

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-

* **Keywords:** social media, addiction, Generation Y, social networking sites, college students' use of social media

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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.

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