

One social media notification sound effect

Out of the roughly 8 billion people on the planet, there are an estimated 2.789 billion social media users. That is nearly thirty seven percent of the global population.

This number only increases with every passing day and though social media brings great improvements to many fronts such as marketing, messaging, and general socializing it has a number of negative effects especially on the younger generation.

This holds especially true in the tense of mental health. In the modern scape of living, young people are more predisposed to mental illness than ever. This is only accentuated by social media.

Social media is addictive and new. Parents often don't know how to moderate their children's usage and are not equipped with the knowledge or tools to regulate this source of stimuli for their children.

Sound effect of like – a lot of social media notifications coming in

Unfortunately, the main selling point of social media is that it is entertaining. This leads many people to the conclusion that it is harmless. This is far from the truth as social media takes root in the developing mind on two fronts, psychological and physiological. Social media is designed to hook the consumer and it does this by pumping the brain for feel good chemicals such as dopamine and serotonin.

Sparkly sounding sound effect

Beginning with the psychological aspect, social media offers the temptation of social acceptance while very rarely offering such. Nonetheless, systems such as likes and trending pages act as a constant hook for the youth. On top of this, social media follows algorithms. This means that the content consumed by the average view is specifically retrieved for them. It makes it easy for anyone to fall down that rabbit hole that is the modern online scape.

While the system in place to create a social and emotion dependency works well, social media also physically addicts the user. The human brain produces serotonin when exposed to the blue light in common phone screens. This means that even if the viewer isn't necessarily enjoying the content provided to them, the simple act of being on a device gives them the hit of serotonin they desire.

Between these two fronts, social media is a serotonin tap. It floods the user's brain with positive response chemicals and hooks them on the very concept of presence in the digital realm. It is by definition, a drug.

Lighter noise

Building off this, social media creates opportunity for an entire new scape of interactions and more detrimentally so, it gives people the opportunity to interact without revealing their identity. When there is no risk of your words being traced back to you, people are more apt to cruelty.

In terms of today's young people, this means that classic school drama is not only amplified through the form of social media but that victims also cannot escape this treatment at home. Social media opens the gate for negativity to follow young people anywhere they go at any time.

Teens and children experience anxiety when separated from their devices

Doctor Nicole Zamanzadeh an accredited researcher in psychology and behavior claims that “users experience anxiety if they are away from their devices for a long period of time. They rely on social media because they feel that they should always know what others are doing”

Constant use of social media creates habitual and paranoid behavior. It is a perfect storm between the fixation of one’s performance and how they present to their peers and the impressionability of young minds. It is the formation of a routine that can so easily slip into reinforced anxious behavior.

Relevant to this is the age-old desire for young people to fit in with their peers. Conformity is not a new concept for the youth in the slightest sense, but social media makes it so that today’s youth feels that pressure to perform, to conform even in their own homes.

Despite all the risk involved with an online presence, young people seem to only have increased interest in involvement with such. This is because despite whatever may come to them online, it still forces out some feeling of satisfaction in their mind on a chemical level.

Social media does entirely more harm than good to them by enabling new forms of bullying with anonymity, increasing anxious tendencies, and creating a dopamine deficiency in developing and impressionable minds. It does have a role in today’s society but, that role is not in the lives of today’s young people.

Phone locking noise