

Is Generation Y Addicted to Social Media?

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Abstract

This study examined Generation Y's psychological addiction to social media with specific regard to Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn. The addiction was interpreted using Griffiths' six components that determine behavioral addiction: salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict and relapse. The purpose of this study was to determine if Generation Y was in fact addicted to social media because of their need to maintain relationships with their peers. The results indicated that this sample of Generation Y suffers from three components, tolerance, salience and relapse. They also suffers from intrapsychic conflict, but not interpersonal conflict.

I. Introduction

The Internet has an indescribable power to influence, connect, and mobilize the current population. Technological advances are no longer shocking but simply expected. Today's society has different expectations for all types of relationships. Relationships are now different because the tools used to maintain peer-to-peer connections have undergone a vast alteration. The primary focus is on the Internet and, with that, the development of social media. Social media is a web-based technology that transforms how people communicate by enhancing interactive conversations. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content."¹ Social Media is a web-based product that is optimized solely by the use of its public. The only way social media can expand depends exclusively on the user and their wants.

Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of the world phenomenon Facebook, said, "More than 175 million people use Facebook. If it were a country, it would be the sixth most populated country in the world." Facebook has the ability to bring people together in a wide variety of relationships. A major factor contributing to the high usability of social media is that it connects people without any boundaries. Social media is basically a template for the user who can then personalize the source's uses and productivity. It is a highly dense and vast resource that is being used on a consistent basis to maintain relationships. People are now accessing social media from mobile devices and laptops making it a commonality in everyday life. Facebook's indescribable popularity is one aspect of this interactive world's power to alter the tangible world.

Social media is continuing to grow exponentially based on the wants of the user. The highest per-

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¹ Andreas M. Kaplan, Michael Haenlein, Users of the world, unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media (Business Horizons, 2010), 59–68.

centage of social media users are Generation Y, also referred to as the 'net generation,' who have grown up understanding the power of the Internet. Generation Y is unconsciously addicted to social media and as a result they feel constant societal pressure to be connected with their peers through maintaining a continuous connection with technology. Their connectedness is creating new kinds of peer-to-peer relationships that are considerably different from previous generations.

II. Literature Review

The new digital age has brought about extraordinary developments in technology that has altered the way many people access and use information. The consistent technological developments that help connect the world can be seen as either beneficial or detrimental to human relationships. The World Wide Web is altering human social interaction and the way the brain processes information. Consequently, scholars dive into the potential of Internet addiction and the Internet's effect on other behavioral changes. Through reviewing basic demographics along with psychological and behavioral implications, scholars remain torn on whether Internet addiction exists but ultimately agree that the new digital age does influence the development of the human mind.

The first step to identifying Internet addiction is to see where the emotional and mental attachment lie. Researchers conclude that there are classic mass media motivations: surveillance; escape, companionship, and identity; and entertainment.² Gordon narrows down this information by concluding that there are five specific types of use: meeting people, information seeking, distraction, coping and e-mail.³ When these concepts are isolated to Generation Y, Subrahmanya proved that adolescents primarily use the Internet as a communication tool to reinforce relationships. The changes in relationships are exceptionally present in teens that use instant messaging as a substitute for face-to-face conversation with friends.⁴ Scholars explain this phenomenon by discovering that using computer networks for social interaction relieves many aspects of group anxiety.⁵ The infinite possibilities of the web help define alternative realities where anonymity is welcomed and potentially psychologically rewarding.⁶ Scholars agree that the rapid growth of these alternative realities is beneficial. The ambiguity of social network profiles allows adolescents to create an identity and find social acceptability without having to directly face scrutiny.⁷ College students are exposed to a higher risk of Internet addiction because of their vulnerability. College students, in particular, are adjusting to massive amounts of developmental and life changes.⁸ This susceptibility and exposure to an abundance of new things are aided by the use of technology and social networks that ease new connections and relieve societal pressures.

Researchers have a unanimous decision about the type of gender specific activities adolescents are using on the web. Gordon, Small, Griffiths, and Lam all agree that males have increased odds of acquiring an Internet addiction.⁹ Men tend to use the Internet more often per week and for longer sitting periods than females. As Gordon explains, men tend to be online in order to e-mail friends, listen to music, get help with schoolwork, IM, and talk with friends. In contrast, females use the web to e-mail friends, get help with

2 Robert Larose, Dana Mastro and Matthew Eastin, "Understanding Internet Usage: A Social-Cognitive Approach to Uses and Gratifications," *Social Science Computer Review* 19 (2001): 396; Lawrence Lam, "Factors Associated with Internet Addiction Among Adolescents," *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 12 (2009): 552.

3 Cherly Gordon, Linda Juang, and Moin Syed, "Internet Use and Well-being Among College Students: Beyond Frequency of Use," *Journal of College Student Development* 48 (2007).

4Kaveri Subrahmanya, and Patricia Greenfield, "Online Communication and Adolescent Relationships," *The Future of Children* 18, (2008): 125.

5 Subrahmanya, "Online Communication and Adolescent Relationships,"126; Mark Griffiths, "Does Internet and Computer "addiction" exist? Some Case Study Evidence," *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 3 (2000): 216.

6 Griffiths, "Does Internet and Computer 'addiction' exist?" 217.

7 Jennifer Czincz, and Regina Hechanova, "Internet Addiction: Debating the Diagnosis." *Journal of Technology in Human Services* 27 (2009): 262.

8 Cherly Gordon, "Internet Use and Well-being Among College Students."

9 Cherly Gordon, "Internet Use and Well-being Among College Students"; Gary Small and Gigi Vorgan, *iBrain: Surviving the Technological Alteration of the Modern Mind* (Brambleboro: Harper Paperbacks, 2009, 92; Griffiths, "Does Internet and Computer 'addiction' exist?"212; Lam, "Factors Associated with Internet Addiction Among Adolescents," 553.

schoolwork, talk with friends, e-mail family and IM.¹⁰ Overall females use the Internet for social networking and reinforcing pre-existing relationships whereas males use the social networking sites to flirt and make new friends.¹¹ Males appear more focused on discovering new things whereas females remain confident in what they already know. In contrast to these ideas, researcher Vorgan, through a Pew Internet & American Life Project, found that women have increased levels of Internet use over the past two decades. Men appear to be more tech savvy, seek confidence in search engines, and are more likely to try new software and gadgets. However, over the years these ideas have become customary for both genders.¹² Based on this research, one is able to distinguish the typical male Internet user. These males describe themselves as having little to no social life without any self-confidence. For these Internet-addicted males, the computer is used to counteract a lack of friends, unattractive physical appearance, or noticeable disability.¹³ Overall, men are using the Internet to compensate for insecurities whereas women are reinforcing their tangible relationships.

A majority of research focuses on the true aspects of addiction and assess whether Internet addiction actually exists. One theory is that web addicts have underlying depression, anxiety, or obsessive-compulsive disorder.¹⁴ Lam discovers that the experience of a recent high-stress event is related directly to Internet addiction. In this circumstance, the usage of Internet becomes a coping mechanism for stress. He also categorizes Internet addiction into the spectrum of impulse-control disorders.¹⁵ Many scholars agree on the concept that addiction is related to impulse-control disorders through variations of delayed rewards testing.¹⁶ Those scholars see a connection between impulse-control disorders and Internet addiction but there is still no tangible proof that Internet addiction exists. A similar argument, which has strong research behind it, is the connection of the new digital age and the growth of Attention Deficit Disorder.

Some behavioral consequences of the new digital brain are hyperactivity, inattention, depression and multitasking mania. Based upon research for brain development, there is a conclusion stating that daily exposure to high technology stimulates brain alternation and neurotransmitter release; ultimately strengthening new pathways in the brain. The human mind is now learning to access and process information more rapidly and shift attention quickly from one task to the next. All this access and vast selection is causing some entertainment seeker's brains to develop the constant need for instant gratification with a loss of patience. Technological developments directly affect those who cannot multitask or work with the demands of modern technology, resulting in symptoms of ADD or ADHD.¹⁷ To narrow down the connection between ADD and the Internet, Yen discovers that being easily bored rather than easily distracted is the core symptom of inattentive ADHD. Internet activities are based highly upon their interactivity levels and immediate response rates; these quick actions relieve the feeling of boredom and possibly create a physical addiction.¹⁸ The Internet becomes the cure for those who cannot hold focus. Once again, research concludes that male college students are more likely to be screened positively for adult ADHD; however, the overall association between Internet addiction and attention deficit is more significant in females.¹⁹ The fast-paced lifestyle created by the Internet affects the way the human brain processes and receives information. Humans are now more anxious and their attention span is weakened by the over stimulation from technology.

Researchers have made conclusions regarding Internet addiction, gender specific activities, and analyzed behavioral changes; however, large gaps of research remain. These studies are broad, vary upon method, and focus on the bigger picture. Research involving the vast space of the Internet needs to be

10 Cherly Gordon, "Internet Use and Well-being Among College Students."

11 Subrahmanya, "Online Communication and Adolescent Relationships," 125.

12 Gary Small iBrain, 92.

13 Griffiths, "Does Internet and Computer 'addiction' exist?" 216.

14 Small, iBrain, 64.

15 Lam, "Factors Associated with Internet Addiction Among Adolescents," 554.

16 Bryan Saville, Amanda Gisbert, Jason Kopp, and Carolyn Telesco, "Internet Addiction and Delay Discounting in College Students," *The Psychological Record* 60 (2010): 282; Jennifer Czincz, "Internet Addiction: Debating the Diagnosis." 263.

17 Small, iBrain, 90.

18 Ju-Yu Yen, "The Association Between Adult ADHD Symptoms and Internet Addiction Among College Students," *CyberPsychology & Behavior* 12, no. 2 (2009): 189.

19 Ju-Yu Yen, "The Association Between Adult ADHD Symptoms and Internet Addiction Among College Students," 188, 190.

conducted in a specified manner. The more narrow focus of my research will provide deeper insights into how technology alters generations. By specially looking at Generation Y and one aspect of online activity my research will fill in the gaps around the impact of the Internet. Lastly, based upon popularity, Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn will be the specific sites utilized in this research study.

III. Background

In regards to this specific research question no studies have been published, yet various researchers and universities have tested social media addiction with a small sample. The main focus of these studies lay within the target audience of Generation Y. Generation Y is defined as those born between the mid-1970s and the early 2000s. This population has grown up with a majority of the technological advances, such as computers and the Internet. They have established relationships with technology and strongly understand its various uses. According to Jones, this generation is considerably more likely to use social networking sites and to create profiles than those of older generations.²⁰ Lenhart focused a study on the activities surrounding this generation and agreed with Jones by concluding that 70% of Generation Y uses social networking sites and about 65% has an online profile. To further this claim, Lenhart discovered that 63% goes online daily to send messages to friends and receive news.²¹

Independent research has been done concerning Generation Y's dependence on social media. A prime example is the International Center for Media & Public Agenda at the University of Maryland, which tested a "technology blackout." They used a sample of 200 students and initiated a media suspension for 24 hours. Following the event the students were asked to write about their experience. When asked to describe that day, students used the words "in withdrawal, craving, very anxious, extremely antsy, miserable, jittery and crazy." The main conclusion was that the students could function without technology but completely refuse to remove it from their lives.²² Nauert had a similar response when students expressed hatred for the loss of personal connections. The students felt that the strength of these relationships was based entirely on their use of social media. Ultimately, both studies arrived at similar conclusions where students felt that they were isolated from their friends and family in the absence of text messaging or Facebook.²³ The constant link to a flow of information is an aspect of life that this sample relies on to function normally.

IV. Methods

In order to answer if Generation Y is addicted to social media news articles and online sources were used to develop the background information. However, because social media is a large segment of Internet usage, this study focuses mainly on the top four social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and LinkedIn. Addiction to these social media sites is a relatively untouched area; therefore, an explicit process had to be formulated. Based upon the analysis of Internet addiction studies and the foundation of addiction a descriptive survey was created and distributed through SurveyMonkey.com, a company that provides web-based survey solutions. On this website, researchers create their own survey and then get organized results. To enhance the results the survey was delivered through outlets that the group regularly uses and feels comfortable with, such as Facebook, Twitter and E-mail. Past research has shown that the target audience is highly active on social media sites and uses these outlets more often than other generations. These outlets maximized survey response rates and allowed for a large pool of respondents within a quick amount of time. The researcher posted the survey as a Facebook status and Twitter update and emailed the majority of her fall classes and organizations she belonged to. She relied on a snowball sample, asking her friends to please

20 Sydney Jones, and Susannah Fox, "Generations Online in 2009," Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, <http://www.pewinternet.org> (October 17, 2010).

21 Amanda Lenhart, "Teens and Social Media," Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, <http://www.pewinternet.org> (October 17, 2010).

22 Rick Nauert, "College Students 'Addicted' to Social Media, Study Finds," LiveScience, April 23, 2010, <http://www.livescience.com>, (October 17, 2010).

23 Sharalyn Hartwell, "Are you addicted to media?," The Examiner, June 4, 2010, <http://www.examiner.com>, (October 17, 2010).

share, retweet, or spread the study to their friends at various universities.

The survey consisted of 12 close-ended questions where participants were forced to select an answer from a list of responses. The questions were divided into various sections: demographics, general social media use, personal perception of use, and specific questions that connected to a component of behavioral addiction. The survey open from October 27 through November 7, 2010, allowed for 313 responses. The results were then interpreted through Griffiths' research of nonchemical addictions. Griffiths uses six components to help determine behavioral addiction. These six components are: salience, mood modification, tolerance, conflict, withdrawal and relapse. The last section of the survey had specific questions that connect to each component, with the exception of mood modification. Mood Modification was not tested because a survey consists of ample amounts of self-assessment and any question relating to personal perception of mood would be overpowered with individual biases. No one is truly able to be completely honest with himself or herself; therefore, mood would be better assessed from surrounding peers.

V. Results

The goal of the current study was to assess if Generation Y was psychologically addicted to social media, in particular Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn. Each section of the survey gathered specific information about the respondent and their relationship with those social media tools.

Demographic Information

Participants were generally social media users acquired from using a snowball technique to reach various universities and age groups. A total of 313 respondents participated in this study. Of the 313 respondents 73.8% were female and 26.2% were male. In addition, 79.2% were between the ages of 17 and 21, 16.6% were between 22-25 years, 2.6% were over 31 years, followed by 1% between 26-30 years, and lastly .6% were 16 and under. This survey successfully reached the target audience of Generation Y based on the majority of the participants.

General Social Media Use

When answering the question "What type of social media do you use or follow on a regular basis?" the majority of recipients (98.4%) used Facebook. Following the popularity of Facebook was the number three social media site,²⁴ Twitter (34.2%). LinkedIn received 18.5% of the respondents, and MySpace only received 1.3% of the sample.

To answer the question "How much time do you spend on social media sites daily?" the majority spent between 31-60 and 61-90 minutes: both responses received approximately 32% of the answers. Alternatively, 15% said they spent between 91-120 minutes, followed by 10.5% for more than 120 minutes, and 10.2% for under 30 minutes. These responses conclude that a vast majority of the participants in this study were already spending a great deal of time focusing on social media.

Self Perception

When answering the question "Do you feel that you are addicted to Social Media?" the majority, 59%, stated that they agreed, followed by the 22.4% who said they remained neutral on the topic. The answer to this question assessed the personal perception the participants had on their social media addiction. These responses help further the claim that because Generation Yers are using these sites so frequently they are aware of a possible addiction, while others feel that they could live with or without social media access. A large amount of respondents said neutral because the parameters of social media addiction are undetermined, as well as the word "addiction" has a variety of negative connotations.

Behavioral Addiction

A mixture of questions was asked that further described the respondents' relationship with social media and their personal usage. These questions assessed emotions, inner conflicts and personal habits. They used a Likert Scale that evaluated the respondent's attitude toward social media usage from a frequency

²⁴ <http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/social-networking-websites>.

standpoint of “Very Often” to “Never,” while connecting to the six-core components of addiction.

a) Tolerance: The first question in this section asked, “How often do you find that you spend more time than intended on Social Media?” Responses show that 38.7% of respondents often find themselves in this predicament, along with 27.5% who said sometimes, and 27.2% that answered very often. This question directly connects with the behavioral piece of tolerance, stating that increasing amounts of a particular activity are required in order to achieve the same effect.²⁵ A majority of this population subconsciously spent more time on social media in order to feel satisfied with their usage. The inability to control the amount of time spent on these sites connects to the individual’s need to reinforce the virtual relationships on a more consistent basis. Social media moves so incredibly fast that tolerance needs to grow to maintain the relationship between the user and technology.

When answering the question “How often do you find yourself saying ‘just a few more minutes’ when using social media?” 24.3% said often and 23.6% said sometimes, followed by the 18.5% who said rarely. These responses show that this sample has a high level of tolerance with regards to social media and feel that they need to spend more time with social media in order to feel satisfied.

b) Salience: In order to assess the behavioral aspect of salience, which occurs when a particular activity becomes of high priority and dominates thinking, a question was asked: “How often do you check your social media sites before something else that you need to do?” A total of 79.5% of respondents answered very often or often and 14.1% stated sometimes. As a conclusion, this sample of Generation Yers showed that social media was taking priority over other activities. The need to check social media first ties into the necessity to stay connected to one’s peers without having a direct conversation with them. Social media sites provide the updates one would receive from a phone call or a face-to-face conversation, but by checking social media first, one is provided with these answers without any authentic dialogue.

c) Conflict: In connection with conflict, the question, “How often do you feel your productivity suffers because of social media?” was assessed. The majority of respondents, 32.3%, replied sometimes. Another 25.2% said often, and 21.7% stated very often. The conflict is derived from either an interpersonal or intrapsychic conflict connected with social media usage.²⁶ Ultimately, a majority of these users claim to sometimes be torn between their social media usage and the ability to stay on task. The reoccurring inner conflict among this generation’s ability to be productive or spend more time on social media has an effect on how each individual performs in school, work, and in their tangible relationships. This intrapsychic conflict removes social media away from solely the interactive world but forces it to have a strong effect on the physical world. Overall, this inner disagreement of productivity provides a deeper problem where social media has a large power over the individuals’ thought process.

The question, “How often do other people comment on your social media usage?” also correlates with the factor of conflict. This question assessed the interpersonal relationships one maintains in conjunction with social media. As a result, 26.5% of respondents said rarely, 21.3% said sometimes, 21.3% also said never, followed by 17.4% who said very rarely. It is apparent that from this population that interpersonal conflict is not necessarily an issue. External conflicts regarding social media usage between Generation Yers are not an issue because, as a whole, they are accustomed to using social media daily.

d) Withdrawal: This occurs when the respondent feels displeased with the discontinued use of social media. In response to the question “How often do you typically feel stressed out, disconnected or paranoid when you cannot access social media?” 27.4% stated rarely, 23.2% stated sometimes, while 22.9% said never. Though it seems that no withdrawal has truly taken place, there are specific conclusions that can be made as to why these answers are the majority. This generation has had a constant connection with social media and because this relationship has never been removed withdrawal is not necessarily an issue.

e) Relapse: This happens when repeated reversions of earlier social media patterns reoccur.²⁷ In answering, “How often do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend online and fail?” Of the respondents, 34.8% said sometimes, 23.6% said rarely and 17.3% said often. From this question, it is assumed that the majority of respondents recognize that their attempts at reducing social media usage are usually ineffective and described as a failure. By attempting to reduce, they’re recognizing that their social media use is a problem. By attempting to use social media less, they feel that their relationships are suffering, and that they need more time to keep them cohesive.

25 Griffiths, “Does Internet and Computer ‘addictions’ exist?” 211.

26 Griffiths, “Does Internet and Computer ‘addiction’ exist?” 212.

27 Griffiths, “Does Internet and Computer ‘addiction’ exist?” 212.

Table: Actual Percentages from Total Respondents

	<u>Very often</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Very Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
<u>Tolerance</u>	<u>27.2%</u>	<u>38.7%</u>	<u>27.5%</u>	<u>4.8%</u>	<u>1.6%</u>	<u>0.3%</u>
	<u>15.7%</u>	<u>24.3%</u>	<u>23.6%</u>	<u>18.5%</u>	<u>8.0%</u>	<u>9.9%</u>
<u>Salience</u>	<u>46%</u>	<u>33.5%</u>	<u>14.1%</u>	<u>4.2%</u>	<u>1.6%</u>	<u>0.6%</u>
<u>Conflict</u> <u>(intrapsychic)</u>	<u>21.7%</u>	<u>25.2%</u>	<u>32.3%</u>	<u>13.7%</u>	<u>5.1%</u>	<u>1.9%</u>
<u>(interpersonal)</u>	<u>3.2%</u>	<u>10.3%</u>	<u>21.3%</u>	<u>26.5%</u>	<u>17.4%</u>	<u>21.3%</u>
<u>Withdrawal</u>	<u>3.5%</u>	<u>9.7%</u>	<u>23.2%</u>	<u>27.4%</u>	<u>13.2%</u>	<u>22.9%</u>
<u>Relapse</u>	<u>7.7%</u>	<u>17.3%</u>	<u>34.8%</u>	<u>23.6%</u>	<u>7.3%</u>	<u>9.3%</u>

V. Discussion

From these findings displayed in the table one can evaluate the survey results, as a whole and assess how they aligned with each addiction component. As a result, the population supports three and a half of the five tested components of behavioral addiction. The two assessments that provided negative responses, or those that fell primarily within the sometimes to never end of the Likert Scale, were those involving interpersonal conflict and withdrawal. In order to assess these replies one must analyze the target audience and the other survey questions. Overall, the group suffered from intrapsychic conflict but disagreements among their peers were nonexistent. Based upon the population, the questions concerning the time spent on social media and its level of priority make it clear as to why these groups would not suffer from interpersonal conflict. There is nothing that would incline one member of the sample to question another if both are most likely using social media in the same way. The interpersonal relationships would never be questioned because of the need to belong and the fact that this problem is normal to the population. An intrapsychic conflict occurs because of the need to live and move forward in the tangible world, but an interpersonal one would not exist based upon the majorities' feelings toward social media. Generation Yers are all in this interactive world together where social media is not a problem; therefore, one would not question the other.

The component withdrawal had a similar negative response because of the environment in which this generation lives. The majority of the sample was between the ages of 17 and 21, living in a college environment. A college environment surrounds the sample with technological advances and various methods of obtaining social media. Withdrawal is an unpleasing feeling that arises when social media are terminated or severely reduced. The question that assessed withdrawal was based upon personal perception and how one assumes they would react in a particular situation. However, it is highly likely that this group has never experienced a forced absence of social media. They make the assumption that they would not feel "stressed out, disconnected or paranoid," but independent research has concluded that students feel the exact opposite when technology is forcefully removed. Ultimately, if access to social media was removed, then the answer to this particular question may have been different. Currently, the responses are based solely on theories and personal perceptions.

VI. Conclusion

This study took a critical look at Generation Y's addiction to social media, specifically Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn, and how it is impacting their relationships when compared to previous generations who communicate on a more face-to-face basis. The only conclusive finding that seemed apparent from the survey responses was that research participants are suffering from three and a half of the five tested components of addiction: saliency, tolerance, the intrapsychic element of conflict and relapse. This generation has made social media their top priority and continues to need more usage in order to feel satisfied. This

group has also concluded that there is a need to decrease their usage but seem unable to make that a reality. These results closely tie into many of the aspects of Internet addiction as addressed in the literature review, as well as the findings of the independent studies described in the Background section earlier.

However, this study was limited because the sample consisted primarily of women (73.8%); a convenience sample was used instead of a random sample. This convenience sample allowed the researcher to access many of her student organizations and friends in a short amount of time. However, because the researcher herself is female, a majority of her outlets were predominately females as well. As a result, this study should be replicated with a more diverse sample. Tying into this limitation was the particular way that this survey was distributed: by using social media as a way to access this population, a majority of the respondents were highly active social media users. When replicating this study, one should use other methods to target this audience and gather a more inclusive study of social media users and non-users.

This study had a further limitation with regards to the gathering of research by relying heavily on self-report assessment; a method seen as potentially unreliable and biased. These results depend greatly on the respondent and their personal self-perception. This study's reliance on self-reported measures of attitudes, emotions and usage could have been skewed. In addition, the questions analyzed were close-ended. To gather more sufficient results and explanation, more open-ended questions should be used. The order of the questions may have also provided some skewing of results by asking "Do you feel you are addicted to social media" at the beginning, a question that may have altered the respondents' choices to further prove or disprove their own self-assessment of social media addiction. In further research, this self-perception question should be more towards the end of the study to allow for more honest responses throughout.

To study this topic further, more research should be done to investigate whether this group would suffer from withdrawal if the technology was forcefully removed. In addition, potentially interviewing and creating a case study following a group of Generation Yers should assess mood modification and interpersonal conflict. By assessing these two aspects in an alternative way, a study may provide insight on how this group interacts in their tangible and interactive worlds. Also, future research should review how Generation Y is using social media as compared to the generations preceding and following. These answers may be found by conducting a wide-aged focus group.

This study assisted not only the technological world but also the psychological world. The younger generations are changing how society communicates on a variety of levels. Assessing addictions that are not necessarily common knowledge develops a basis for the future. The brains of the younger generations are growing and developing differently from those above them, and because of this more research should be conducted on how specific aspects of the technological world will continue to alter human development. The researcher hopes that this study will lead more people to study and assess the power of social media and its ability to change the world in various ways.

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Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Demographics

1. Age
 - I. 16 and Under
 - II. 17-21
 - III. 22-25
 - IV. 26-30
 - V. 31 and over
2. Gender
 - I. Male
 - II. Female

General Social Media Use

3. What type of Social Media do you use or follow on a regular basis? Check all that apply.
 - I. Facebook
 - II. Twitter
 - III. LinkedIn
 - IV. MySpace
 - V. Other
4. How much time do you spend on social media sites daily?
 - I. Less than 30 Minutes
 - II. 31-60 Minutes
 - III. 61-90 Minutes
 - IV. 91-120 Minutes
 - V. More than 120 Minutes

Self-Perception

5. Do you feel that you are addicted to Social Media?
 - I. Strongly Agree
 - II. Agree
 - III. Neutral
 - IV. Disagree
 - V. Strongly Disagree

Six Components of Social Media

6. How often do you find that you spend more time than intended on Social Media?
 - I. Very Often
 - II. Often
 - III. Sometimes
 - IV. Rarely
 - V. Very Rarely
 - VI. Never
-

7. How often do you check your social media sites before something else that you need to do?

- I. Very Often
- II. Often
- III. Sometimes
- IV. Rarely
- V. Very Rarely
- VI. Never

8. How often do you feel your productivity suffers because of social media?

- I. Very Often
- II. Often
- III. Sometimes
- IV. Rarely
- V. Very Rarely
- VI. Never

9. How often do you try to cut down the amount of time you spend online and fail?

- I. Very Often
- II. Often
- III. Sometimes
- IV. Rarely
- V. Very Rarely
- VI. Never

10. How often do you find yourself saying “just a few more minutes” when using social media?

- I. Very Often
- II. Often
- III. Sometimes
- IV. Rarely
- V. Very Rarely
- VI. Never

11. How often do other people comment on your social media usage?

- I. Very Often
- II. Often
- III. Sometimes
- IV. Rarely
- V. Very Rarely
- VI. Never

12. How often do you typically feel stressed out, disconnected, or paranoid when you cannot access social media sites?

- I. Very Often
 - II. Often
 - III. Sometimes
 - IV. Rarely
 - V. Very Rarely
 - VI. Never
-