

### Has Social Media Made People More Or Less Connected?

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#### ABSTRACT

*Social networking websites enable us to interact, exchange information, participate in activities, events, play games, and listen to music, all of which contribute to the creation of our own virtual social spaces where we can distinguish ourselves from other people. Although many of us love using social media to remain in touch, excessive use can lead to addiction, anxiety, melancholy, loneliness, and FOMO. Therefore, the current study is focused on how social networks have increased or decreased human connectivity.*

One of the Internet's most popular resources at the moment is social networking. They are utilized by approximately 85% of all Internet users worldwide, according to the research company comScore. A number of scientists contend that continuity, mass character, and quality are the three most significant fundamental issues facing the contemporary educational paradigm (Voronkin, 2014).

A social network is a community of people who share common interests, a cause, or other reasons for communicating directly with one another. A social network is defined by the general philosophical approach as a collection of social objects and their relationships (Patarakin & Shustov, 2013).

The influence of social networks on a person and his life is enormous, many do not even fully realize the scale of this phenomenon, and social networks are already the most popular activity on the Internet. Today, out of the 100 most visited sites in the world, 20 are classic social networks and another 60 are socialized to some extent. More than 80% of companies around the world use social networks in their work. About 78% of people trust information from social networks. Entire revolutions are even organized through them. Social networks have become the very center of the modern Internet. About 3.5 billion people use social media, and more than 1 million people open a social media account every day. Individuals with access to digital devices spend nearly 2.5 hours on social media every day (Regis College, 2021).

With an ever-increasing number of people using social media on a daily basis, there is no doubt that social media offer a variety of advantages that span all facets of life. In terms of human connection, students for specifics, adolescents can instantly connect with family, friends, and

even strangers beyond face-to-face distance and share their lives via photos, videos, or even text status updates (Anderson & Jiang, 2018). These connections can help with a variety of things, like getting advice from others, looking for a new job, finding help, making free ads, and so on (Express News Service, 2015). The use of social media to strengthen existing relationships or create new meaningful connections is the most effective way to combat loneliness. However, if it is used in place of actual social interaction, it is counterproductive (Patulny, 2020).

### Social Media Contributes to Social Isolation

In 1998, just as a lot of people started using the internet, the first study that looked into this phenomenon was published. The researchers observed 169 individuals over the first two years of their internet use to see whether this new medium made them more or less social. They discovered that: "...more Internet use was connected with participants' decreased communication with family members in the household, decreased social circle size, and increased melancholy and loneliness" (Kraut et.al., 1998). This was seen as quite the paradox, given that the individuals were using the internet extensively as a communication technology.

A 2004 study comparing online engagement with face-to-face interaction came to the same conclusion: "Despite its extensive use as a communication tool, the Internet has been associated to poorer levels of social well-being" (Moody, 2004).

A 2014 study on college students with internet addiction revealed the following ten years later: "The results show that long-term, harmful, and excessive Internet use would cause feelings of loneliness to increase...[.] This study also found that social interactions with family members online were ineffective at reducing depressive symptoms when compared to unconnected social relationships " (Yao et.al., 2014).

The use of social media in ways that connect with others makes you feel less lonely and social. Unfortunately, as our social media usage increases, we become more and more lonely. This trend suggests that we may not be using social media in the most social way and comparing ourselves to others. The convenience of interaction may come at the expense of face-to-face interaction. Both increase the likelihood of social isolation.

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