feature within Snapchat too.

Snapchat also offers you powerful advertising tools which can help you drive sales, get leads or reach a wider audience. All you need is a Snapchat Ad Account. This tutorial can help you get started on your first Snapchat ad.

B. TikTok

In just a few years, TikTok has established itself as one of the biggest social media platforms that hosts over 1 billion monthly active users. Popular among GenZ and Millenials, you can use TikTok to create and share less than 60 second videos which can range from lip-syncing, dancing, fitness, voice overs and the ability to collaborate with or comment on other users' content.

TikTok is versatile, authentic, appeals to local audiences and is short and concise. Plus, cashing in on the latest trends is a good way to improve visibility on the platform.

Currently, 50% of the top brands have no TikTok presence or activity. This is a great chance for small businesses to leverage the platform and create a fanbase.

6. Discussion Forums

Discussion forums are one of the earliest types of social media. These websites aren't very welcoming of direct advertising, but can become a valuable space to gather market research, build a community, get honest customer feedback, build trust and generate leads. You will not find brand pages here like you do on other types of social media. You create individual accounts with basic information.

Discussion forums like Quora and Reddit follow a simple Q&A format where answers that are of value to the community get upvoted while unfavorable ones are downvoted. You can also opt for paid ads on these platforms. But, it does get a little tricky for brands as promotional content can get downvoted.

A. Reddit

If you are new to Reddit, a user account is represented as u/"username" and then there are subreddits which are represented as r/"topic". Subreddits are communities generally dedicated to a single topic, issue or query. As an active contributor in these communities, you will earn Karma Points when you comment, share links and get downvoted or upvoted. Karma Points are like scorecards for Redditors.

From Netflix's user profile, you can see how many Karma Points and Awards they've received from the Reddit community for being active contributors.

As a business, you can observe the conversations around your brand by searching for topics or subreddits that suit your marketing goals. You can also contribute to subreddits by leaving honest comments about your service, starting your own discussion threads and finding suitable

subreddits to post your content. For instance, Netflix posts their trailers under the subreddit u/trailers or they find relevant subreddits to post specific content on. For example, they posted a beyond the screen video for Army Of The Dead under the subreddit r/zombies.

B.Quora

Quora follows the same Q&A mechanisms as Reddit. You can use Quora to build your brand image. The trick here is to follow Topics that are related to your business. Let's say you're a clothing brand. You can type clothing in the search bar and choose to follow any topic you relate to. You can even filter it out by type (question, answer, post, profile, topic), by author and time.

Once you're following topics, you can search for the right questions to answer. You need to be careful about not sounding too promotional or else you will get downvoted. Since there are no brand profiles on Quora, you will have to get your employees or preferably someone in the top management or an industry expert to answer the questions you pick. The answers can be followed up with a CTA to direct them to your website. Give out as much information as possible without any fluff to get your answers upvoted. More upvotes means more visibility.

For example, in the question below for "What's the best place to find cheap clothing online", the most upvoted answer is by an owner of a brand, who is sharing information of value to the community.

7. Bookmarking & Content Curation

These types of social media networks help you discover, save and share content and can easily become your go-to channels for ideas, news, hot topics and trends.

A.Pinterest

One of the world's leading platforms to share ideas and find inspiration, Pinterest functions as a visual search engine. With an interesting UI, Pinterest functions using "Pins" that are essentially visual bookmarks that you collect on "Boards". A Pin could contain an image, a video, an infographic or could link back to a source. You can create a collection of Pins or Repins, from another source, on a specific Board, which essentially functions as a category of items or ideas. Boards help you organize your pins and as a business, it makes it easier to help your audience find what they are looking for. For instance, Whole Foods Market creates tips, DIY or How-To infographics that are seasonal, topical and relevant to their audience.

Whole Foods Market's content is visually appealing, neat and provides value to the user in the form of tips, hacks, information on new products, etc. Each piece of their visual content links back to their website.

Pro-Tip: If you haven't already begun marketing on Pinterest, read our ultimate guide to marketing on Pinterest for insights and how to get started!

B.Flipboard

Founded in 2010, around the same time as Pinterest, Flipboard is a content curation website that allows you to pick topics that interest you, ranging from news, entertainment, tech, design, etc. and flip them into a magazine. A magazine is a customized collection of the stories you

pick and helps you access/organize them in one place. You can have multiple magazines for each of your interests. The editorial team also curates special magazines with the latest news and trends with publishers from the Guardian, BBC, The Telegraph, Forbes, etc. ensuring that you have authentic and reliable content.

As a platform that is driven by news, information sharing and hot topics, it is a little less about visual appeal, unlike Pinterest. By creating and curating content that is current and relevant to your industry, you can establish yourself as an expert and drive more traffic to your website by sharing links. Levi's does a fantastic job at that. They have flipped stories into 11 Magazines across different topics.

Each magazine has curated content that either promotes their brand, shares news specific to Levi's or drives users to their website.

If you are in a clothing and lifestyle industry like Levi's, you could create product catalogues and flip them into a magazine, highlight industry news, share company insights and events or even create a newsletter for your followers. The key is to remain consistent.

8. Review Networks

How many times has a review on Yelp saved you from ordering something you'd regret eating or a Tripadvisor review that saved your vacation from turning into an absolute nightmare? These types of social media networks help you find and share reviews on products, services, food, travel and stay, etc. People often check reviews to avoid an unpleasant experience. Positive reviews can undoubtedly influence sales and are extremely vital for your business.

As a business, these types of social media networks can help you understand your customers' perspective. Reviews, good or bad, help you identify what is working and what is not, and make necessary improvements. They give you a chance to solve issues and establish yourself as a reliable brand. Whether you're big or small, the way you handle negative comments can make a world of a difference in building trust and loyalty with your customers.

Pro-Tip: Assign a team to monitor review networks relevant to your business and respond to queries or complaints within 24 hours. Quick resolutions and the ability to turn a negative experience into a positive one can turn a disgruntled customer into a fan.

9. Social Shopping Networks

Remember when malls were a thing? Now, with everything available online, social shopping networks like Etsy and Faveable take the experience of e-commerce a step further by combining product sales with consumer recommendations. These types of social media networks focus on creating a community of individuals who share similar interests, opinions and influence each other's purchasing decisions.

Faveable takes an editorial approach to social shopping. Instead of presenting the consumer with just a product, Faveable makes shopping easy by employing experts who independently research products by thoroughly testing them. Once tested, the products are reviewed in articles and presented with a link where you can buy them.

Similarly, Etsy's store promotes small businesses and individual crafters giving them a chance to sell and market themselves for as less as $0.20.

The products you sell are reviewed by people who purchase them. Helpful reviews are often upvoted and we already know the impact of positive reviews.

The key to succeeding on Etsy and Fancy is to ensure good branding. This does not only involve your logo but how you shoot your products and how descriptive your content is. If you do not want to invest in a studio, there are many ways to shoot epic product videos at home.

Pro-Tip: To find more enticing ways to showcase your products, try these product templates by InVideo for free.

10. Interest Based Networks

Unlike other types of social media that cater to a wide variety of topics, interest based networks focus solely on a single area of interest, be it books, music or home design. If you have a very specific niche, interest based networks can help you specifically target the right audience.

For instance, if you're a publisher, Goodreads is a great resource to tap on. Goodreads content is fueled by authors and avid readers. You can discover, explore, rate and review books across a wide range of categories. By adding friends, you can explore what they are reading, what they want to read and leave comments.

By searching for a genre, you can access various books, rate them or click on want to read which then gets shared on your profile where your friends can comment or leave a review.

Similarly, if you're in the space of housing or interior design, Houzz lets you browse the work of other designers, create collections of your own work as well as connect with people looking for interior design services. When you upload a design, users can either save or share your pictures, ask questions or leave a comment.

If you have a very specific target audience, an interest based network can help you connect with an audience looking specifically for your service as well as keep up with current trends.

11. Sharing Economy Networks

People don't want to own things anymore and sharing economy networks solve that issue. It enables individuals to save money by sharing services. It's a perfect tech enabled online solution for those wanting to save money and those wanting to make it. For instance, Uber connects drivers to users who need a ride, all from the convenience of a mobile app. You even have the option to share feedback on your ride by providing ratings.

Like interest based networks, sharing economy networks also cater to specific niches. So venturing into these types of social media is only possible if you fit into those specific industries. For instance, if you own a bed & breakfast, listing your business on Airbnb can help you drive more leads and sales.

12. Audio Only Apps

There are many people out there who listen to podcasts regularly. You might be one of them too! As the name of this category suggests, it is audio only. Apart from your profile picture, your content does the talking for you - literally!

Currently, Clubhouse, a social audio app, has been making waves. The app lets you explore different rooms created by users for a wide variety of topics. Where else could you possibly join a room where Elon Musk is talking about cryptocurrency? You can listen in, share your thoughts and chat with like-minded individuals. Best part is that you can host your own room which gives business owners the exciting opportunity to share their knowledge and establish themselves as thought leaders.

By creating a room or joining a club, you can stay up-to-date with what's happening, listen to experts, find people with the skills you need, give free advice and probably even get new business! The possibilities are endless.

If your business already owns a podcast, what better way to get more ears on it than putting it out on Spotify? It currently has 356 million monthly active users and 158 million premium subscribers. If your business isn't into podcasting, you can always create an audio ad for Spotify for as little as $250.

13. Anonymous Social Networks

If you're looking for new potential spaces or social media networks or users, these are the kind of networks where you won't find them. As the name suggests, anonymous social networks let you post anonymously. Sites like Whisper and 4chan are prime examples.

As these sites allow you to post anonymously, there is no accountability for the user and these networks can easily become sites for cyberbullying, to vent, gossip or snoop - all of which don't do much for any business or brand.

Ways Social Media Impacts Cybersecurity

Social media is appealing because humans are inherently social creatures. We like to connect, share and discuss. But it's clear that sometimes, these impulses take a wrong turn in the remote, detached online settings where social media takes place.

A key issue with social media use – one that's often not understood or even recognized – is the cybersecurity risk it introduces. This risk doesn't only affect individuals; as an employer, your employees' social media behaviors may create significant risk to your organization.

It's necessary to understand how malicious actors gather information from social media platforms about your employees, particularly with digital artifacts, relationships and personally identifiable information aggregation across platforms.

1) Everyone's Information Has Value

Once you create a digital profile, your information is available for everyone to see. That makes it available to be harvested by malicious actors. People tend to repeatedly use similar images, usernames and email addresses for different platforms. They also use those email addresses for other, more sensitive online activities, like banking. Every time you put a piece of information online, it puts you at greater risk.

It's surprising how many people believe their online information isn't a target for bad actors. They assume that since they aren't rich or famous or have a student bank account, no one would be interested in it. But the money in your bank account is of interest to criminals; your computer can be compromised and used as a resource to target other people of interest to criminals. That means every person is of some interest to a criminal.

2) Oversharing Creates Risks for Curated Phishing

Everyone knows someone within their social media circle who overshares – that virtual social butterfly with way too many "friends" who offer a running commentary on everything they are doing, everywhere they are going, every personal problem they're having.

What most people don't know is that this kind of oversharing can open a person up to the risk of spear phishing and similar attacks. Why? The more information an attacker can string together about you, the more likely they'll be able to create a realistic-seeming email or text that you will engage with.

For employers evaluating a prospective employee, a habitual over-sharer is at a higher risk for phishing attempts, which then puts the company at risk. And that leads into the next point.

3) Bad Actors Can Aggregate Data Across Forums

Every bit of information you put on your social media accounts is a potential data point, but it's not only about the content you share. Bad actors can gather information from the memes and quizzes you fill out. It's a seemingly harmless diversion to respond to memes like "Your secret agent name is your mother's maiden name plus your favorite color."

What else do those answers remind you of? How about the security questions that sites ask to recover passwords? First pet, first car, favorite color and so on. It's been shown that some of these quizzes are created by malicious actors to gain access to your online accounts.

One or two bits of information aren't likely to be dangerous, but if you become the target of an attack, the bad actor will look for more information across your social accounts. Any content that's publicly available is of potential use. For instance, if bad actors can find your business email address easily, they can use that info to attempt a Business Email Compromise attack.

4) Relationships Can be Leveraged for Information

In addition to what you share and what others share with you, your social media connections also pose potential risk. A clear example comes from the Cambridge Analytica scandal. When you post something and your friends like it, comment on it or reshare it, that's now a relationship that's exposed if that post is publicly available.

Even if your accounts are private, there's still risk. For instance, your Facebook profile image is public, and some of your connections can comment on your profile image if you've recently changed it.

Even if you don't share your interests, location or education history, an attacker can conduct pattern analysis across relationships or life pattern analysis. They can derive information about you just from your relationships, whether you share it or not. In fact, this is one of the most valuable tactic attackers use.

5) Disinformation on Social Media Leads to Business Risk

Attackers are taking advantage of disinformation and misinformation. For instance, malicious actors could take advantage of a recent data breach by sending an email like, "Your account has been compromised" or "You're locked out of your account. Click here to change your password."

These attackers are taking advantage of the individual's decision cycle to get access to corporate computer systems, sensitive information, bank accounts and more.

Social Safety: Strong Policy is Needed

These days, social media is about more than being social. It's become a business necessity, but it's also now a potential security liability. Attackers have adapted their methods so that they can glean important facts about your employees from social media to develop stealthy phishing campaigns and other social engineering-based attacks.

Make sure you have a strong social media policy in place and that you enforce it. Also, consider monitoring the social media of your employees, as well as your corporate social presence. Such steps will help you stay ahead of social cyber risk.

Social Media and Its Impact On Society

Context

1. Social media has been accused of polarising society due to the inflammatory nature of certain posts.
2. World over concerns has been raised over social media being used for surveillance, election meddling, etc.

Background

1. Social media has become ubiquitous. As per a UN report, 47 % of the global population is online and among them, the percentage of social media users is rising steadily.
2. It does not have a steep learning curve and compared to other traditional websites offers content in the local language.
3. The barriers to entry are quite low and there is a large and well development ecosystem in place for users which is unavailable in traditional TV media. The positives of social media.
4. Social media offers a variety of entertainment that offers an escape from the conventional scripted entertainment industry funded by established studios.
5. It offers people-to-people interaction that breaks barriers and forges a true human connection.
6. It also has been instrumental in pro-democracy fights in many oppressive regimes.
7. Social media also played an important role in bringing out stories of 'Metoo' victims.
8. Social media is also playing a crucial role in disaster relief, blood donation drives, etc.

Hashtag in social media

A hashtag is a word or keyword phrase preceded by a hash symbol (#). It's **used within a post on social media to help those who may be interested in your topic to be able to find it when they search for a keyword or particular hashtag**. It helps to draw attention to your posts and encourage interaction.

How to Use Hashtags Effectively on Social Media

When it comes to promoting your brand on social media, hashtags are a great way to drive views, likes, and shares. Previously known as the pound sign (#), the hashtag is a way to make your content discoverable to a captive audience.

Hashtags were first widely used on Twitter, but they have become commonplace on other social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and TikTok. Mastering the hashtag gives you a powerful way to engage your audience and increase your social impact at no cost other than the time it takes to do some research and pay attention to trends.

Used correctly, hashtags help people interested in your topic to find you and help expand your influence and followers.

What is a Hashtag?

A hashtag is a word or keyword phrase preceded by a hash symbol (#). It's used within a post on social media to help those who may be interested in your topic to be able to find it when they search for a keyword or particular hashtag. It helps to draw attention to your posts and encourage interaction.

What Do You Do with Hashtags?

When using a phrase as a hashtag, you spell it out without spaces, such as #usinghashtags. It can include numbers but not symbols or punctuation. The hashtag can be placed at the beginning, middle or end of your social media post or comment, and it allows what you have written to be indexed by the social media network. With this strategy, people who are not your fans or followers can still find your content.

If you need some guidance on how to research keywords to feed into your hashtags, check out our infographic for five easy steps.

What Does a Hashtag Mean on Social Media?

While it sounds simple to place a hashtag in front of your keyword, there's some other basic information that's important to know when you are trying to be found by using hashtags.

Using them only makes a difference in your social media strategy when done the right way. Here are some general tips:

- Don't get carried away using a hashtag every couple of words. The number of hashtags that can be used depends on which platform you are using. But in most cases, one to three hashtags can have more impact than a lot of them.

- Keep hashtags short and memorable rather than trying to use a lot of words in one tag. Remember #BlackOutTuesday being used successfully as part of the Black Lives Matter movement in America in 2020?

- Don't try to choose hashtags that are too clever or obscure. If you choose a tag that no one is going to search for, it won't benefit your marketing as it won't be found!

- Use hashtags that are detailed and specific as this will lead to better results than broad or general ones. Broad terms are not likely to be searched, and if you use them, your content will probably get lost in a sea of unrelated content.

- Don't try to force hashtags into every post. Instead, use them when they add value and are likely to stimulate conversation and interaction.

- Hashtags can not only attract members of your target audience but can also be used to research your competition. Search using hashtags, and you will uncover relevant content related to your topic.

Why are Hashtags Important?

Hashtags are important on social media as they enable your content to be found by the right people. Using relevant hashtags helps your content to be found and helps drive traffic to your content so that you can boost views, likes, and shares. The key is finding the right ones that match your content and appeal to users.

How to Find Effective Hashtags: Start with Influencers

There can be a fine line between hashtags that are too general and hashtags that are too complicated or can't be found. A good place to start to determine what hashtags are effective is by paying attention to what hashtags influencers in your niche have chosen and are using.

The chances are you have a good idea who the influencers are that are capturing the attention of your audience, but if you are brand new to a niche, how do you find them? For a particular niche, the influencers are the people whose voices are most trusted and listened to, such as celebrities, famous bloggers, and YouTube users. There's also a great bank of B2B influencers that you can use to create marketing impact, just make sure they are relevant to your business.

A great tool to use to identify influencers is BuzzSumo. Using this tool, you can find the top content, bloggers, publications and writers in your niche. Follow the top influencers, and notice the hashtags they use regularly to tap into relevant keywords and trends.

Once you identify relevant influencers, you should use an influencer tracker tool to keep a list of important factors such as social channels used, specialty and relevance to your brand.

How Do Hashtags Work?

The point of using hashtags on social media is that you are indicating to a follower/user and algorithm that your content relates to a specific topic or category. Ultimately, it helps users to find relevant content easily across platforms so your content is discoverable to a wider (or niche) audience.

How to Use Hashtags on Twitter

Using relevant hashtags on Twitter can increase your engagement, as long as you don't go overboard. One or two hashtags per tweet should suffice. When you use a couple of hashtags and specifically ask your followers to retweet, this can result in even more engagement.

The use of hashtags on Twitter will make your post accessible when people search for your tag. It can also help you to find conversations to get involved in. For even more impact on this platform, research trending hashtags. Check out this list of Twitter hashtag research tools and one specific to researching Twitter trends is Twitonomy.

How to Use Hashtags on Facebook

When you're trying to get more exposure for your Facebook posts, using hashtags may help as they can boost organic reach. On Facebook, it's important not to use too many hashtags. Usually, it's recommended to only use one or two. More than that will make you seem unprofessional and could annoy those reading your posts.

You can find relevant hashtags to use by simply typing a keyword into the search bar.

How to Use Hashtags on LinkedIn

On LinkedIn, people haven't always used hashtags, but they work on this platform the same way as any other. As of yet, LinkedIn doesn't allow clickable hashtags in the body of the articles so you'll need to use hashtags in the body of your post to get your article discovered.

One to three hashtags are usually recommended for LinkedIn. These can be added using the 'Add' button under 'Hashtags'

The use of hashtags on LinkedIn can get your posts in front of people outside your network. Let's say you have 500 LinkedIn connections, posting without a hashtag limits your content to that network. However, if you use a hashtag such as #PPCMarketing, you may triple the number that sees it driving up your post engagement and credibility.

How to Use Hashtags on Instagram

Using hashtags on <u>Instagram can increase reach</u> and drive engagement. So feel free to use up to ten or eleven relevant and popular hashtags for Instagram Stories to reach the widest audience possible.

You can use as many as 30 hashtags on a regular post on Instagram. You probably don't need to use that many, but it's good to know that using more is acceptable here, so you can experiment.

Social media marketing

Social media marketing is a powerful way for businesses of all sizes to reach prospects and customers. People discover, learn about, follow, and shop from brands on social media, so if you're not on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, you're missing out! Great marketing on social media can bring remarkable success to your business, creating devoted brand advocates and even driving leads and sales.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLATFORMS

| Platform	PEOPLE	CONTENT	STRATEGIES	CONS
Facebook	• 25-34 • Boomers	• Photos & links • Information • Live video	• Local mkting • Advertising • Relationships	• Weak organic reach
YouTube	• 18-25 • 26-35	• How-tos • Webinars • Explainers	• Organic • SEO • Advertising	• Video is resource-heavy
Instagram	• 18-24, 25-34 • Millennials	• Inspiration & adventure • Questions/polls	• Ecommerce • Organic • Influencer	• High ad costs
Twitter	• 25-34, 35-49 • Educated/ wealthy	• News • Discussion • Humor	• Customer service • Ads for males	• Small ad audience
LinkedIn	• 46-55 • Professionals	• Long-form content • Core values	• B2B • Organic • International	• Ad reporting & custom audience
TikTok	• 10-19 • Female (60%)	• Entertainment • Humor • Challenges	• Influencer marketing • Series content	• Relationship building
Snapchat	• 13-17, 25-34 • Teens	• Silly • Feel-good • Trends	• Video ads • Location-based mkting • App mkting	• Relationship building

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What is social media marketing?

Social media marketing is a form of digital marketing that leverages the power of popular social media networks to achieve your marketing and branding goals. But it's not just about creating business accounts and posting when you feel like it. Social media marketing requires an evolving strategy with measurable goals and includes:

- Maintaining and optimizing your profiles.
- Posting pictures, videos, stories, and live videos that represent your brand and attract a relevant audience.

- Responding to comments, shares, and likes and monitoring your reputation.

- Following and engaging with followers, customers, and influencers to build a community around your brand.
  Social media marketing also includes paid <u>social media advertising,</u> where you can pay to have your business appear in front of large volumes of highly targeted users.
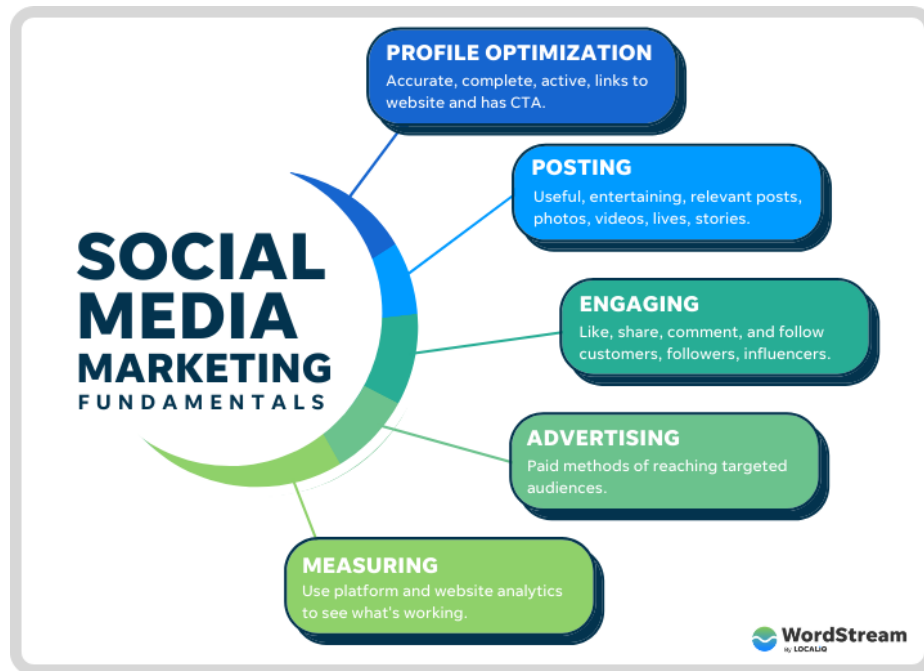
Benefits of social media marketing

With such widespread usage and versatility, social media is one of the most effective free channels for marketing your business today. Here are some of the specific benefits of social media marketing:

- **Humanize your business:** Social media enables you to turn your business into an active participant in your market. Your profile, posts, and interactions with users form an approachable persona that your audience can familiarize and connect with, and come to trust.
- **Drive traffic:** Between the link in your profile, blog post links in your posts, and your ads, social media is a top channel for <u>increasing traffic to your website</u> where you can convert visitors into customers. Plus, <u>social signals</u> are an indirect SEO factor.
- **Generate leads and customers:** You can also generate leads and conversions directly on these platforms, through features like Instagram/Facebook shops, direct messaging, call to action buttons on profiles, and appointment booking capabilities.
- **Increase brand awareness:** The visual nature of social media platforms allows you to build your visual identity across vast audiences and improve <u>brand awareness</u>. And better brand awareness means better results with all your other campaigns.
- **Build relationships:** These platforms open up both direct and indirect lines of communication with your followers through which you can network, gather feedback, hold discussions, and connect directly with individuals.

The essentials of a successful social media marketing strategy

A successful <u>social media marketing strategy</u> will look different for every business, but here are the things they will all have in common:

- **Knowledge of your audience:** What platforms they use, when they go on them and why, what content they like, who else they're following, and more.
- **Brand identity:** What is the message you want to convey to your audience? How do you want them to feel when viewing your content?
- **Content strategy:** While there is a level of spontaneity on social, you'll need a structured <u>content strategy</u> to be able to have a consistent voice and produce quality content regularly.
- **Analytics:** Quantifiable insights will inform your strategy, including who you're reaching, the right content to share, the <u>best times to post</u>, and more.
- **Regular activity:** Social media is a real-time platform. If you want to use it to grow your business, you need to post regularly, stay on top of engagements with your business, engage back, keep up with trends, and maintain accurate profiles.
- **Inbound approach:** Don't use social media to pitch your business. Focus on adding value through useful and interesting content and building up those around you. This, in turn, will organically promote your business and others will promote it for you.

The best social media marketing platforms

The best social media marketing platforms for business include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, TikTok, and Snapchat. Different social media marketing sites require different approaches, so here's a brief overview on each one—its user base, main vibes, pros, cons, and content types.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLATFORMS

	PEOPLE	CONTENT	STRATEGIES	CONS
f (Facebook)	• 25-34 • Boomers	• Photos & links • Information • Live video	• Local mkting • Advertising • Relationships	• Weak organic reach
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(Snapchat)	• 13-17, 25-34 • Teens	• Silly • Feel-good • Trends	• Video ads • Location-based mkting • App mkting	• Relationship building

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Facebook

Facebook is the largest social media platform globally as well as one of the biggest local business directories. People of a diverse range of age groups use it to communicate with friends and family, participate in groups and forums, find and visit businesses near them, and follow brands. Facebook is a great social media marketing platform to:

- Build relationships with current customers
- Announce hours changes, events, and milestones
- Hold discussions and live streams
- Market to baby boomers

YouTube

You may not think of YouTube as a social media marketing channel, but it fits the bill: you can post videos to your channel; share, comment on, and like other videos, and follow other accounts you like. Plus, you have a curated feed in your homepage with recommended videos. The key to social media marketing on YouTube is not to try to "go viral," but to add value. It's best for:

Social media privacy

Too many social media platforms are built on excessive collection, algorithmic processing, and commercial exploitation of users' personal data. That must change.

Over the past two decades, social media platforms have become vast and powerful tools for connecting, communicating, sharing content, conducting business, and disseminating news and information. Today, millions or billions of users populate major social networks including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, and dating apps like Grindr and Tinder.

But the extraordinary growth of social media has given platforms extraordinary access and influence into the lives of users. Social networking companies harvest sensitive data about individuals' activities, interests, personal characteristics, political views, purchasing habits, and online behaviors. In many cases this data is used to algorithmically drive user engagement and to sell behavioral advertising—often with distortive and discriminatory impacts.

The privacy hazards of social networks are compounded by platform consolidation, which has enabled some social media companies to acquire competitors, exercise monopolistic power, and severely limit the rise of privacy-protective alternatives. Personal data held by social media platforms is also vulnerable to being accessed and misused by third parties, including law enforcement agencies.

As EPIC has long urged, Congress must enact comprehensive data protection legislation to place strict limits on the collection, processing, use, and retention of personal data by social networks and other entities. The Federal Trade Commission should also make use of its existing authority to rein in abusive data practices by social media companies, and both the FTC and Congress must take swift action to prevent monopolistic behavior and promote competition in the social media market.

SOCIAL MEDIA & SURVEILLANCE ADVERTISING

Social media companies—and in particular, Facebook—collect vast quantities of personal data in order to "microtarget" advertisements to users. This practice, also known as surveillance advertising or behavioral advertising, is deeply harmful to privacy, the flow of information, and the psychological health of social media users.

As former FTC Commissioner Rohit Chopra wrote in his dissent from the FTC's 2019 Facebook order, "Behavioral advertising generates profits by turning users into products, their activity into assets, their communities into targets, and social media platforms into weapons of mass manipulation." Chopra went on to explain how surveillance advertising operates in Facebook's case:

To maximize the probability of inducing profitable user engagement, Facebook has a strong incentive to (a) increase the total time a user engages with the platform and (b) curate an environment that goads users into monetizable actions.

To accomplish both of these objectives, Facebook and other companies with a similar business model have developed an unquenchable thirst for more and more data. This data goes far beyond information that users believe they are providing, such as their alma mater, their friends, and entertainers they like. Facebook can develop a detailed, intimate portrait of each user that is constantly being updated in real time, including our viewing behavior, our reactions to certain types of content, and our activities across the digital sphere where Facebook's technology is embedded. The company can make more profit if it can manipulate us into constant engagement and specific actions aligned with its monetization goals.

As long as advertisers are willing to pay a high price for users to consume specific content, companies like Facebook have an incentive to curate content in ways that affect our psychological state and real-time preferences.
Notably, tracking and behavioral advertising by social media companies is not limited to the platforms themselves. Firms like Facebook use hard-to-detect tracking techniques to follow individuals across a variety of apps, websites, and devices. As a result, even those who intentionally opt out of social media platforms are affected by their data collection and advertising practices.

SOCIAL MEDIA & COMPETITION

Data collection is at the core of many social media platforms' business models. For this reason, mergers and acquisitions involving social networks pose acute risks to consumer privacy. Yet in recent years, platforms that have promised to protect user privacy have been repeatedly taken over by companies that fail to protect user privacy.

One of the most notable examples of this trend is Facebook's 2014 purchase of WhatsApp, a messaging service that attracted users precisely because of strong commitments to privacy. WhatsApp's founder stated in 2012 that, "[w]e have not, we do not and we will not ever sell your personal information to anyone." Although EPIC and the Center for Digital Democracy urged the FTC to block the proposed Facebook-WhatsApp deal, the FTC ultimately approved the merger after both companies promised not to make any changes to WhatsApp user privacy settings.
However, Facebook announced in 2016 that it would begin acquiring the personal information of WhatsApp users, directly contradicting their previous promises to honor user privacy. Antitrust authorities in the EU fined Facebook $122 million in 2017 for making deliberately false representations about the company's ability to integrate the personal data of WhatsApp users. Yet the FTC took no further action at the time. It wasn't until the FTC's 2020 antitrust lawsuit against Facebook—six years after the merger—that the FTC publicly identified Facebook's acquisition of WhatsApp as part of a pattern of anticompetitive behavior.
For many years, the United States stood virtually alone in its unwillingness to address privacy as an important dimension of competition in the digital marketplace. With the 2020 wave of federal and state antitrust lawsuits against Facebook and Google—and with a renewed interest in antitrust enforcement at the FTC—that dynamic may finally be changing. But moving forward, it is vital that antitrust enforcers take data protection and privacy into account in their antitrust enforcement actions and assessments of market competition. If the largest social media platforms continue to buy up new market entrants and assimilate their users' data

into the existing platforms, there will be no meaningful opportunity for other firms to compete with better privacy and data security practices.

SOCIAL MEDIA & DATA BREACHES

The massive stores of personal data that social media platforms collect and retain are vulnerable to hacking, scraping, and data breaches, particularly if platforms fail to institute critical security measures and access restrictions. Depending on the network, the data at risk can include location information, health information, religious identity, sexual orientation, facial recognition imagery, private messages, personal photos, and more. The consequences of exposing this information can be severe: from stalking to the forcible outing of LGBTQ individuals to the disclosure of one's religious practices and movements.

Without federal comprehensive privacy legislation, users often have little protection against data breaches. Although social media companies typically publish privacy policies, these policies are wholly inadequate to protect users' sensitive information. Privacy policies are disclaimers published by platforms and websites that purport to operate as waivers once users "consent" to them. But these policies are often vague, hard to interpret, full of loopholes, subject to unilateral changes by the platforms, and difficult or impossible for injured users to enforce.

EPIC'S WORK ON SOCIAL MEDIA PRIVACY

For more than a decade, EPIC has advocated before Congress, the courts, and the Federal Trade Commission to protect the privacy of social media users.

Beginning in 2008, EPIC warned of the exact problem that would later lead to the Facebook Cambridge Analytica scandal. In Senate testimony in 2008, then-EPIC President Marc Rotenberg stated that, "on Facebook … third party applications do not only access the information about a given user that has added the application. Applications by default get access to much of the information about that user's friends."

In 2009, EPIC and nine other public interest organizations filed a complaint with the FTC detailing how Facebook changed its privacy settings to begin disclosing information to third-party applications and the public which users had sought to keep private. Facebook implemented these changes without obtaining affirmative consent from its users or even giving them the ability to opt out. In 2011, the FTC announced that Facebook had settled charges that it deceived users by failing to keep its privacy promises and credited EPIC with providing the factual basis for its complaint against Facebook.

In 2014, EPIC filed a complaint with the FTC alleging that Facebook "altered the News Feeds of Facebook users to elicit positive and negative emotional responses." Facebook had teamed up with researchers to conduct a psychological experiment by exposing one group of users to positive emotional content and another group of users to negative emotional content to determine whether users would alter their own posting behavior. The study found that "emotional states can be transferred to others via emotional contagion, leading people to experience the same emotions without their awareness." EPIC alleged that the researchers who conducted the study "failed to follow standard ethical protocols for human subject research." EPIC further alleged that Facebook engaged in unfair and deceptive practices in violation of Section 5 of the FTC Act by not informing users that they were potentially subject to behavioral testing. Finally, EPIC alleged that Facebook's psychological study violated the 2011 FTC Consent Order by misrepresenting its data collection practices.

In 2014, when Facebook entered a deal to acquire the text-messaging application WhatsApp, EPIC and the Center for Digital Democracy filed a complaint with the FTC urging the Commission to block Facebook's acquisition of WhatsApp unless adequate privacy safeguards were established. Although the FTC approved the merger, the Commission sent a letter to Facebook and WhatsApp notifying the companies of their obligations to honor their privacy promises. In 2016, WhatsApp announced its plans to transfer users' personal information to Facebook for use in targeted advertising.

In March 2018, news broke that Facebook had allowed Cambridge Analytica, a political data mining firm associated with the Trump campaign, to access personal information on 87 million Facebook users. EPIC and a coalition of consumer organizations immediately wrote a letter to the FTC urging it to investigate this unprecedented disclosure of personal data. The groups made clear that by exposing users' personal data without their knowledge or consent, Facebook had violated the 2011 Consent Order with the FTC, which made it unlawful for Facebook to disclose user data without affirmative consent. The groups wrote that, "The FTC's failure to enforce its order has resulted in the unlawful transfer of [87] million user records … [i]t is unconscionable that the FTC allowed this unprecedented disclosure of Americans' personal data to occur. The FTC's failure to act imperils not only privacy but democracy as well."

EPIC also submitted an urgent FOIA request to the FTC following the Cambridge Analytica revelations. The request sought all the privacy assessments required by the FTC's 2011 Order and all communications between the FTC and Facebook regarding those privacy assessments. Following the FTC's release of heavily redacted versions of the assessments, EPIC filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit to obtain the full, unredacted reports from the FTC.

In 2019, following a proposed settlement between the FTC and Facebook in connection with the Cambridge Analytica breach, EPIC moved to intervene in *United States v. Facebook* to protect the interests of Facebook users. EPIC argued in the case that the settlement was "not adequate, reasonable, or appropriate."

In 2020, following President Trump's threat to effectively ban social network TikTok from the United States, Oracle reached a tentative agreement to serve as TikTok's U.S. partner and to "independently process TikTok's U.S. data." In response, EPIC sent demand letters to Oracle and TikTok warning both of their legal obligation to protect the privacy of TikTok users if the companies entered a partnership. The deal would have paired one of the largest brokers of personal data with a network of 800 million users, creating grave privacy and legal risks. "Absent strict privacy safeguards, which to our knowledge Oracle has not established, [the] collection, processing, use, and dissemination of TikTok user data would constitute an unlawful trade practice," EPIC wrote. In 2021, the Oracle-TikTok deal was effectively scuttled.

Also in 2020, EPIC and coalition of child advocacy, consumer, and privacy groups filed a complaint urging the Federal Trade Commission to investigate and penalize TikTok for violating the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. TikTok paid a $5.7 million fine for violating the children's privacy law in 2019. Nevertheless, TikTok failed to delete personal information previously collected from children and was still collecting kids' personal information without notice to and consent of parents.

Challenges, opportunities, and pitfalls

Social Media Challenges

- Social Media Challenge #1: Engagement or Reach.
- Social Media Challenge #2: Trends and Algorithms.
- Social Media Challenge #3: Content Creation.
- Social Media Challenge #4: Strategy.
- Social Media Challenge #5: Authenticity and Relevancy.

Social Media Challenges Brands are Facing in 2023

1. Determining on which platform(s) you should market your brand.
In 2022, **26% of marketers** say their biggest challenge will be determining which platform(s) they should invest time and resources.
This makes sense: The most popular social platforms aren't always the best fit for your brand or business goals, so it can be difficult to determine which apps you should include in your marketing strategy.
To choose the right platforms for your brand, HubSpot's Senior Manager of Social Media Kelly Hendrickson told me, "It all comes down to your audience. Who is your audience, and where do they spend their time on social media?"

She adds, "[Most] platforms share broad audience demographics data, so even without a study, you may be able to figure out where your low hanging fruit is. If it's a bit harder to test out a few hashtags related to your business on various platforms to see where your audience is already participating."

Alternatively, it's helpful to consider which types of content your audience prefers. For instance, if you've conducted market research and found your buyer persona enjoys video content, then you've narrowed down your platform(s) to video hosting apps like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram Stories — to name a few.

Finally, keep in mind your social media goals when choosing your platform. For instance, if your primary goal is to increase sales, then perhaps you want to test out targeted, personalized Facebook ads. If, alternatively, you're hoping to expand your brand awareness, you might test out some newer platforms like TikTok or Clubhouse.

Additionally, in regards to TikTok, Instagram Reels, or Snapchat, Hendrickson told me, "The data shows that generally each of these channels skews towards a younger audience base. While that may seem less opportunistic if your audience is older, just remember, your audience of tomorrow may be on these platforms."

2. Creating engaging content.

As a content creator, I can tell you firsthand: Creating content is hard.

And, apparently, most marketers agree. In fact, **24% of marketers say creating engaging content** will be their biggest challenge in 2022.

Creating high-quality social media content is time-consuming, so consider how you might get the most bang for your buck by repurposing content across channels. For instance, if you take the time to create a 10-minute YouTube video on a topic, cut short snippets from the video to repurpose on short-form channels like Instagram Stories, Snapchat, or TikTok.

You can also create a social media post with some of the information you researched for the video.

Additionally, Rachael Samuels, the Senior Manager of Social Media at Sprout Social, believes dedicating time, resources, and headcount towards social media is vital for long-term success.

As she puts it, "The social landscape is becoming increasingly saturated with new networks and seemingly endless potential audiences to engage. Social teams of one are no longer enough to keep up with the demand."

Samuels adds, "As consumer preferences and expectations continue to grow in the year ahead, social marketers require greater investment in their teams and resources to be successful. To get ahead of this challenge, brands must ensure social is prioritized as a critical communication tool and provide their teams with the resources needed to produce creative, relevant, and authentic content."

Additionally, to truly see ROI from your social efforts, you'll want to take the time to integrate it into every stage of the customer journey. Perhaps you can use certain platforms for support for existing customers, whereas you use others to reach new audiences.

Samuels says, "Having an integrated marketing plan that addresses social media at each touchpoint of the customer journey is critical for overall business success. When brands fail to invest in social and their respective teams, they run the risk of losing customers and perpetuating burnout."

3. Finding ideas for new content.

23% of the marketers report that finding ideas for new content is their biggest challenge heading into 2022.

It can be tricky to consistently pitch new ideas for social platforms — particularly when social platforms feel overcrowded with content already.

While this isn't an exhaustive list, here are a few social media content suggestions when brainstorming ideas for your 2022 calendar:

- Post your new blog on your Instagram Stories.

- Conduct a poll on Instagram.

- Share user-generated content on Twitter.

- Create and share website content on Facebook.

- On LinkedIn, post articles/stats about your industry.

- Highlight milestones of your company on LinkedIn.

- Create graphics for Instagram and Facebook.

- Show the faces behind the company on Snapchat or Instagram.

To combat this challenge, you also might consider using <u>user-generated content</u> to spruce up your pages. Alternatively, take the time to research what types of content are trending on which platform(s).

<u>Christina Garnett</u>, HubSpot's Senior Marketing Manager, Offline Community & Advocacy, suggests researching what already exists when looking for new ideas. She told me, "In his book, *The Creative Curve: How to Develop the Right Idea at the Right Time,* Allen Gannett writes that 'to create something novel you must know what already exists.'"

Garnett adds, "Once you determine what you can create, you need to determine who needs it, and how it can best be packaged to improve their experience. Content has the same need to find product-market fit as products and solutions do. In the pursuit of the novel, you not only need to determine what doesn't exist, but *why* it doesn't. Creating for the sake of creation isn't enough when it needs an audience."

While this research can be time-consuming, it can enable you to position your brand as a thought leader in your industry and will undoubtedly lead to new content ideas.

4. Measuring ROI.

In some instances, measuring ROI can be relatively easy — particularly when it comes to monetary value, such as how many sales you received from a specific Facebook ad.

But when your social media goals involve more abstract concepts, such as "increase brand awareness", it can be difficult to quantify and measure your campaign's success.

Social Media: Opportunities and Challenges

The internet has created the opportunity for social media to thrive. Participating in social media forums, known collectively as "Web 2.0," allows communication and information-sharing with large groups of people instantaneously. Social media can fall into one of six primary categories:1

Social networks: sites that allow users to connect and share with people who have similar interests and backgrounds. Example: Facebook.

Bookmarking sites: sites that allow users to save and organize links to any number of online resources and websites. Example: Stumble Upon.

Social news: sites that allow users to post news links and other items to outside articles. Example: Reddit.

Media sharing: sites that allow users to share different types of media, such as pictures and video. Example: YouTube.

Microblogging: sites that allow users to submit short written entries, which can include links to products and service sites as well as links to other social media sites. Example: Twitter.

Blog comments and forums: sites that let users engage in conversations by posting and responding to community messages.

How Social Media is Being Used in Health Care and Education

The use of social media in health care and education has climbed in recent years,[2] leading to numerous opportunities and challenges. In hospital settings, social media can be used to alert patients to wait times, update patient status, deliver public health messages, recruit for research and communicate with staff. Healthcare providers also use social media to disseminate information, answer questions and communicate with patients. Several studies indicate that 70-90% of students in healthcare professions use social media.[3] This is not a surprising finding because most of the current students in healthcare professions are in the Millennial generation, born after 1982. Millennials are accustomed to staying connected with the outside world using handheld, wireless devices and are considered "digital natives."[4]

In the education environment, the opportunities intrinsic to social media are plentiful. Some of the potential opportunities include collaboration and connectivity among users, access to clinical experts, access to information from a number of different sources, and the ability to disseminate information. The development of content within social media, such as learning to concisely communicate through Twitter, can also be a valuable skill. In healthcare professions, storytelling or relaying clinical experiences are common and allow students the opportunity to reflect and share. When storytelling occurs on social media, feedback is immediate, camaraderie can provide emotional support, and input from others can enrich a learning experience. However, relaying clinical experiences via social media can also present significant challenges. Complying with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), maintaining professionalism, and respecting patient privacy and confidentiality are common challenges.

The following example represents a posting on social media by a medical student. "I had my first patient death, a man who served his country in combat. … I will never forget the last conversation I had with him, about his wife of 50 years. They met when they were just kids and had such a great life together, raising three daughters. … The wife never saw this coming, she looked so shaken and scared."[5] Although this example does not violate HIPAA, it raises the question of whether it respects the patient's privacy. The patient may have felt comfortable sharing these personal details with his doctor, but the patient and/or family members may not have intended the information to be shared on Facebook.[5] Several professional medical organizations have attempted to address these types of challenges. In 2013, the American College of Physicians published a position paper that states "Consideration should be given to how patients and the public would perceive the material …"[6] Therefore, clinicians and

healthcare students should ask themselves before posting: Would my patient or his or her family want me to post about them on Facebook?[5]

In addition to the challenges related to storytelling, inappropriate postings on social media can negatively impact careers or the public's perception of a healthcare profession. Chretien et al. found that 47 out of 78 medical schools reported incidents of students posting unprofessional online content.[7] The content included profanity, pictures of intoxication, and sexually suggestive material. At a recent medical education conference in Boston, medical school faculty relayed a case where a student posted on social media: I cannot believe how wasted I was this morning. I needed to be at the hospital early so that I could participate in a renal transplant. A reply to the post: Are you my daughter's doctor?[8] Clearly this post has numerous implications including the potential to damage the public trust in the profession.

Facing the Challenges

The American Medical Association (AMA) has added the following to its Code of Ethics. "Physicians must recognize that actions online and content posted may negatively affect their reputation among patients and colleagues, may have consequences for their medical careers (particularly for physicians-in-training and medical students), and can undermine public trust in the medical profession."[9] Social media is an incredible tool. Optometric educators should reflect on the formal training offered to students regarding the use of social media in the educational and professional settings. Are we doing enough to prepare our students to be responsible users of social media? Are they able to take advantage of the many opportunities and effectively deal with the challenges?

The Pitfalls of Social Networking

- Bandwidth and storage consumption. ...
- Potential legal liability. ...
- Exposure to malware. ...
- Decreased employee productivity. ...
- Disclosure of personal information. ...
- Risk of leaking corporate secrets. ...
- Limited executive use

The use of social networking is rising dramatically, and its scope has expanded far beyond the personal realm. Politically oriented videos and blogs are being posted to YouTube in an effort to influence primary elections.

Corporate and government entities are increasingly using social networking to facilitate communication and collaboration among individuals and groups, both internally and externally. While there are clear benefits to increasing communication, social networks also present a number of challenges, including the following:

Bandwidth and storage consumption. Many social network members post pictures, music, videos, high-definition movies and other large files. Downloading and storing these files can cripple your infrastructure and make capacity planning virtually impossible.

Potential legal liability. Students at Canterbury's University of Kent created a Facebook group named "For Those Who Hate the Little Fat Library Man," to harass a librarian they disliked. In the U.S., if employees were to use corporate IT resources for similar purposes, the company could be held responsible in any ensuing litigation.

Exposure to malware. Social networks are designed to be open, with few restrictions on content or links. In most cases, security was not a primary design criterion. Thus, these networks are potential vehicles for introducing viruses, worms and spyware.

Decreased employee productivity. Social networking for personal purposes can affect corporate productivity. A Goldman Sachs trader in the U.K. was spending four work hours a day on Facebook. When he was told to stop, he posted the warning e-mail and wrote, "It's a measure of how warped I've become that, not only am I surprisingly proud of this, but losing my job worries me far less than losing Facebook."

Even when networking is used for business purposes, corporations may want to limit the number of networks employees use. Monitoring many networks can become incredibly time-consuming. Moreover, interfaces among current networks don't support robust information-sharing. Unfortunately, unless all interested parties use the same network, many benefits are lost. Consider designating specific networks for companywide communications.

Disclosure of personal information. Companies regularly search MySpace, Classmates.com, LinkedIn and other social networking sites to glean information about potential hires and competitors, but postings should always be taken with a grain of salt.

Risk of leaking corporate secrets. Companies often sanction social networking for the purpose of exchanging professional information. But take great care to protect corporate secrets. Definitions of secret may vary or be misunderstood, and critical information may inadvertently be revealed. Provide clear guidelines across the company, as well as to your suppliers and outsourcers.

Limited executive use. Many articles on social networking claim that it will facilitate sales. Executive use of social networking is not widespread, however. Many executives already have substantial personal networks and rely less on new technological platforms for interaction. (This will undoubtedly change in the future, but networks have limited selling power today.)

While social networking does offer many benefits, there are corporate costs and pitfalls to be considered. Organizations need to establish policies to address issues such as personal usage, business relevance, site restrictions and information confidentiality. Take time to thoroughly investigate and address these issues to maximize the effectiveness of social networking.

Disadvantages of Social Networking:

10 Disadvantages of Social Networking

1. **Lacks Emotional Connection**

"A couple weeks ago, one of my friends and I got into a fight and she told me all of her feelings as to why she ignored me for two weeks. Assuming it would have been really hard to say it to my face, she sent me a text message. The negative side was I didn't know if she truly felt sorry because I didn't hear it from her. The quality of a conversation using social media is awful

because you cannot sense the emotion or enthusiasm from the other person. It makes you wonder if they actually mean what they say."

2. Gives People a License to be Hurtful

"I do think it has gotten to an extreme point where you can say things you can't say or get away with in person."

"I'm disappointed whenever I hear about social media being used as a way to hurt people. I wonder if this happens when the writers forget that there are real people behind the screen."

3. Decreases Face-to-Face Communication Skills

"Computer reliance could hurt a person's ability to have a face to face conversation by making it awkward and unusual to hear something and respond with a thoughtful message through the spoken word because of one's dependence on a keyboard to convey a message."

4. Conveys Inauthentic Expression of Feelings

"Social media conversations today are filled with "haha", "LOL", and other exclamations that are meant to represent laughter. This shorthand has become second nature and is often used when the sender is not even smiling, much less laughing, in real life. On the occasion that our "roflcopter" is actually put to use at a funny moment, we are replacing actual laughter with, in this case, a simple ten-letter acronym. According to Robin Dunbar, an evolutionary psychologist at Oxford, the actual physical act of laughter, and not the abstract idea of something being funny, is what makes laughing feel so good. If we are so willing to replace the act that, honestly, we all love, with an artificial, typed representation that doesn't even bring the same joy, what else would we be, potentially subconsciously, willing to exchange?"

5. Diminishes Understanding and Thoughtfulness

"Since the inception of social networking, the quality of conversations has dropped. I believe that people are spending so much time online that they don't always understand the feeling, emotion and/or character of the person they are talking to. When you talk to someone through a message or even a voice, you can't always fully understand them."

"Social networking has ruined the thoughtfulness in basically saying hello in person. For instance, you could say hello to your friend in Germany with Facebook, chat in seconds; but what if there was no way to communicate via social networking? Well you would have to write them a letter and that is something very thoughtful."

6. Causes Face-to-Face Interactions to Feel Disconnected

"When I see my friends on their phones and I am around them, I feel disconnected even though we are only two feet apart….. Unfortunately, sometimes friends use their phones so much that it is difficult to have an actual conversation with them. Sometimes friends can get so socially attached to something such as a blog or gaming console that they lose touch with friends, creating small gaps and holes in close friendships/relationships."

7. Facilitates Laziness

"The new socially active era causes laziness because instead of running to your friends you can message them. Or instead of walking upstairs to notify the family of dinner, I can blog it. Social

networking makes life so convenient that it creates laziness. In my opinion staying fit is important, but it is difficult to go beyond the newly developed status quo."

"It's really easy to spend hours doing nothing….It's a fantastic way to waste time."

8. Creates a Skewed Self-Image

"We tell ourselves lies about ourselves and develop something we are not. We post pictures of us looking perfect and share the good news. We never post pictures of ourselves when our dog dies, when someone we love leaves, and when we lose a job. We never share the bad news that always clouds our lives. We all develop this perfect image of ourselves and some of us actually try to rely on this imaginative thought we have of ourselves instead of staying true to who we are."

9. Reduces Family Closeness

"Texting, Facebook, Twitter, and Gmail alienate us from our families more than we actually think it does…. When my family is spending family time together and watching a movie, in reality my brother and I are on our phones rather than actually watching the movie with our parents."

10. Causes Distractions

"When I have my phone out, it makes me feel like nothing else is going on around me. I use social media as a way to feel popular, important, and also just to fit in. My friends and I always compare ourselves to each other, wondering who has more Facebook friends or Twitter followers. But what really ends up happening is I begin to talk less and end up relying on text for a conversation. Ever since I got a smartphone I have been distracted from everything. I watch television less, do homework less, and even spend less time with my friends and family."

Addressing the Disadvantages of Social Networking

The disadvantages of social networking and social media will be studied for decades to come. The 10th-grade essays used for this article are five years old now but they could easily have been written today.

In the last five years, social media has proven to be a significant source of concern among privacy advocates, particularly with concerns over how Cambridge Analytica used Facebook data. Parents have become increasingly worried about their children's safety online and how to protect their personal data.

But clearly, the disadvantages of social networking go much deeper than privacy and safety. These high school students described some of the serious drawbacks to *relationships* and *mental health* — foundations of human development.

In the past several years, more studies have linked social media to poor mental health. According to a recent Forbes article, several studies have not only shown a correlation but also a causation. Findings suggest that people who limit social media to 30 minutes daily feel significantly better than those who use social media for longer periods of time. By reducing time spent, people were able to reduce depression, anxiety, and loneliness.

Recent statistics from the Pew Research Center show that social networking usage has remained unchanged in the past four years. This may suggest a saturation point has been reached. It may also be a hopeful sign that people are learning to manage social media in healthier ways; or at least they don't show an insatiable appetite for more. In addition, most

people <u>don't trust news</u> from social networking sites–only 5% of U.S. adults have a lot of trust in this information.

Among Americans from 12-34 years old, Facebook usage declined from 79% in 2017 to 62% today. The only social network growing among U.S. youth is Instagram, up from 64% to 66% in the past two years.

Researchers suggest that helping children and teens learn to manage social networking is paramount to their healthy development. Most experts agree that parents must lead the way by setting a good example of what healthy computer usage looks like. <u>Family meetings</u> are a great venue to discuss social networking and computer usage with the whole family and get buy-in for solutions.

10

DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

surprising insights from teens

1. LACKS EMOTIONAL CONNECTION
2. GIVES PEOPLE A LICENSE TO BE HURTFUL
3. DECREASES FACE-TO-FACE COMMUNICATION SKILLS
4. CONVEYS INAUTHENTIC EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS
5. DIMINISHES UNDERSTANDING AND THOUGHTFULNESS
6. CAUSES FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS TO FEEL DISCONNECTED
7. FACILITATES LAZINESS
8. CREATES A SKEWED SELF-IMAGE
9. REDUCES FAMILY CLOSENESS
10. CAUSES DISTRACTIONS

Source: http://www.rootsofaction.com/disadvantages-of-social-networking/
RootsOfAction.com

Best Practices: Safe Social Networking

- Manage your privacy settings. ...
- Remember: once posted, always posted. ...
- Build a positive online reputation. ...
- Keep personal info personal. ...
- Protect your computer. ...
- Know what action to take. ...
- Use strong passwords. ...
- Be cautious on social networking sites.

Best Practices: Safe Social Networking

Safety Tips for Social Networking

Social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter can be a great way to connect with friends. But there are some social networking safety tips you should always keep in mind.

- **Manage your privacy settings.** Learn about and use the privacy and security settings on your social networking sites. They help you control who sees what you post and manage your online experience in a positive way. You'll find some information about Facebook privacy settings at the bottom of this webpage.
- **Remember: once posted, always posted.** Protect your reputation on social networks. What you post online stays online. Think twice before posting pictures you wouldn't want your parents or future employers to see. Recent research found that 70% of job recruiters rejected candidates based on information they found online.
- **Build a positive online reputation.** Recent research also found that recruiters respond to a strong, positive personal brand online. So demonstrate your mastery of the environment and showcase your talents.
- **Keep personal info personal.** Be careful how much personal info you provide on social networking sites. The more information you post, the easier it may be for someone to use that information to steal your identity, access your data, or commit other crimes such as stalking.
- **Protect your computer.** Security start with protecting your computer. Install <u>Antivirus software</u>. Keep your operating system, web browser, and other software current. Visit <u>Microsoft support</u> for information on automatically installing the latest security updates for Office 365 and Windows.
- **Know what action to take.** If someone is harassing or threatening you, remove them from your friends list, block them, and report them to the site administrator.
- **Use strong passwords.** Make sure that your password is at least eight characters long and consists of some combination of letters, numbers, and special characters (for example, +, @, #, or $).
- **Be cautious on social networking sites.** Even links that look they come from friends can sometimes contain harmful software or be part of a phishing attack. If you are at all suspicious, don't click it. Contact your friend to verify the validity of the link first.

Facebook Privacy Settings

Make sure you know how to access and use Facebook's privacy settings. Log in to Facebook, click the **Settings** menu.

- Select **Privacy** to view and edit who can see your photos, activity and information.
- Select **Apps and Websites** to control access to your Facebook account by applications and websites
- Select **Blocking** to block specific users or application invitations.