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Social Mania

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Social Mania

Abstract

Ten.

That's the total number of times I've checked Facebook and Instagram within the past hour alone. Ashamedly, it's become a sort of compulsive habit. No matter what I'm doing, turning on my phone or laptop wouldn't be complete without checking Tumblr, Facebook or Instagram. Within the past year or so, social media has become a big part of my life. It's become part of my daily morning routine. Before the thought of getting out of bed to face the day even crosses my mind, I have to check social media and see what's been going on in the world while I've been sleeping. Whether I'm waiting in a line or taking a quick study break, my first impulse is always to check my phone. And I'm not the only one. According to a recent study done by Pew Research Center, "Multi-platform use is on the rise: 52% of online adults now use two or more social media sites, a significant increase from 2013, when it stood at 42% of internet users." [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, social media, Millennial Generation, mental health

Disciplines

Communication | Mental and Social Health

Comments

Surge is a student blog at Gettysburg College where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

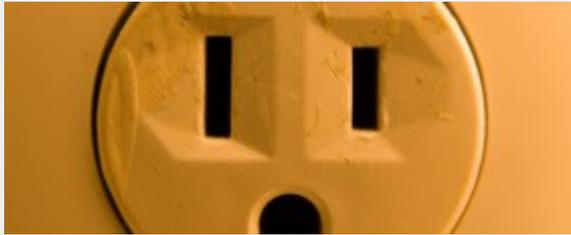
SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

SOCIAL MANIA

April 23, 2015

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That's the total number of times I've checked Facebook and Instagram within the past hour alone. Ashamedly, it's become a sort of compulsive habit. No matter what I'm doing, turning on my phone or laptop wouldn't be complete without checking Tumblr, Facebook or Instagram. Within the past year or so, social media has become a big part of my life. It's become part of my daily morning routine. Before the thought of getting out of bed to face the day even crosses my mind, I have to check social media and see what's been going on in the world while I've been sleeping. Whether I'm waiting in a line or taking a quick study break, my first impulse is always to check my phone. And I'm not the only one. According to a recent study done by Pew Research Center, "Multi-platform use is on the rise: 52% of online adults now use two or more social media sites, a significant increase from 2013, when it stood at [42% of internet users.](#)"

It's no secret we're living in the digital age. The Millennial Generation in particular, is especially connected. The phrase TMI is a thing of the past with Generation Y. With the presence of Instagram, Tumblr, Twitter, Facebook, along with all other social media outlets, it's never been easier to straddle between two worlds, both real and virtual, staying connected 24/7. Day after day, we share pictures, take selfies, update our statuses; we're constantly bombarded with an endless stream of information. So where do we draw the line? Yes, there are plenty of benefits to having this ability to connect so widely with people from around the world. But, it's become too easy for social media to turn into a black hole and consume our lives. "And perhaps that's why they [millennials] are always glued to their smartphones—devices they use more than any other generation. Just how inseparable are they from their devices? An astounding 83 percent say that they [sleep with their smartphones.](#)" There comes a point, where we all need to unplug and take a break for a little while.

The truth of the matter is *social media makes us unhappy*. Our online social presence is determined by our amount of friends, or followers. Our self-esteem is boosted by positive comments on our selfies, while our validation comes from how many likes we get on pictures. It seems like everyone is leading these healthy, happy, glamorous lives, furthering our own feelings of worry and inadequacy. But what many fail to realize is that these are just the highlight reels. In reality, that person with the amazing selfie probably

went through a bunch of different filters, lighting and angles before settling on that one picture. That girl boasting of her accomplishments on twitter and Facebook? She could be dealing with issues behind the scenes. That adorable, smiling couple on the beach? They could've had an explosive argument before striking a pose. The point is *that we don't know*. We're too quick to take the endless stream of videos, pictures and statuses at [face value](#). Spending so much time in this virtual world does us more harm than good.

A study done on Facebook in particular, showed that the most "social" network has been linked to countless mental health consequences, including low self-esteem, bitter jealousy and depression among others. The Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology found that there is a clear correlation between Facebook and depressive symptoms, "but the mediating factor seems to be a well-established psychological phenomenon: "Social comparison." That is, making comparisons, often between our most humdrum moments and our friends "highlight reels" – the vacation montages and cute baby pics – is what links [Facebook time and depressive symptoms](#) together."

Now I don't think we need to boycott social media altogether. Besides how completely unrealistic that is, considering there are benefits to it, getting rid of social media isn't necessary. What's necessary is changing our mindsets and spending a little less time plugged in. It's time to stop looking for validation in all the wrong places and comparing our lives to the highlight reels of others. So take a break and disconnect yourself. Live your life. I promise the internet will still be here when you get back.

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Editor