Course Project - Family Social Media Usage

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**Benefits and risks of using social media**

There are many benefits to social media, it allows us to connect with people, products, and services while providing social interaction. Social media offers us the ability to learn faster, work harder with less physical activity, engage potential people are businesses, run businesses, or start brands, and can help anybody deliver a message with the click of a button.

Studies show that clear health benefits being connected with social media online. It allows self-expression without the danger of stigma. Social media offers the chance to connect with others and offers enough anonymity to allow people with mental illness to express themselves without revealing their identities *(paintedbrain.org, 2017).*

**Benefits of Social Media:**

* **Inspire healthy lifestyle changes**

Social media can be used as a motivational tool to achieve healthy lifestyle goals such as quitting smoking or attending the gym regularly. Connecting people's trainers and cons that can help him get started or change their lifestyle completely.

* **Social media can benefit therapists and psychiatrists** by extending their reach.

Mental health professionals are increasingly using social networking tools such as Facebook, Tumblr, and Pinterest to collect data that can be used in research, and to connect with other professionals in the online community.

* **Social support and interventions**

Twenty-four-hour suicide prevention hotlines are not the only sources of intervention. An increasing number of websites are now offering support through social media channels. These sites often provide anonymous forums for people to connect, share personal experiences, and many even allow them to sign up for an SMS service to receive daily advice, motivational messages, and information useful for seeking or promoting recovery.

* **Strengthen existing relationships**

Social media facilitates building new relationships, keeping people connected but those who live in different states or regions. It can also help maintain relationships for those with disabilities, such as elderly individuals and people with physical handicaps which limit their mobility and prevent travel outside the home.

* **Provide adults with opportunities**

to develop technical and other skills needed to function in society.

Social media has become a place where people can share their knowledge a platform that allows them to engage in communication with people across the globe. Teaching technical skills and trade knowledge to people.

As with anything else social media can be a great tool. Though, if it is not respected, is abused, and used incorrectly it can bear a lot of potential risks. Social media is a tool that should be used with reason purpose. Today social media has become a passive way of entertainment leading to a lot of potential risks. These risks result in many different types of psychological conditions such as social anxiety, depression, anger, many other conditions that affect in-person interaction. Here are some potential risks of social media usage.

**Social Media Risk**

* **Social Media Addiction**

A review study from Nottingham Trent University looked back over earlier research on the psychological characteristics, personality, and social media use. The study concludes that this addictive disorder also known as ‘Facebook Addiction Disorder, causes individuals to neglect their personal life, mental preoccupation, escapism, mood modifying experiences, tolerance, and concealing the addictive behavior, appear to be present in some people who use social media excessively. They also found that the motivation for people’s excessive use of social networks differs depending on certain traits—introverts and extroverts use it for different reasons, as do people with narcissistic traits. But that deserves a piece of its own *(Griffiths, 2011)*.

* **Triggers emotional sadness and depression**

The more we use social media, the less happy we seem to be. One study a few years ago found that Facebook use was linked to both less moment-to-moment happiness and less life satisfaction—the more people used Facebook in a day, the more these two variables dropped off. The study suggests this may have to do with the fact that Facebook conjures up a perception of social isolation, in a way that other solitary activities do not *(guardianlv.com, 2013*).

* **Triggers emotional anger**

Behind the comfort of a screen and keyboard, people lack the physical capabilities of socializing. This allows people to become the worst version of themselves because there are no immediate or physical consequences. We do not perceive ourselves as we do on social media in the world forts real people. This enables a lot of people to become the worst version of themselves acting in very discrete ways with negative attitudes towards people. We become more egotistical, narcissistic, sociopathic. These Tendencies typically lead to wrongful actions such as cyberbullying, fake news, misinformation, racism, and many other negative attributes *(Griffiths, 2011)*.

* **It can lead to jealousy**

On social media, people are only posting the perception of what they think the best versions of themselves are. People only want to highlight the good in their lives on social media not the bad. These snapshots are not objective reality. when other people see others succeeding, fulfilled, happy, taking tropical vacations and having perfectly behaved kids amongst other common themes people tend to get jealous. Studies have shown that social media does trigger feelings of jealousy and envy. Social media also because of jealousy in the way relationships. Social media has become a massive community channel which allows many people to play on their desire and fall into fidelity *(Forbes, 2013) (Griffiths, 2011)*.

Here are a few other notable major risks caused by social media: *(Psychology Today, 2017)*

* Comparing our lives with others is mentally unhealthy
* We get caught in the delusion of thinking social media is harmless
* Social constructionism creating a physical reality based on our digital reality
* Cyberbullying implementing persecutions, hatred, bias, and prejudice toward others.

As I mentioned before social media is a tool in like any tool it can be used to build something great or to massively destroy things. I believe the comprehension in psychology that is based on the studies improvement science should be taken into consideration more and should be more available to people. People should be very aware of the seriousness of how social media and Technology directly affect our lives. On some level, I feel the creators of these platforms should be semi-responsible purposely creating platforms that facilitate these types of dysfunctions. Ultimately it is up to the user on social media platforms to understand the risk and the benefits *(American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020)*.

**Specific Interesting Topic**

Growth hacking is a topic that I am very interested in. Growth hacking is the techniques and systems used by social media app creators to control people's actions and exploit human vulnerabilities. Companies such as Google Twitter and Facebook use programmatic implementations, artificial intelligence, and machine learning capabilities to manipulate, exploit, and alter the perception of reality for the people using their platforms. These are systems that they know keep people addicted to the platforms and yet they build them into the system anyway *(DesignNLI, 2018) (Elaheebocus, 2018).*

The internet is completely mediated by algorithms that implement recommendation engines, search, trending, autocomplete, and other mechanisms that predict what they want you to and what the algorithms think you want to see based on social media users engagements, context, behaviors, interest, and many other factors. Some of these companies even higher top psychologists to run analysis on the data so they can fine-tune the to get their specific outcomes. The algorithms do not understand what propaganda is and what is not, or what is “fake news” and what is fact-checked. They do not know stand what free speech is, cyberbullying, or hatred is. Their job is to surface relevant content (relevant to the user, of course), and these algorithms do it exceedingly well *(Harris, 2016)*. As referenced from the new 2020 movie the Social Dilemma when they wrote "Technology’s promise to keep us connected has given rise to a host of unintended consequences that are catching up with us *(Dilemma, 2020)*. If we cannot address our broken information ecosystem, we’ll never be able to address the challenges that plague humanity".

Sean Parker former Facebook president revealed in November of 2017 talked about the consequences of a social network that grows exponentially to billions of users that is their sole purpose was to consume as much time and attention some people as possible. he talks about the psychological factors that went into building these applications that enhance dopamine receptors in the brain by using their platforms. Event talks about how people having pressing the like button on post or content engages a person to create more content and perpetuates a cycle that consumes that person's attention He also admitted to having top psychologists and Sciences work together to figure these problems out. Similar to how slot machines in Las Vegas are set up and designed to attract and retain people’s physical presence. Social media is designed to retain people’s digital presence in the physical world *(CBS, 2017).*

I find it interesting that they would go to all these links to create these platforms. Given the current political structure of social media today we are finding that many people are being exploited censored and violated more than ever before showing me existed. Yet these app creators persist entreating hold Apartments to manage these growth hacking efforts. This is essentially where psychology meets computer data science.

**Analysis of Family's Social Media Usage**

My immediate family social media usage it is not something that I am comfortable with personally. Meaning that I am cost but how I use it what information I share. I carefully plan out what it is that I engaged with. Although, I run a business and use social media for that business. I am contributing to the resolve am I, family.

My wife for instance she can spend get lost in social media without realizing how much time is going by as can I. She only uses social media possibly when she is relaxing or after she gets home from work. She does however get on her phone first thing in the morning. This is to check her online Scentsy business and read her devotionals for the first hour after she wakes up followed by briefly checking social media before she has to go to work. I would calculate she spends two to three hours total on social media.

Both of us used to wake up and check our phones. We found this was a destructive and distracting pattern it did not facilitate accomplishing anything good. Now we get up and we do something productive such as red, do devotionals, things of that nature. It made a habit of not looking at social media until after I day is already started. We also turn our phones completely off before we go to bed.

My children on the other hand a constantly plugged in every spare minute they can get consuming content on social media channels. And engaging that is what I believe are unhealthy levels a problematic social media addiction. My kids will check the phone every spare minute they get. After school when they are being passive it will simply watch TV while being on their phone. I hate to admit it but some days they spend six to seven hours on mobile devices. At least half of that time spent on social media sites like Instagram.

There is certainly a social media site we do not allow our children on such as Twitter, Tik Toc, and Facebook. Being a Computer & Data Science major, I am pretty tech-savvy. I have a web interface that I built from scratch connected to my home network to control every device in my homes access to the internet on each of their devices and I can control which websites they visit. Just built this last year but it is working out pretty great.

In my family, we have had to come to some conclusions and lay some ground rules for the use of social media. Due to the current 2020 Homeschool situation, only one of my children is attending live classes at her High School. While my other two children online. So literally my kids are plugged in gate 12 hours a day sitting in front of a computer. are We communicate and enforce that school studies are not met grades are not maintained work is not complete it we remove our children's I am having their mobile devices and internet access.

My two sons play video games constantly, we try to do what we can to limit them. So now our children seemed to do well in school and their activities including their chores. Because they have experienced and know that there are consequences it is not keeping up their end of the deal and doing what is expected of them.

Still, I have had moments with my children wear they seem to have withdrawn from their devices as if they were an addict. We do know the ramifications and potential risks that technology has on Young Minds. But technology is a tool and should be used as such and we can pay this message in our household very well.

Although I understand the benefits and risks of social media myself it is really difficult sometimes to communicate this with my children. Modern technology makes use of an age-long human weakness: behavioral addictions. Instead of injecting a substance, you directly get a pleasurable feeling every time you plugin. In perspective, the major percentage of people can be addicted to many things they know are wrong but continue to do them anyway.

Essentially this becomes a moral fallacy the individuals have to deal with because of giving in to their desires. Some examples of these here in America are fast food, soda, candy, caffeine, nicotine, etc. The same addictive risk is associated with social media. What is even more alarming is the creators of these applications know this and still implement psychological triggers into their development *(Nikolinakou, 2018) (CBS, 2017).* We can look at people like Bill Gates or Steve Jobs who do not let their children have mobile devices and Technology. The statement in itself says volumes concerning the topic. The creators of this technology will not even let their children on it why should we be given our children is technology?

Our culture is the culprit for lack of reasoning concerning the way we adopt technology into our private lives. Their limited capacity for self-regulation makes children more susceptible to peer pressure and cultural influence means that they are more inclined to the risk factors involved with social media.

Subconsciously people wake up every morning to check their phones social media. Behavioral addiction is characterized as being overly concerned about social media. I believe because of this addiction no matter how much influence or information my wife or myself relate to our family and friends. It barely scratches the surface at preventing their impulses from taking over.

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