

Social Media: An Introduction



Social media is something we all talk about a lot, but what exactly does it mean? The best way to define social media is to look at the two words that make up the phrase: If we _____ *media* as an instrument of communication, like a newspaper or a radio, then *social media* would be a social tool of communication.

Communication in regular media is one-way. You can read a newspaper or watch a report on television, but you can't give your thoughts on the matter. Social media is like a two-way street that gives you the ability to communicate too. This _____ can be as simple as a website asking for your comments, or it can be more _____, like recommending movies to you based on the ratings of other people with similar interests. Any website that allows you to interact with the site and with other users can be defined as social media.

Now that we understand what social media is, we can move on to different types of social media websites that have taken off in recent years. Because social media is such a broad term, it covers a large _____ of websites. But the one common thing these websites have is that you are able to interact with the website and other users. Here are some types of common social media websites and examples for each:



- **Social Bookmarking.** Users interact by tagging websites and searching through websites bookmarked by other people.
- **Social News Sites.** Users interact by voting for articles of interest and commenting on them.
- **Social Networking.** Users interact by adding friends, making posts, and having discussions.
- **Media Sharing.** Users interact by sharing photos or videos and commenting on other users' submissions.
- **Wikis.** Users interact by adding articles and editing existing articles.
- **Location based review services** Users can give reviews on shops and services and give other users advice.

Along with social media giants like Facebook and Twitter, traditionally non-social websites are adding social _____ to their webpages. For example, many news websites now allow visitors to comment on the news articles they read.

Social media has had a huge _____ on the world we live in. It has changed the way we communicate, the way we shop and gather news, even the way we choose world leaders and how we _____ to natural disasters. We are no longer merely consumers of media; we are also creators and distributors. The social media world is a _____ one and is constantly changing, and we need to keep up with these changes if we want to be effective Internet users.

Social Media Literacy



You may have learned about media literacy in high school or university. Media literacy focuses on our ability to evaluate what we watch, read, or listen to. This _____ media literacy is still important, but as social media continues to become a bigger part of our lives (it is now the most common thing people use the Internet for), we also need to pick up social media literacy skills.

Knowing how to use Twitter or Facebook is not showing social media literacy – social media literacy is having the knowledge, skill and attitude to communicate _____, and to

evaluate, share and create meaningful content within the social media environment.

As more and more universities and employers are starting to use social media to check up on applicants, social media literacy is _____ for students to be ready for college and their careers. Social media literacy can be divided into the following five sub-literacies, and all should be considered in managing your social media life:

1. Attention literacy: There are many attractions (and distractions) from the online world competing with users' attention in the real world. Many Internet users have not learned how to split their attention effectively. At times, multi-tasking can be a useful skill, but at other times people should give tasks (or other people) their undivided attention.

2. Participation literacy: By posting their own content, Internet users become active citizens rather than _____ consumers of media. But

users should learn about how to participate in social media in a way that's _____ to others as well as to themselves. We also have to remember that whatever we post online may be around forever.

3. Collaboration literacy: In general, doing things together gives us more power than doing things alone. Social media allows people to collaborate in ways that were too difficult or expensive to attempt before the Internet. Understanding the best ways to work together and _____ each other online is an important skill in getting the most out of your social media experience.

4. Network awareness: Social networks have always been an essential part of being human. In the past there were limitations on how many people we could include in our networks. With social media, those limitations are gone. But who are you going to include in your networks, and what access do these people have to your personal information?

5. Critical consumption: This is also sometimes referred to as "crap detection" and it refers to the ability to figure out what information is trustworthy. Because social media doesn't have traditional media fact checking, it is up to Internet users to critically _____ the media they are consuming.

Print technology and literacy shaped the historical period we call "The Age of Enlightenment" in the 1700's. For young people brought up these days, a new revolution is happening; social media technology is shaping the social and cultural _____ of the 21st century. It's up to Internet users to develop the literacies listed here to get the most from this revolution.



The Problem with Multitasking



From Youtube to Facebook to our own email inboxes, the Internet is full of potential distractions. With all of these these things asking for our attention, it is sometimes difficult for us to get things done by their deadlines.

Multitasking is one way that people try to make up for lost time. Multitasking can be as simple as eating a sandwich while watching a Youtube video to much more complex _____ such as trying to listen to a university lecture while writing a homework assignment due next class and answering a friend's text all at the same time.

The problem is that most humans are not _____ of doing this kind of multitasking very well. While we may think that doing two things at once saves time, studies show that when a person's attention is divided between two or more tasks, they finish the tasks more slowly, and they make more mistakes. A good example of this is walking while using a smartphone: the average person normally walks 4.4 feet per second, but while they are texting, they only walk 3.3 feet per second, and they are less likely to walk in a straight line.

Does this mean we should _____ multitasking completely? Not necessarily. Instead, people should think carefully about what tasks they need to _____ their full attention to. Eating a sandwich while watching a Youtube

video is unlikely to result in lost productivity, but when you are trying to finish a report, it is probably best to _____ distractions. Luckily, our attention, like a muscle, can be strengthened through exercise. Here are some tips for exercising your attention:

1. Know what your distractions are (the most common distractions are usually social networking sites, email, news sites and online games).
2. Set clear goals for what you want to accomplish while online (if your goals are vague, it is easier to become distracted).
3. When using the Internet, you should ask yourself "Am I still on task?" at 5 minute _____.
4. Use your distraction websites as a reward. After you accomplish what you set out to do, allow yourself to visit one of your distraction sites.
5. If you don't have the willpower to limit your distractions, you may have to try the "cold turkey" _____. Try leaving your smartphone at home or using software that blocks distracting websites except for certain times of the day.



For years, many of us have been worried about managing our time, but perhaps we should be more _____ on managing our attention. If more people could do this, perhaps we could get more done, and bump into fewer people on the street.

Facebook Depression: real or not?



The longer you are on Facebook, the worse you feel, according to some researchers.

You may have heard this before. The “social” network has been associated with jealousy and low self-esteem, and studies suggest using Facebook too much can lead to depression. The reason is a _____ phenomenon called “*social comparison*.” This is when we compare our lives with other people’s lives.

Research on social comparison has found that *upward social comparisons* (for example, comparing yourself to someone who is more popular than you) tend to give people depressive symptoms, but *downward comparisons* (comparing yourself to someone less popular) tend to make people feel better about themselves. When you look at your friends’ photos from their vacation or an exciting party they went to, this might be an upward social comparison.

Another _____ habit many Facebook users have is that they play “a numbers game”, collecting friends (even people they don’t like) and counting how many people “like” their posts and photos. Some people get depressed if they think not enough friends have liked or commented on one of their Facebook posts.

Perhaps you are skeptical as to whether social media can really _____ users’ feelings. Well, Facebook has done its own studies and claimed that it does have the power to change people’s moods. The company was criticized when it said it had conducted secret experiments on users’ emotions. They would _____ the types of news and status

updates that users received from their friends. Facebook discovered that users tended to post positive or negative comments depending on whether they were shown happy or sad news in their feeds.

Knowing that Facebook use has the _____ to make us depressed might worry some users, but the research seems to be a bit _____. Other studies have suggested that using Facebook to chat with friends or to make future plans can actually make people feel better about themselves. So, maybe it’s not the length of time we spend on Facebook, but the purposes we use it for that determine whether we will fall victim to Facebook depression.

Here are some tips to avoiding Facebook depression:

- 1) If someone’s posts are upsetting you, hide that person’s updates.
- 2) It’s usually a good idea to remove your ex boy/girlfriend from your friends list.
- 3) Only look at someone’s posts if you are willing to make a comment.
- 4) Never compare or _____ your life with someone else’s posts.
- 5) Most importantly, keep in mind that people usually only share the “highlight reel” of their lives. That Facebook friend who causes you envy may actually be dealing with some very unpleasant _____ in their life.

Not all researchers believe that Facebook depression exists, but if you always feel bad rather than good after your social media visits, it might be time to take a break.



A New Menace



Bullies have long been a part of school life, and most adults probably have some memory of a bully during their school days. While some studies suggest that traditional forms of bullying are actually declining, social media has brought about a new problem: the cyberbully.

The Internet and mobile technology have changed the way bullying happens. _____ traditional bullying victims have been smaller or weaker than the bully, with cyberbullying, the _____ strength of

the bully is no longer important. In addition, past bullies have always had to be physically close to their victims in order to carry out their harassment. With the rise of cyberbullying however, bullies can harass their victims 24 hours a day, and their victims can no longer escape abuse by simply going home and closing their door. This continuous abuse often causes more psychological stress than traditional playground bullying.

Cyberbullying is often difficult to _____ because it occurs in many ways. Besides sending harassing texts or emails, the following types of cyberbullying have become common in recent years: 1) *cyberstalking*: This involves a bully sending continuous mean messages to an individual multiple times. 2) _____: This is the act of intentionally leaving a person out from an online group such as chats and sites. The group then leave mean comments and harass the person they have excluded. 3) *outing*: This is when a bully shares personal and private information, pictures,

or videos about someone publicly. 4) *impersonation*: This is a situation where a bully pretends to be someone else while harassing the victim.

Why are these new forms of bullying on the rise? Some young people do it to feel powerful, and some bullies do it simply because they are bored. Also, Internet users who would normally avoid confrontation can do whatever they like online, insulting and harassing others, usually without



_____. Studies show that many people seem to have less sense of responsibility and accountability for their online actions. Females seem to be more prone to cyberbullying than males, and minority groups such as gays and _____ are also often the targets of such

attacks. But the truth is, anyone who uses social media can be a cyberbullying victim. There are cases of teachers being cyber-bullied by their students, and professional athletes have had to deal with their share of abuse too.

Experts agree that when cyberbullying _____ it is a bad idea to respond to the bully or fight back. Instead, victims should try to save the evidence of bullying, and try to block the bully from contacting them. Perhaps above all, people should be civil in their own use of the Internet; research shows that Internet users who gossip or are mean to other users increase their chances of becoming a _____ bullying victim.

Rise of the Selfie



The selfie isn't new—it has been around since the beginning of photography, when photographer Robert Cornelius took one in 1839. But in the past few years, it has become increasingly popular.

Like many changes in our society, the rise of the selfie began with _____ in technology. For most of its history, photography was an expensive and difficult hobby. In the 1990's however, digital cameras changed photography, making it easy to take and erase photos without spending lots of money on film developing. With the invention of the smartphone many people started carrying cameras around in their pockets. Photos were easily taken and shared _____ email, or uploaded to social networks (which were just starting to become popular). Then in 2010 Apple released a new version of the iPhone with a front-facing camera, and the selfie _____ took off. "Selfie" was the Oxford Dictionary's word of the year for 2013, and it is now thought that 93 million selfies are taken _____ each day.

Why do people take selfies? For one thing, it's so easy to do. They are a simple and instant snapshot memory of the big and small events in our lives. They can also be a way to tell a story through social networking. Instead of typing that you're paying a visit to Disneyland, a selfie of you with Cinderella's castle in the background can _____ exactly where you are and what you're doing.

Occasionally, selfies can be part of a social movement or charity, for example when thousands of women posted "no make-up

selfies" to social media sites to raise money and awareness for cancer research.



But we must realise that at the heart of the selfie boom is people's desire for attention. For many young people, they are looking for any reason to post a photo of themselves. However, it's not only regular people who take part in this _____. Many celebrities have come around and now frequently post self portraits to their social media accounts.

Selfies are most commonly criticised for their association with narcissism and attention-seeking, but recently a new problem has come to light. According to international _____, selfies are now responsible for more worldwide deaths than shark attacks. Sometimes these deaths come as the result of the photographer doing something dangerous, like taking a selfie on top of a moving train. Other times it's a simple matter of the person not paying attention to their surroundings when snapping their picture. Almost all of these accidents occur to young people.

People see selfies as an expression of who they are and a way to _____ their life events. They have become an ubiquitous part of our online lives — an activity that no one really thinks about anymore. It doesn't matter if you love them or hate them, selfies aren't going to disappear anytime soon.

Online Dating



In the 1998 romantic comedy *You've Got Mail*, the two main characters meet in an Internet chat room and develop a romantic relationship over a series of long, personal emails. At the time of the movie's release, meeting a partner online was _____; people hadn't yet thought of the Internet as a dating tool. Things are very different now. The long, romantic e-mails in the 1998 movie seem old-fashioned compared to the messages sent on online dating services today. While traditional dating relationships might take months to develop in the real world, iPhones and dating apps help relationships develop much faster. Online dating has taken off, and the world of romance has changed forever.



In the beginning, online dating was mostly popular with social groups who had a very limited number of potential partners. Gay people and divorcees were early users of online matchmaking services. Most people had a negative _____ about meeting partners over the Internet, and users who took part in online dating usually kept their activities secret.

But online dating is not a private, embarrassing activity anymore. More and more people are beginning to believe it's a good way to meet people. It is said that now approximately 120,000 marriages every year come about because of online dating. These days it's also part of how many young people spend time with friends and entertain themselves. Instead of going to an expensive dinner and talking to one potential partner, people can stay at home and talk to 15.

However there may be some downsides to this trend. Some psychologists _____ that online dating makes it difficult for some men to commit to only one woman. Many men feel there is an unlimited supply of potential mates and this is leading to a _____ towards short-term dating. Some even blame rising divorce rates on online dating; they say there is no _____ for couples

to stay together if it is so easy to find someone new. In some modern societies with _____ birthrates, this could become a problem.

And of course there are people who say that the generation that has grown up on social media doesn't know how to communicate with each other face-to-face.

They say young people form impressions of each other based on social media profiles instead of forming real connections. Is this healthy? Is it possible to find true love in a world where people communicate through screens; and can partners trust each other when they know there is an _____ selection of other people looking for love?

Well, online dating shows no signs of slowing down. In the decades to come, it will not only be an easy way to meet a partner; it is predicted to become the most common way that couples meet and make _____ communication. According to one study, one in two relationships will start online by the year 2031.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised. These days we do our shopping on the Internet, pay our bills, reserve movie tickets and order pizza. Maybe it's only natural that more and more of us are finding love online as well.

Activism vs Slactivism



In the summer of 2014 the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge went viral on social media. People all over the world filmed themselves pouring buckets of ice water over their head and challenging others to do the same. The campaign was to raise money and draw _____ to ALS, a rare but deadly disease, but it also drew some criticism because many participants seemed more interested in social media popularity than helping others.

Slacktivism is a combination of the words "activism" and "slacker". The word is used to describe doing something online in support of a certain cause or event that _____ very little time or effort, such as "liking" a post or sharing a news article. In the case of the Ice Bucket Challenge, it seemed that lots of social media users took the opportunity to post fun videos of themselves, but most did not donate any money to charity.

Traditional activism has been responsible for bringing about many positive changes in the world. The civil rights movement in the 1950's-60's is a good example, but social media has made it easy, maybe too easy, to _____ support for a cause. Clicking a like button or signing a petition takes much less effort than attending a rally or demonstration, and retweeting a link is of course much cheaper than giving money to a charity. Critics say that today's "slacktivists" are lazy and not really helping their causes. There is even a possibility that slacktivism can hurt charities that count on people's generosity. Some studies have found that when people publicly support a cause on social media, they are less likely to volunteer their time or give _____ support for that same cause.



Of course, not everyone agrees. Other people argue that this kind of participation can raise awareness for a cause. But does awareness lead to change?

An LGBT organisation in America changed their logo colors to red and pink. They then encouraged people to change their Facebook profile pictures to this new red and pink symbol to show their support. _____ ten million users changed their avatars and this started many discussions about same-sex marriage. It's unknown whether this campaign actually had an influence on the government's decision to _____ same-sex marriage, but it did show how many Americans support gay rights.

And while some people still believe the Ice Bucket Challenge was mostly about narcissism, the donations it raised _____ 100 million dollars, and many people learned about a very frightening disease for the first time.

Like so many other issues in social media, the effectiveness of online activism depends on the efforts of users. Do you care enough about a cause to do more than "raise awareness"? Are you willing to _____ money or take part in volunteer work? Changing your Facebook profile picture or signing an online petition probably isn't going to change the world. But maybe it's the first step towards committing to real action.

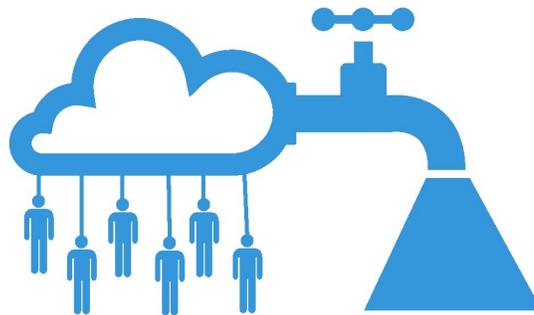
Crowdfunding



In the 1990's many western companies started saving money by getting outside companies to do work for them cheaply. For example, many American _____ laid off their customer support staff, then hired companies in India to supply telephone support workers at much cheaper wages. This was called *outsourcing* and it has often been criticized as a way for companies to _____ their profits by firing workers.

Fast forward to the 2000's and companies have found a new way to save money: crowdsourcing. This is when jobs that are traditionally done by company employees are done by large networks of volunteers. Creative work such as advertisement campaigns that were once managed by company employees or outsourced to marketing firms are now being taken over by networks of thousands of people. Perhaps one of the best examples of a company that is using crowdsourcing to it's benefit is the toy company *Lego*. In 2014 they asked customers to _____ ideas for new toys and at the same time allowed other customers vote on the toy ideas they wanted to see produced. The winning toys were brought to production and the designers were given 1% of the profits for those toy designs.

The benefits of this _____ method of starting a project are obvious. Companies save money on creative tasks and they can actually tap into the creativity of thousands of people instead of just relying on a few people. In the case of *Lego*, rewards are available for the volunteers taking part in the projects so it seems that crowdsourcing is benefitting everyone who is involved. Wikipedia is another good example of a project that has been accomplished mostly



by online volunteers. The volunteers do not have any financial incentives to work on Wikipedia, but many of them enjoy the "sense of community" they get while working together.

Crowdsourcing has recently led to the new practice of *crowdfunding*, in which people who have ideas for new products or inventions can use social media sites to ask others for money to help _____ the project. Instead of traditional businessmen getting a project off the ground, it's social media users who are responsible. Usually, each user contributes a small amount of money, but if enough users are interested in a

project, they can raise a _____ amount of money for the project. In some cases the investors make much more money than they need to start their project.

Crowdfunding has moved beyond merely funding inventions and new products. Some artists have made music albums and movies via crowdfunding. And some individuals with mounting healthcare or legal bills have taken to crowdfunding sites to raise money to pay for their bills.

One problem with the crowdfunding trend is the potential for fraud. Some Internet users have started fake crowdfunding campaigns in order to steal money from potential _____. And some crowdfunding campaigns may be started by people who don't really need the money. Once again, it is up to the social media user to be vigilant against people who may have questionable _____.

Big Data and Targeted Advertising



"If the service is free, you are not the customer; you are the product".

This is often said about Facebook and other free social media websites. These websites make money by supplying advertisers with information about their users. The average Internet user spends two and a half hours daily on social media, and their activity can _____ a lot about their interests, hobbies, and most importantly - what they might be interested in buying.

Social media websites have learned how to make money from the huge amounts of data they collect about online activity. Facebook currently collects 63 different pieces of data from its users. It uses this information, including the users' age, gender and location, to present "targeted" ads that will appeal to _____ people. You may have noticed that you are often presented with the same advertisements at every website you visit. These are targeted ads.

Of course, data collection can be used for more than advertising purposes. Some websites use this information to _____ individual user experiences, and there are also occasional benefits to society. For example, in the past Google has done studies on large amounts of data from its search engine to help health experts determine where outbreaks of influenza are likely to happen.

But "big data" is most often used for targeted advertising, and sometimes users don't like this. In one _____ in England, a department store was using data from customers' purchases to suggest new products. As part of this project, they sent coupons for diapers to a teenaged girl. The girl's father found the coupons and made a complaint with the

store. However, he apologised when it was later discovered that his daughter was actually pregnant and the store had merely been able to _____ her pregnancy by analysing the products she had recently purchased.

Targeted advertising can be beneficial to consumers as the advertisements they get become more _____.

But this sometimes also causes "price discrimination" in which people are charged different prices for the same product, depending on their online information. If you have recently shown interest in traveling to Europe, targeted ads may show you available hotels, but at a price that's more

expensive than usual. So targeted ads show you products and services you are interested in, but they might also rip you off with their prices.

So what can users do if they don't want social media websites to _____ their Internet use?

- 1) The easiest step is to log out of the site when you aren't using it.
- 2) You can download Internet browser "plugins" that protect user data and can _____ that users aren't being tracked.
- 3) Users can disable their web history. This doesn't stop advertisements from appearing, but it gives websites less information to use when targeting ads.

Data collection is an annoyance to some, and a convenience to others. Whichever it is to you, it's important to realise that when you "like" a Facebook post or "check in" somewhere with a location based app, that information is being used to do business.



Thinking critically while online



“Every man should have a built-in automatic crap detector operating inside him.”

-Ernest Hemingway

Thanks to the Internet, the answer to almost any question man has ever asked is available to us within seconds. But how do we know which information is true? How useful are these facts if they are mixed with hoaxes and scams? Some critics claim that there is so much false information on the Internet it has become useless, and unfortunately social media is responsible for a lot of this _____ of misinformation (or "crap").



Rumours and _____ stories are not new in media. For hundreds of years newspapers have occasionally reported incorrect information depending on the wishes of their editors and owners. However, traditional publishers have to be careful about what they print as someone might sue them for publishing lies. Social media has changed the way information is spread. These days, the reliability of information is no longer the responsibility of the publisher, but of the _____. So, do we have to fact-check every meme, link and viral news story that appears in our social network feeds? And when we find a piece of false information, what do we do? Do we try to correct the person who posted the material?

An interesting _____ of this side of social media is that many users often don't care if the memes or stories they share are false. People

tend to believe stories that _____ to their view of the world, and if someone else points out the inaccuracies of these stories, it often doesn't matter. Perhaps this explains why memes and rumours about unpopular politicians continue to circulate long after they have been proven false.

We cannot control the information that is put on the Internet. We can however control what we accept as fact. The "CRAP test" is a list of four simple questions that Internet users can ask themselves to help _____ false information. This is the

CRAP Test:

Currency: How current (recent) is the information?

Reliability: Does the author provide references or sources?

Authority: Who is the author? Are they an expert?

Point of view: Is this fact or opinion? Is it _____? Is it trying to sell you something?

Asking yourself these questions is a good first step to _____ the credibility of a piece of information. Fact-checking websites can also be a useful tool in not falling for misleading social media posts.

As long as people keep mindlessly clicking, liking and sharing, nothing is going to change. We need to learn to become critical consumers of online media. Asking questions about what we read and watch is the first step to building our own crap detector.