The Dangers of Social Media

Edward E. Moody, Jr., Ph.D.

emoody@nafwb.org

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

Ecclesiastes 1:9

Psychological Impact

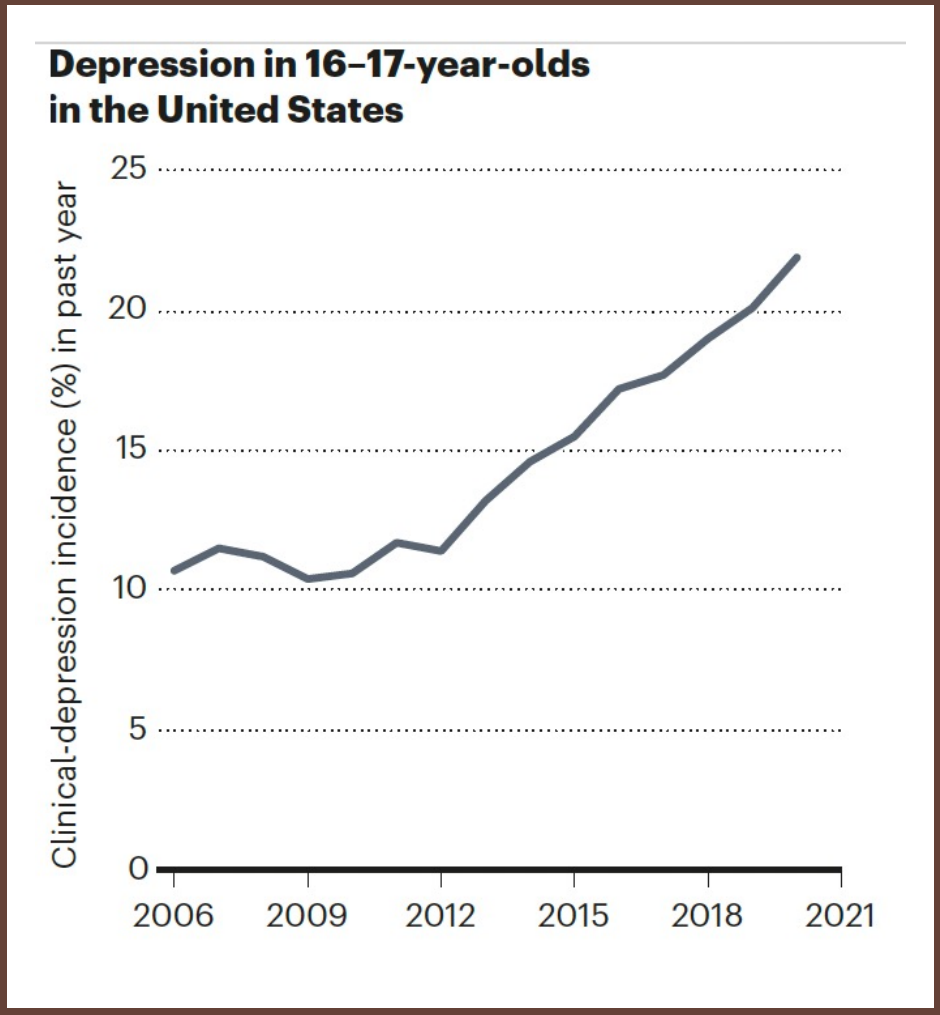
- Between 2004 and 2006, Facebook was introduced to U.S. colleges in a series of staggered rollouts. In the year that followed each introduction, mental health on those campuses declined.
- After the site was introduced to a college, severe depression increased by an average of 7%, while anxiety disorder increased by 20%.

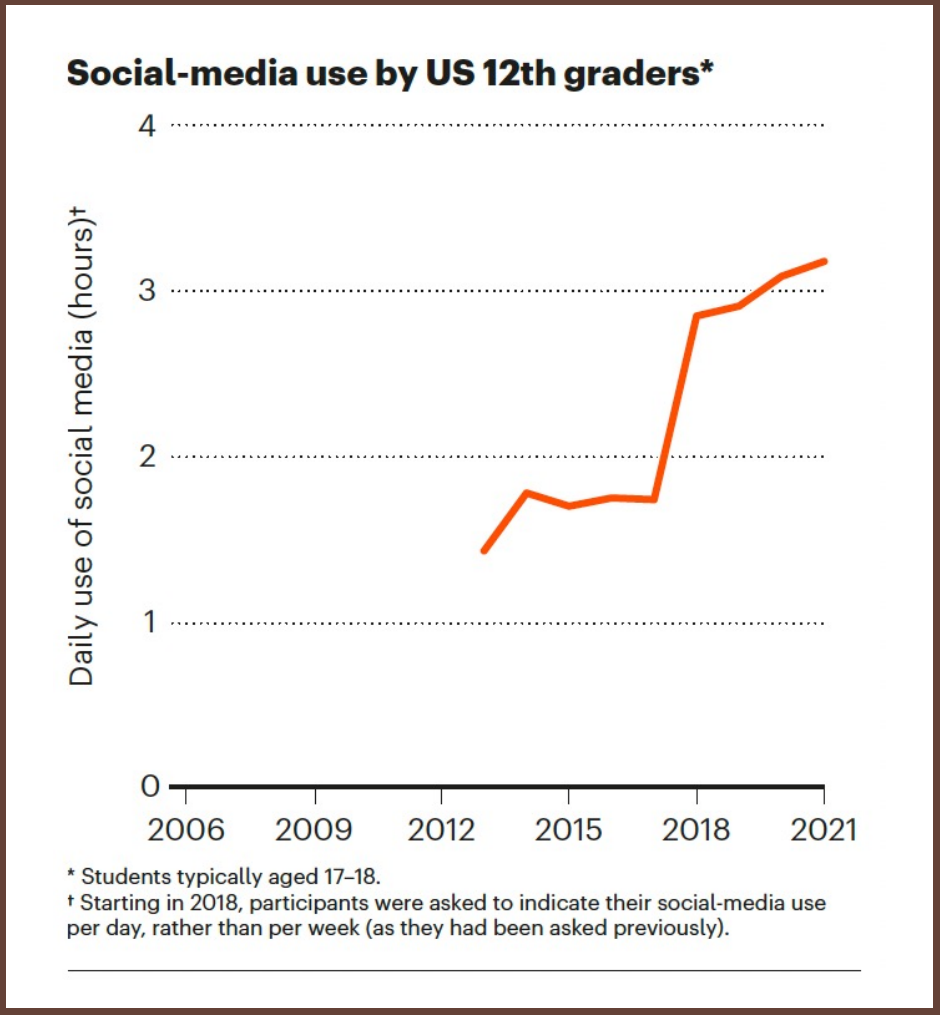
American Economic Review 2022, 112(11): 3660–3693
https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20211218

Social Media and Mental Health†

By Luca Braghieri, Ro'ee Levy, and Alexey Makarin*

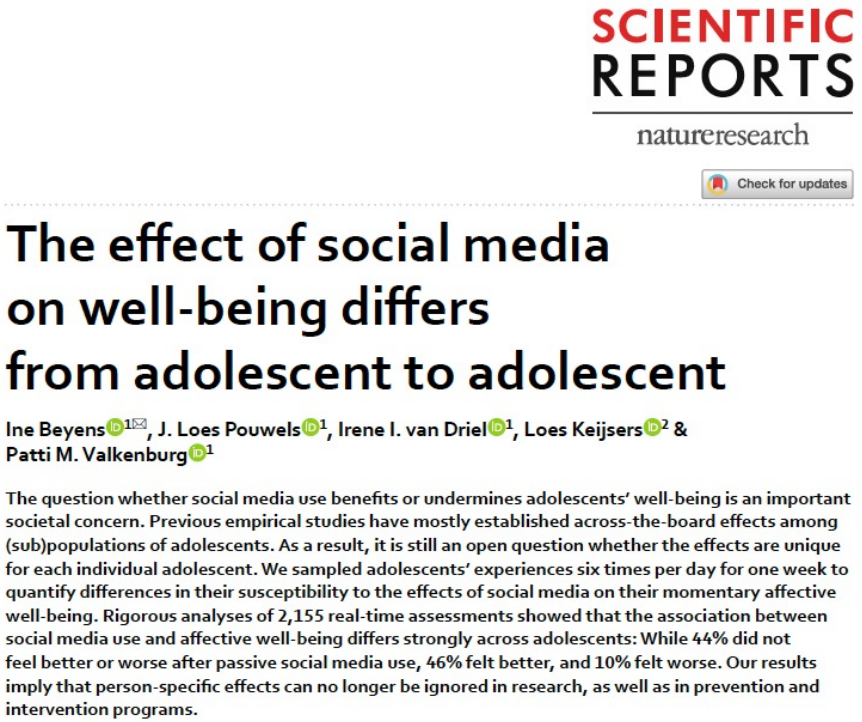
We provide quasi-experimental estimates of the impact of social media on mental health by leveraging a unique natural experiment: the staggered introduction of Facebook across US colleges. Our analysis couples data on student mental health around the years of Facebook's expansion with a generalized difference-in-differences empirical strategy. We find that the rollout of Facebook at a college had a negative impact on student mental health. It also increased the likelihood with which students reported experiencing impairments to academic performance due to poor mental health. Additional evidence on mechanisms suggests the results are due to Facebook fostering unfavorable social comparisons. (*JEL* D91, I12, I23, L82)





Nature, 614, February 16, 2023

- For females (at ages 11, 12, or 13), increased social media use predicted decreased life satisfaction
- For males (at ages 14 or 15) increased social media use predicted decreased life satisfaction
- For both female and male participants, increased social-media usage at 19 years old, predicted decreased life satisfaction



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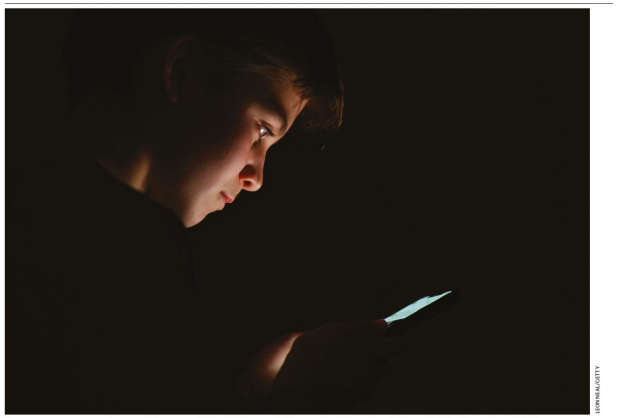
The effect of social media on well-being differs from adolescent to adolescent

Ine Beyens[1✉], J. Loes Pouwels[1], Irene I. van Driel[1], Loes Keijsers[2] & Patti M. Valkenburg[1]

The question whether social media use benefits or undermines adolescents' well-being is an important societal concern. Previous empirical studies have mostly established across-the-board effects among (sub)populations of adolescents. As a result, it is still an open question whether the effects are unique for each individual adolescent. We sampled adolescents' experiences six times per day for one week to quantify differences in their susceptibility to the effects of social media on their momentary affective well-being. Rigorous analyses of 2,155 real-time assessments showed that the association between social media use and affective well-being differs strongly across adolescents: While 44% did not feel better or worse after passive social media use, 46% felt better, and 10% felt worse. Our results imply that person-specific effects can no longer be ignored in research, as well as in prevention and intervention programs.



LEON NEAL/GETTY

Teenagers are now spending more time on social media than ever before — coinciding with a rise in mental-health problems in this age group.

How social media affects teen mental health: a missing link

Amy Orben & Sarah-Jayne Blakemore

Researchers investigating the impacts of social media on mental health must consider where exactly adolescents are in their cognitive and social development.

Depression, anxiety and suicidality have all sharply increased in adolescents over the past decade[1]. So, too, has the amount of time that young people spend online (see 'Troubling trends'). Partly because of fears that there's a link between these trends, governments around the world are under pressure to do more to regulate technology companies.

In the United Kingdom, the Online Safety Bill, currently being debated by Parliament, seeks to protect children from harmful content online. Last year, the European Union approved the Digital Services Act — which, among other things, has introduced tougher mandates requiring companies to remove illegal content from their websites. And in 2021, the US surgeon-general called for social-media companies to prioritize adolescent health and well-being at "all stages of product development"[1].

A difficulty facing policymakers, however, is that most of the scientific evidence on the impact of social media and other online

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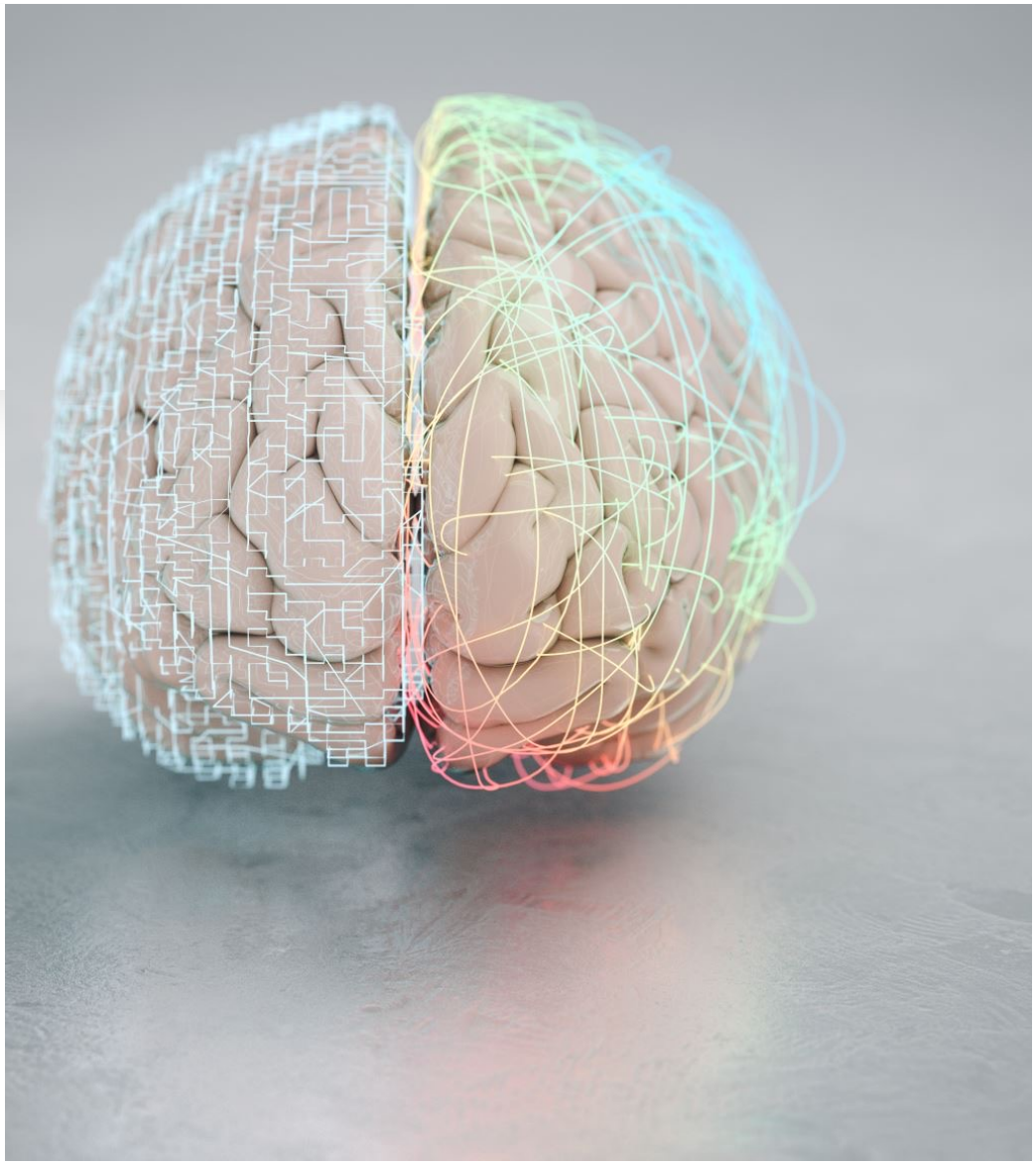
"For some people, being able to constantly track feedback from peers could heighten anxieties about self worth."

The Brains of Adolescents

- Brain regions associated with the desire for attention, feedback, and reinforcement from peers become more sensitive.
- Brain regions involved in self-control have not fully matured.



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Detecting Emotional Contagion in Massive Social Networks

Lorenzo Coviello, Yunkyu Sohn, Adam D. I. Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Massimo Franceschetti, Nicholas A. Christakis, James H. Fowler

Published: March 12, 2014 • DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0090315

Abstract
Introduction
Results
Discussion
Supporting Information
Author Contributions
References

Reader Comments (1)
Media Coverage (19)
Figures

Abstract

Happiness and other emotions spread between people in direct contact, but it is unclear whether massive online social networks also contribute to this spread. Here, we elaborate a novel method for measuring the contagion of emotional expression. With data from millions of Facebook users, we show that rainfall directly influences the emotional content of their status messages, and it also affects the status messages of friends in other cities who are not experiencing rainfall. For every one person affected directly, rainfall alters the emotional expression of about one to two other people, suggesting that online social networks may magnify the intensity of global emotional synchrony.

Figures

CrossMark

Subject Areas
Behavior
Emotions
Experimental econo...
Facebook
Human evolution
Instrumental variabl...

Media, Grades and Personal Contentment (8-to-18 year-olds)			
	Type of User		
Percent Who Say They Get Mostly:	***HeavyUser***	***ModerateUser***	***LightUser***
Good grades (A's & B's)	51%	65%	66%
Fair/poor grades (C's or below)	47%	31%	23%
Percent Who Say They:			
Have a lot of friends	93%	91%	91%
Get along well with their parents	84%	90%	90%
Have been happy at school this year	72%	81%	82%
Are often bored	60%	53%	48%
Get into trouble a lot	33%	21%	16%
Are often sad or unhappy	32%	23%	22%
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation Study, January 2009			

Social media can interfere with . . .

SLEEP

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

SCHOOL WORK

IN-PERSON SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Spiritual Impact

- Dangerous content

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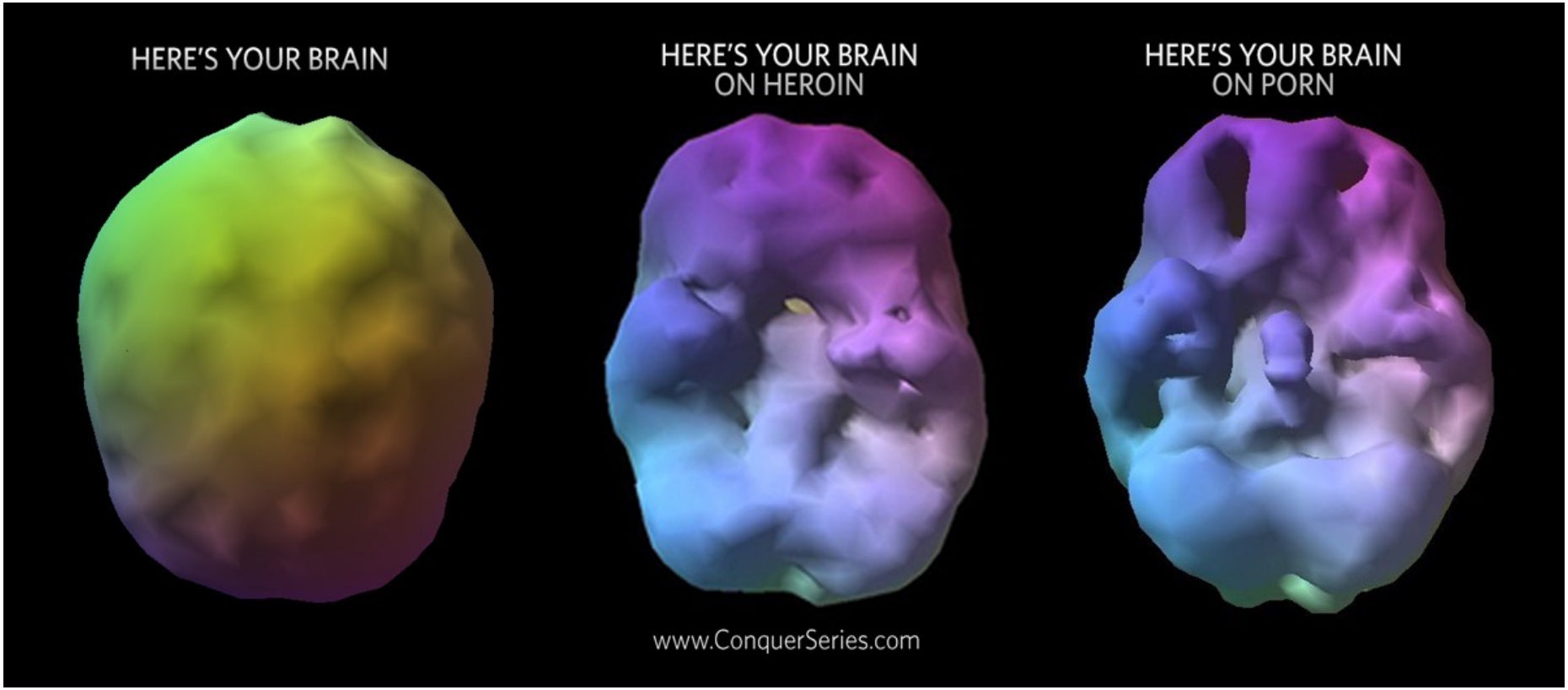
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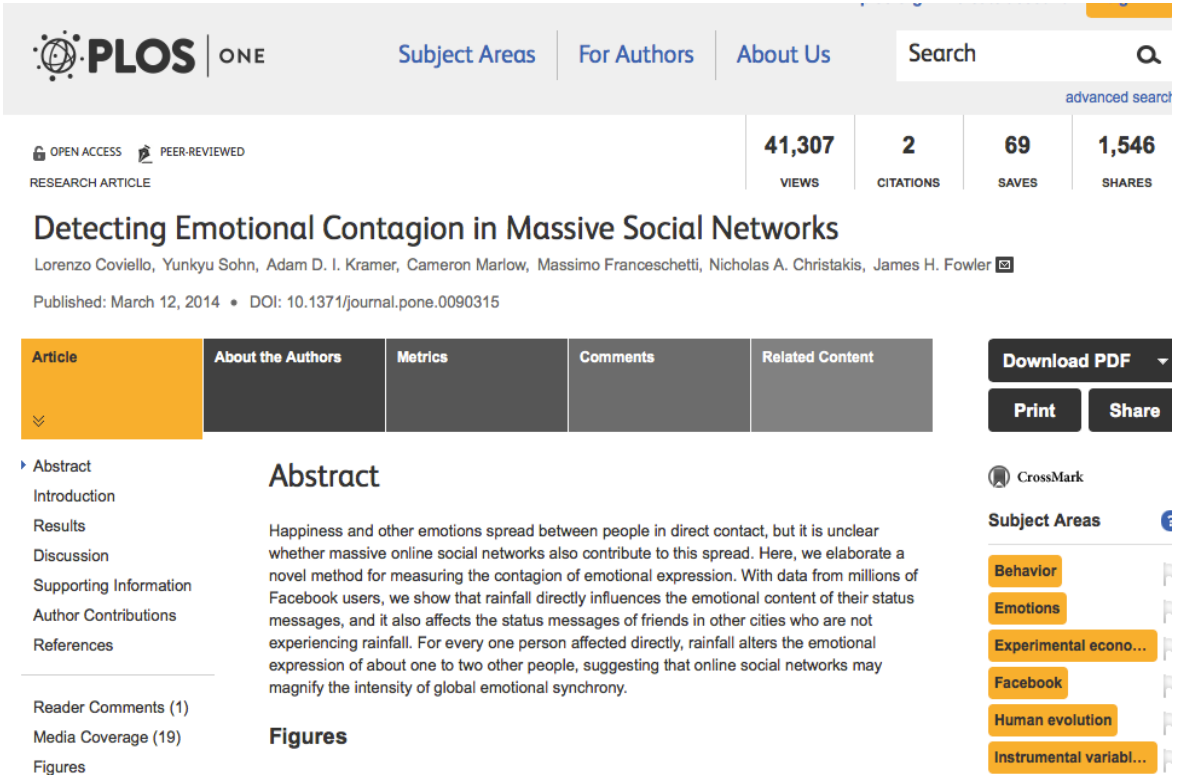
27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:
28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Matthew 5:27-28

Spiritual Impact

- Dangerous content
- Echo chamber



Detecting Emotional Contagion in Massive Social Networks

Lorenzo Coviello, Yunkyu Sohn, Adam D. I. Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Massimo Franceschetti, Nicholas A. Christakis, James H. Fowler

Abstract Fig

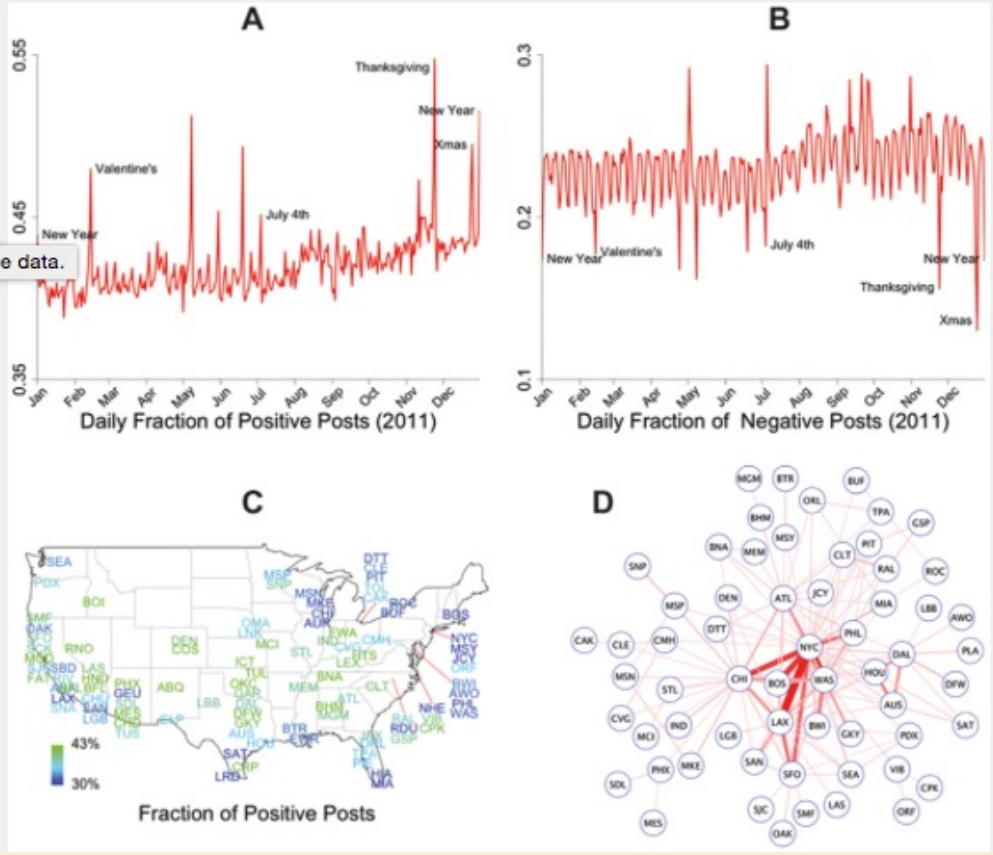


Figure 1 Description of the data.

Spiritual Impact

- Dangerous content
- Echo chamber
- Worldly comparisons

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EATING DISORDERS

Empirical Article

Do you "like" my photo? Facebook use maintains eating disorder risk

Annalise G. Mabe BS, K. Jean Forney MS and Pamela K. Keel PhD*

Article first published online: 24 JAN 2014

DOI: 10.1002/eat.22254

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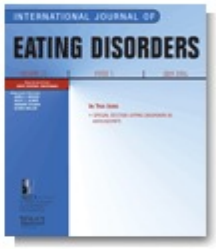
Issue

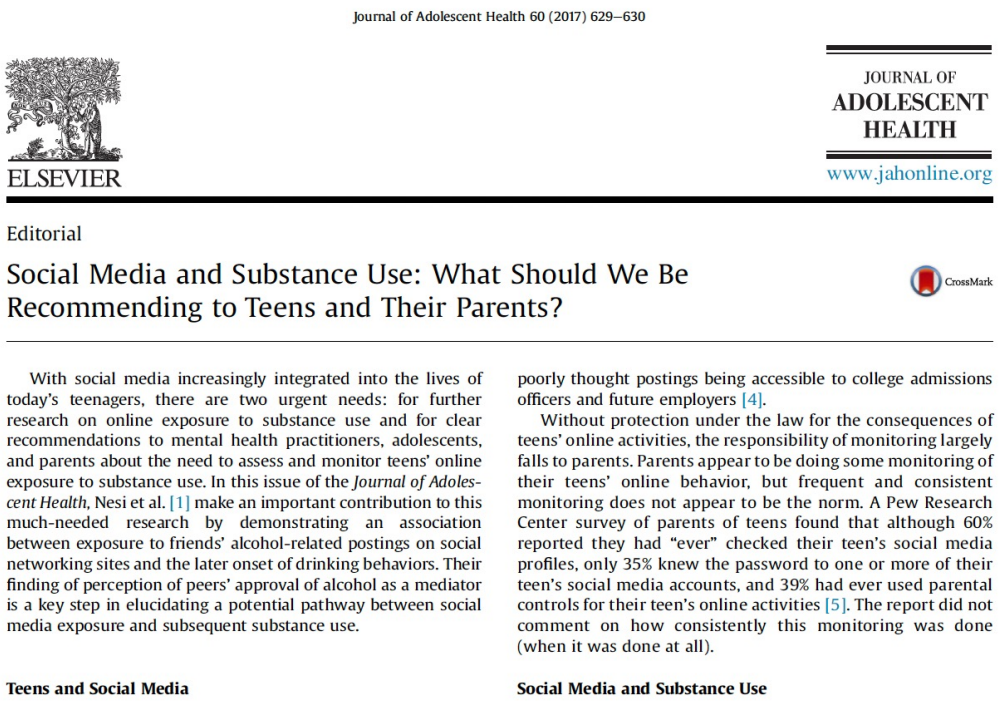


International Journal of Eating Disorders

Volume 47, Issue 5, pages 516–523, July 2014

Spiritual Impact

- Dangerous content
- Echo chamber
- Worldly comparisons
- More likely to engage in ungodly behaviors that are observed



Journal of Adolescent Health 60 (2017) 629–630

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Editorial

Social Media and Substance Use: What Should We Be Recommending to Teens and Their Parents?

With social media increasingly integrated into the lives of today's teenagers, there are two urgent needs: for further research on online exposure to substance use and for clear recommendations to mental health practitioners, adolescents, and parents about the need to assess and monitor teens' online exposure to substance use. In this issue of the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, Nesi et al. [1] make an important contribution to this much-needed research by demonstrating an association between exposure to friends' alcohol-related postings on social networking sites and the later onset of drinking behaviors. Their finding of perception of peers' approval of alcohol as a mediator is a key step in elucidating a potential pathway between social media exposure and subsequent substance use.

Teens and Social Media

poorly thought postings being accessible to college admissions officers and future employers [4].

Without protection under the law for the consequences of teens' online activities, the responsibility of monitoring largely falls to parents. Parents appear to be doing some monitoring of their teens' online behavior, but frequent and consistent monitoring does not appear to be the norm. A Pew Research Center survey of parents of teens found that although 60% reported they had "ever" checked their teen's social media profiles, only 35% knew the password to one or more of their teen's social media accounts, and 39% had ever used parental controls for their teen's online activities [5]. The report did not comment on how consistently this monitoring was done (when it was done at all).

Social Media and Substance Use

Positive Uses of Social Media

- Social connection, kids can find people who share their identities and interests.
- People who struggle can know they are not alone.

A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

Proverbs 25:11

Good Uses

Text *encouragement*

Keep them *informed*

Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

Proverbs 25:16

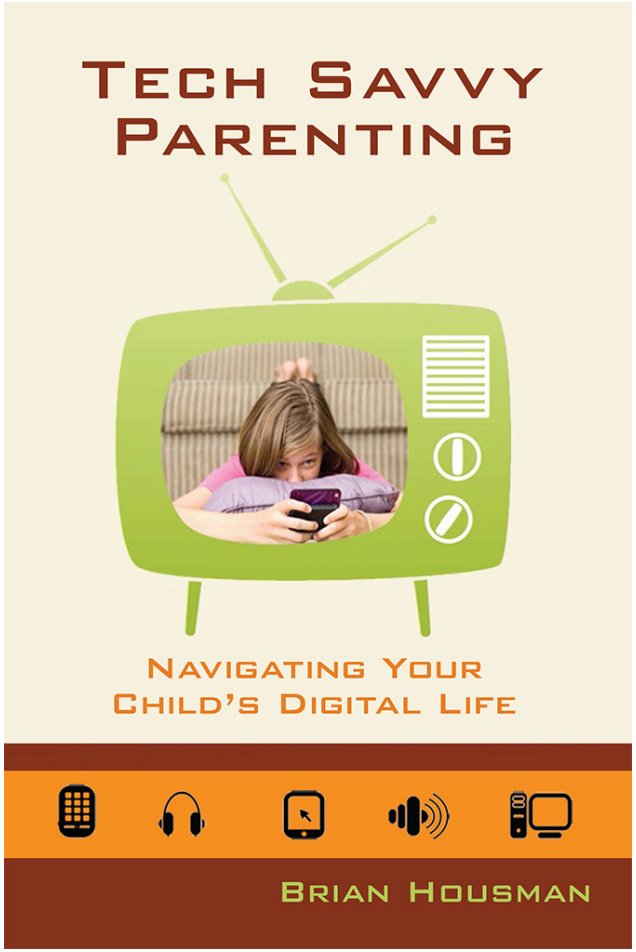
Signs of a Problem

Strong cravings to use social media, or an inability to stop.

Lying or sneaking around in order to use devices when they aren’t allowed.

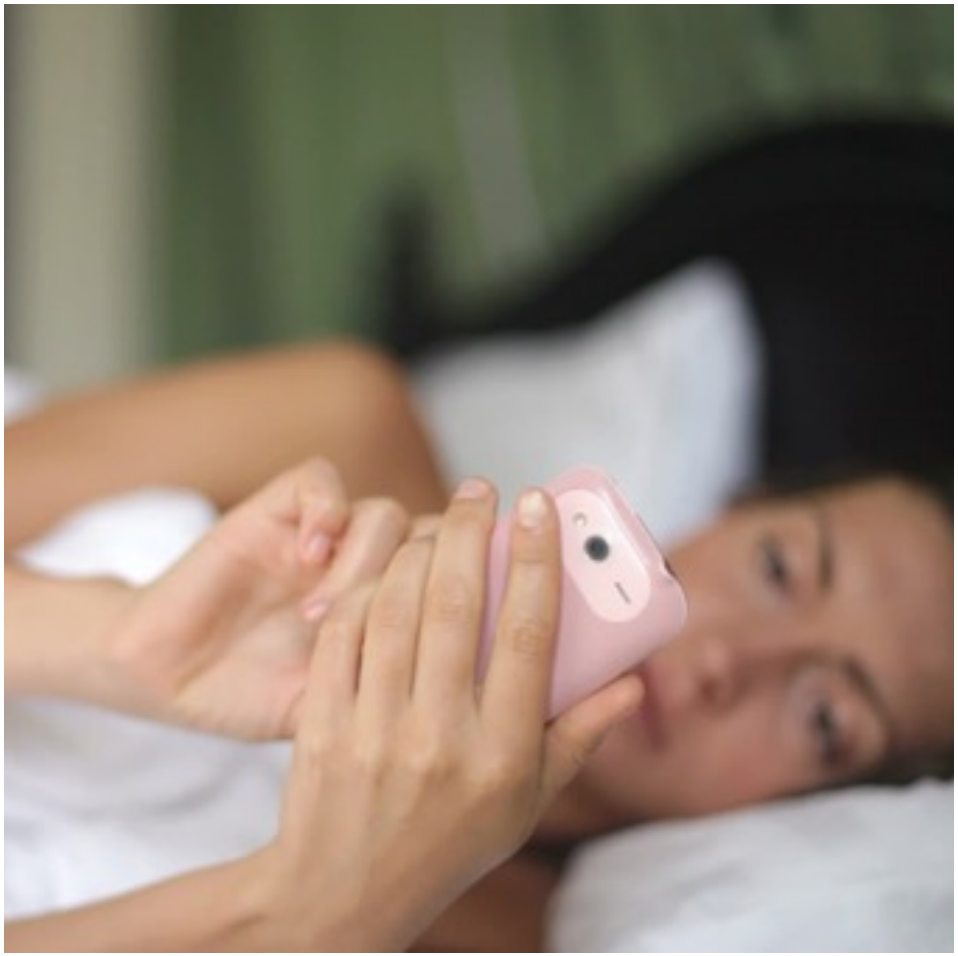
“Social media is here to stay. That doesn’t mean we have to accept its dangers, however. Just as we decide when kids are old enough to drive, and we teach them to be good drives, we can establish guidelines and teach children to use social media safely.”

Mary Alvord, Ph.D.


Tech Savvy Parenting
Navigating Your Child's Digital Life
Brian Housman

Advice for Parents

Remove the devices from the bedroom at night.



Advice for Parents

Model

Advice for Parents

- Kids' social media use should be monitored closely in early adolescence, especially between the ages of 10 and 14.
- Talk to kids and limit the amount of time they can use the device.
- Remove the devices from the bedroom at night.
- Encourage kids to spend time in other valuable activities.

Advice for Parents from the U.S. Surgeon General

- Create a family media plan
- Create tech-free zones
- Model responsible social media behavior
- Work with other parents to help establish shared norms

Screen Time in the Home - Arlene Pellicane

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Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 22:6

Teach Kids Digital Literacy

- Know the danger of algorithms and how they can lead down rabbit holes.

Teach Kids Digital Literacy

- Know the danger of algorithms and how they can lead down rabbit holes.
- Automatic playing of videos make it incredibly hard to step away.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.
Philippians 4:8

Teach Kids Digital Literacy

- Know the danger of algorithms and how they can lead down rabbit holes.
- Automatic playing of videos make it incredibly hard to step away.
- Teach kids to identify misinformation.

What to do

1. Start ***talking***
2. Explain God's design for ***intimacy***
3. Communicate ***boundaries***
4. Establish ***barriers***

Teach Kids Digital Literacy

- Know the danger of algorithms and how they can lead down rabbit holes.
- Automatic playing of videos make it incredibly hard to step away.
- Teach kids to identify misinformation.
- Teach kids to protect their privacy.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

Proverbs 22:1

EDUCATION

When Colleges Look Up Applicants on Facebook: The Unspoken New Admissions Test

High school seniors applying to college have always had to worry about GPAs, SATs and resumes and. But with the rise of social media has come a whole new set of challenges – namely what to scrub from your digital identity

By Victor Luckerson | Nov. 15, 2012 | 34 Comments

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Photo-Illustration by Alexander Ho for TIME; Classroom: Getty Images

Judging by its Facebook network, Hastings High School in New York has one strange senior class. A student named "FunkMaster Floikes" is somehow rubbing shoulders with Lizzie McGuire and the fictional parents from *That '70s Show*. Meanwhile Samwise Gams (a nickname of a hobbit in *Lord of the Rings*) is listed as a 2012 alum. At first glance, such social media profiles have all the makings of crude online pranks. But in reality, they have been strategically created by actual Hastings seniors determined to

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Keep in Mind

Everything you do is part of your ongoing *image*

Once you send it, it's anybody's *business*

Present actions have long-term *consequences*

Look me in the eyes

Keep the phone away from the table

Never text while driving

A cell phone is a privilege not a right

Setting the boundaries

HOUR-OF-DAY *RESTRICTIONS*

SCHOOL IS FOR *SCHOOL*

LIMIT THE NUMBER OF *TEXTS*

KEEP THE PHONE IN A PUBLIC *PLACE*

HOMEWORK COMES *FIRST*

The Dangers of Social Media

Edward E. Moody, Jr., Ph.D.

emoody@nafwb.org