

# **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION**



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## INTRODUCTION

Social Networks are becoming a more essential part of our daily lives. Being constantly connected to Facebook or Twitter can develop into an excessive habit that forms an addiction.

Are you addicted to social media?

Are you a social media junky?

Read the following points and decide on your own:

- When you speak, your sentences contain a maximum of 140 characters.
- You cannot see something happening or find out about events without tweeting about it.
- A camera is aimed at you and you immediately ask: Are you going to post it in your Facebook page?
- When you go to church on Sunday, you check in on Foursquare.
- You no longer use the automated DM function in Twitter.
- You have become the Mayor of your city.
- You are the 'boss of your boss'.
- You cannot remember the last time you went to the bathroom without your iPhone, Black Berry or Android.
- You go shopping and when you return home you already have new ideas for your blog.
- You write your blog before you unpack your shopping.
- Without the hashtag #ff, you do not know when Friday is.
- You know who you follow better than you do your neighbors.
- You have lost count of how many followers you have and how many people you are following.
- If you want to lose weight, you look for diet options in Twitter.

- You prefer to chat or Skype with your boy or girlfriend, even if they are a couple of feet next to you.
- When your girlfriend tells you a joke, you answer by saying LOL.
- You know your Klout Score by heart. This is an indicator of your influence in social media.
- During Halloween, you dress up as the Twitter Bird or a Facebook Page.
- If when you are unpacking after a trip, you tape yourself and upload the video to your YouTube account.
- If you have fallen asleep a couple of times this week on top of your laptop or your desktop at work.
- If you know the free Wi-Fi locations in your city better than most of the recommended tourist attractions.
- If during a power outage your sweat, tremble and have panic attacks.
- If you have concurred with each and every point listed above.
- And lastly, if you decided not to read the complete list.

So are you a social media addict? Be honest with yourself. Social skills are being lost and anything in excess is bad.

There is no doubt that a lot of people are addicted to social media as we know it. Some people spend more time on their social media sites than on their daily tasks. The reason why they are so addicted is because just like any other person on the planet, these people crave the interpersonal interaction that these sites provide.

This addiction is just something that is waiting to be exploited.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **ADDICTION, THE BRAIN, AND HYPNOSIS**

Addictions are serious chronic brain diseases. They have biological, psychological, and social implications. They are powerful because they employ neurological processes required for learning and survival.

However, they use these vital systems in a way that threatens the addict's health, relationships, and may often end in criminal prosecution and jail time. So, to understand and treat this problem both the patient and the counselor must know how abuse is encoded, triggered, and reinforced.

Our brain participates in a two-level learning system. Generally, learning can be divided into short-term and long-term with each using very different and distinct parts of the brain - and one critical part that both share.

The ability to have short-term memory involves perception being predominantly stored in the area called the hippocampus, which specializes in briefly recording what is detected by one's senses. This then tends to trigger a reaction in the nearby amygdala, which is the brain's emotional center.

The resulting reaction varies depending on whether the perception is deemed to cause pleasure or fear. Of course, I would assume that addictive behavior is more related to a pleasurable response. This acts as a reward system, which is critical to our ability to encode and reinforce the proper reaction to a perception of safety or threat.

Short-term memories are eventually stored in other areas of the brain as long-term memories. When this happens, new memories are integrated with other previously attained ones, thus providing opportunities for retriggering the previously experienced positive or negative responses.

For instance, once you have enjoyed your favorite dessert - during which your reaction to the taste was associated with a particular smell - the next time you smell the same aroma the original short-term reaction will again be relived. This means that again the

amygdala will trigger the emotional centers of our brain to react. It appears that triggering the amygdala is associated with both short-term and long-term memories.

Taking this a few steps further, we can say that to understand the relationship between addiction and the brain, you must realize that repeated behavior will alter how the brain functions and is structured.

This means that either due to the dramatic effect of the behavior or the ingestion of a substance, repeated use will cause the associated networks of brain cells to multiply.

This means that their ability to replay the reward response in the future will grow stronger and stronger. (This is true even should the brain create a tolerance to the behavior or substance.

Thus, even though more of the addictive substance or stimulus will be required, essentially the brain's capability, which has developed a certain level of genius, will always be there.) This increasing competency due to intensity and repetition is the fundamental reason why understanding the brain and addiction is important.

Addiction is a growing problem in our culture. When we focus on addiction, we normally think of a celebrity who has just entered rehab because of prescription drug abuse. However, more and more we learn of others - both celebrities and non-celebrities - who have admitted that they are addicted to alcohol.

This is a major problem. In fact, about 18.7 million people, which is about 7.7% of the US population, are dependent upon or use alcohol. So, just like situations in which people are addicted to drugs, many are finding alcohol addictive. Of course, I can add to this many other addictive behaviors, such as gambling, porn, as well.

What is the solution?

First I must express that one of our main problems in addressing the problem is our social and legal attitudes. The media readily refers to addiction sufferers as addicts or alcoholics - terms which have strong negative connotations.

However, a wide range of people can easily become addicted despite their moral values, intelligence, or degrees. As an addiction takes advantage of brain capabilities, which are critical to learning and survival, the onset of this chronic disease is clearly an equal opportunity condition. Therefore, it should be looked at more as a health issue, rather than a social one resulting in shame and guilt.

I sincerely believe that almost all addictions normally warrant professional assistance by medical or psychological professionals - who hopefully see the problem and treat it as a chronic brain disease.

With that said, treatment should recognize the role of the learning and reward system and seek to reprogram these natural systems in a way that the underlying trained reaction to the stimulus produces an alternate result.

This is a far cry from often employed techniques, which seek to deny the functioning of these processes. Finding a method, which allows the learning and reward and survival processes to function, interrupt the pattern, and install the expectation of an alternate reward seems to be a more logical choice.

Often I hear inquiries regarding the role of hypnosis and the resolution of an addiction. While I have never promoted hypnotherapy as a stand-alone cure, when used by a competent practitioner I sincerely believe that it can help.

This is because the same areas of the brain, which play major roles in the hypnotic process, are very much involved in addictions. The right orbitofrontal cortex, which is just above the right eye, is believed to play a major role in our judgment abilities.

In detail, these involve inhibition and suggestion and imagination, which I sometimes refer to as simulation and anticipation.

Hypnotherapists are masters when it comes to the use of suggestion and imagination. Researchers have found the relationship between anticipation and triggering intense emotion within the amygdala.

For instance, the thought of what a piece of pie will taste like - or the feelings caused by addictive alcohol use - will activate the amygdala. Hypnosis can do the same thing.

The interesting thing about how the brain uses its different parts is that when an area, which is associated with specific functions, is activated, it can not do more than one activity simultaneously.

For instance, try simultaneously imagining the taste of something very delicious and another item that is completely repulsive. You will most likely become very frustrated.

By using hypnosis to activate positive thoughts an addicted person will have a very hard time triggering their typical behavior or substance abuse pattern. This helps them develop an alternative.

If this is done in a way that installs a different reward feeling, the process of restructuring the brain begins. In a nutshell this is why hypnosis can and should play a role in the treatment of mental and physical addictions.

## CHAPTER 2

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

Has social media taken over your life? Do you communicate more with people around the world instead of your family and friends? There's nothing wrong with using social media to connect with people or promote your business, but if you're on your sites 24/7, you could be developing an addiction. This isn't healthy.

There's more to life than updating your status every 5 minutes. Take a break from social media and go outside. The fresh air will do you good!

Social media has become a driving force behind many of our lives. With an ever increasing user base many people have begun to find themselves utilizing social media applications like Twitter and Facebook on a more than regular basis.

How can we know if our use of these sites has become something more than normal? If you find yourself agreeing with these signs, then you may just be addicted to social media. So, here they are.

#### **The Top Ten Signs You're A Social Media Addict**

1. Your real life conversations consist of no more than 140 characters.
2. You no longer have "real life" conversations.
3. You belong to a social network for people addicted to social networks.
4. On Facebook, you're a fan of (wait for it) Facebook.
5. When you heard Google was coming out with a social media platform you became aroused and then promptly tweeted about it.
6. When people ask you who your friends are you say things like: Ashton Kutcher, Barack Obama, Al Gore, Bill Gates.
7. Youtypethingslikethistouselesspace and put #hashtags #in #front #of #everything.

8. You're Facebook friends with your entire graduating class from high school even though you didn't talk to or like most of them.
9. The best part of your day is checking to see if you have new followers, friends or fans.
10. You get upset if you can't log on to your social media sites



### *Social Media Addiction - Symptoms to Watch For*

Do you 'freak out' if your sites are down for maintenance? If you do, you could be addicted. Don't worry; your favorite sites will be working in no time.

Use the downtime to do something else like read a book, work out, take a walk, paint, or whatever it is you'd like to do. It will be good for you!

You have to update your status when you wake up. If you have to update your status as soon as you get up, you could be developing an addiction. Your followers will be all right

if you don't update your status early in the morning. Break out of your routine and update your status in the afternoon. Change is good.

Do you dream about updating your status? Do you go to bed dreaming about updating your status? Do you think about updating your status all day? Stop dreaming about your social sites and dream about what you'd like to do with your life.

You remain logged in and comment on every status update. If you stay logged into your social media sites and comment on statuses as soon as they're posted, you could be addicted. You don't have to comment on every status update.

- ❖ Getting your news from social media- Many people receive their information from the internet but if you solely depend on social media for news, you could be developing an addiction.
- ❖ You accept to be interrupted by social media updates- Dinner used to be a time to spend with family and catch up with everyone. Not anymore. If you pay attention to a 'tweet' or status update instead of your children, partner, or spouse, you're developing an addiction.
- ❖ You Update your sites while driving - This is dangerous. If you 'tweet' or update other your other social sites, you're becoming addicted and could cause harm to you and others.
- ❖ Your self-worth is determined by the amount of followers you have - If you're upset you only have 500 followers on various sites, you could be developing an addiction You determine your self-worth not social media websites.
- ❖ You wonder why people ask you about your weekend - If someone asks you, "How was your weekend?" and you think to yourself, "I just updated my statuses, didn't you read my posts?" This is a sign that you're becoming addicted.

Do any of the above symptoms resonate with you? If they do, you're becoming addicted to social media. Life's too short to constantly be 'hooked up' to your social websites. Go to the park and enjoy the sunshine.

Get together with friends and enjoy a night out on the town without worrying about updating your status. You're given a limited amount of time on earth -- take advantage

of every moment. Your followers will understand if you don't update them every five minutes!

## CHAPTER 3

### HOW TO BREAK THE OBSESSION

If you constantly check your Facebook status to see who 'liked' your status, you could be addicted to social networking. If you 'tweet' all day long, you could be addicted to social networking.

Being addicted to social networks can ruin your life. Your 'real life' friends will forget about you, and your online friends may not be all that friendly. Don't let the internet consume your life. There's more to life than being hooked up 24-hours a day!

#### Social Networking Addictions - How to Break the Obsession

- ✓ *Check your social networks twice a day.* This may sound crazy if you're a die-hard social networker, but it's a start to breaking your addiction. Spend **no more than 15 minutes on each website.**
- ✓ Once you've finished, go onto to the next site. Do this for one week and see how you feel. You may go through actual withdrawal just like any other addict but stick with the program and you'll get better.
- ✓ *Take up a hobby.* What did you like to do when you were a kid? Did you like to build model airplanes or cars? Do you like to build things? What about puzzles? Find something else to do to occupy your time.
- ✓ *Read.* This one may send people over the edge. Educate yourself and read for fun. You can read books, journals, newspapers, and magazines. There's a whole world out there that you're missing because you're too busy liking fan pages or commenting on peoples' status updates. Find a favorite author and curl up with a good book.
- ✓ *Take classes.* How would you like to become SCUBA certified? What about learning how to paint? You can take a variety of classes that will stimulate your mind. You may find that you enjoy learning how to make pottery. You may discover another multiple stream of income -- you can sell your pottery!

- ✓ *Get in shape.* Are you in good shape? Chances are if you sit in front of the computer every day, you may not be in the best shape. If you have a family or class reunion, you would want to break your social networking addiction. You'll want peoples' jaws to drop because you look incredible.
- ✓ *Turn off the computer* and run around the block, lift weights, jump rope, do squats, or whatever it is you want to do to get in shape. Drink plenty of water. Remember, when you lose weight, you'll have to update your profile picture. Isn't getting in shape worth it if you can upload a 'snappy' new picture on your social networks?

Social networking addiction is no different than a drug or gambling addiction. It isn't healthy for you and could cause your 'real life' relationships to break down. There's nothing wrong if you want to connect with people around the world; however, if you spend all of your time online, you'll miss out on what's happening around you.

Shutdown the computer at a reasonable time, and limit the amount of time you spend on social networking sites. If you don't, your family and friends may forget all about you.

How will that make you feel?

Will your online friends be there for you?

That's definitely something to think about.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION**

The psychology of social media addiction proves that the Internet has become the backbone of society in most countries. As the number of “digitally native” users grow, marketers and advertisers seek to get noticed by social media users that love to network.

On average, most people spend half of their day tapping away at their hand-held devices. Either, surfing the net or checking notifications. Facebook ranks the highest in all social networking platforms, followed by Twitter, Instagram and so forth.

#### **The Science Behind It**

Social media is addictive- which is why so many people are “hooked”. Often referred to as Social networking addiction, this phrase is often used to describe someone who spends too much time on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other channels.

A blog post, Instagram, tweet, or youtube video can be produced easily by anyone and shared, which can then be viewed by millions for free. Psychologists and scientists have now taken the time to study social media in terms of why they believe it interferes with aspects of our daily life.

#### *No real medical term*

There is no official medical term that identifies addiction and social networking. It cannot be deemed as a disease or disorder as cases are not severe and the habit can easily be maintained or prevented.

Furthermore, instead of spending long periods of time on social media, we dip into and out of these sites all day long. We check for updates from friends and family as well as

news and information. However, the behaviours associated with excessive use of these channels has become the subject of much public and sociological debate.

However, the behaviours associated with excessive use of these channels has become the subject of much public and sociological debate.

### **The Major Hormones: Dopamine and Oxytocin**

Scientists believed some years ago that, dopamine was simply a pleasure chemical in the brain. Recent studies have shown that; dopamine actually produces the desire in people to “want” by drawing out the need for us to -seek and search. Creating the ultimate drive to find what is that we want.

Dopamine is spontaneous. It’s stimulated by unpredictability and small bits of information as well as reward cues which are the same conditions that social media presents to all users. In addition, the pull of dopamine is so strong that recent studies have shown that tweeting, for example, can be harder to resist than cigarettes and alcohol!

Researchers at Chicago University studied the effects of social media. They concluded quite quickly that people presented higher levels of addiction to social media than the need to smoke or drink. Media cravings ranked higher.

And, let’s not forget oxytocin, many call it the cuddle chemical because the brain releases pleasure chemicals that transpire usually when you kiss and hug- or tweet. Known also as the hormone that builds the strong yet unique bond between mothers and their babies.

Oxytocin is now regarded as the human stimulant of empathy, generosity, trust, and more. These are factors which many advertisers and marketers play on when promoting a brand or business over social media.

## Social Media's Impact on Human Emotion

Consequently, in ten minutes of social media time, oxytocin levels can increase as much as 13%- a hormonal spike equivalent to some people on their wedding day.

Not only that, research has shown that when subjects were exposed to positive and funny content on social media- results showed lowered stress levels, feelings of love, trust, empathy, generosity.

We can confidently say that between dopamine and oxytocin, social networking not only comes with heightened feelings, it's also really hard to stop wanting more of it. This is why social media plays a huge and important role for major brands and businesses. Essentially, they are trying to tap into human behaviour and manipulate it.

When we describe addiction, we express it in terms of compulsive behaviour that may lead to a negative outcome, but in terms of marketing- it's about building loyal customers.

### *Content is king*

Understanding what it is that your customers want to know about your business and anything in relation to it is the way forward. Building and relaying content that opens up conversation allows people to come to you with interest and with responses.

In most cases of addiction, people feel compelled to part-take in certain activities regularly. And, so often that it becomes a habit. A lot of the time big brands will avoid interfering with people in a harmful way by using subjects or objects that people can already identify with.

Marketers will focus more on how their brand or product can add value to a user's life, rather than to influence change. Content marketing is about creating and sharing interesting, valuable, relevant and useful content.

This builds your brand and consumers confidence in your products and/or services and ultimately drives desirable customer action. The point of having a social presence is to

allow your brand to reach as many people (or potential customers) as possible, through networked experiences.

Spending time on developing communities and good relationships add immense value to your business. At Cloudnames, we believe that providing your visitors or customers with an experience they will never forget is the way forward. It's not easy to achieve. But, once you've started effectively networking, you will start marking memory with your brand.

### **Self-Obsession and Self-Presentation**

Research shows that people devote about 30–40% of all speech to talking about themselves. But over social media, these numbers increase to about 80% of posts. And the reason for this is because socialising in person demands more emotional and physical contribution.

Social media eliminates having to observe body language or read facial expressions, instead we prefer to look at photos and take our time to refine our comments and interact in a more calculated way. Social media users are focused on self-presentation, on facebook, for example, we position ourselves in a way that will increase our self-esteem and confidence.

There is a tendency of comparing lives. It causes psychological discomfort and insecurity in users. Social media is full of people bragging, sharing photos of holidays and updating relationship statuses etc., aspects that affect largely human moral and confidence.

### *Building relationships*

What's interesting for marketers is the fact that we tend to work on self- presentation through buying things and acquiring things that signify who we are, which give our very being some meaning. This is also how we identify ourselves and others.

For businesses and brands your logo, products and services would be the vital component for self-presentation. Brands that can create aspirational ways to interact

with their followers not only create social media opportunities but also move beyond likes and shares and into building relationships that are longer lasting.

Also, all these components are again about our own self-image. 68% of people say they share content to provide others with a better sense of who they are and what they care about.

But the main reason we share is about other people: 78% of people say they share because it helps them to stay connected and maintain relationships.

### *Portraying feelings?*

Social media and the mobile web has shown that there is also a desire in people to take pictures of themselves and post it on social media platforms regularly, and this craze is called the selfie. The peculiar thing is, there is no real reason or logic to why people actually do it, which is probably why “selfies” have become so successful.

In essence, a selfie is meant to be a photographed moment that portrays human feeling or emotion. But is this really the case? How many selfies have you come across whereby the subject is crying for example (the answer is not many).

Most celebrities are using selfies as an opportunity to display not so much their creativity or human emotion, but more objectifying photos of nudity, which becomes the centre of attention in all kinds of media as a result.

## **Social Media and Mental disorders**

The APA (American Psychiatric Association) has officially classified taking selfies as a mental disorder- this is alarming as social media has become quite conceptual and selfie ridden. There are channels like Instagram that is based around the idea of taking photos of oneself.

Although this may be extreme, the truth is the APA have picked up on the idea that the obsessive and compulsive desire to take photos of one’s self and post them on social media as a way to make up for the lack of self-esteem and fill a gap in intimacy.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **ADDICTION IN STUDENTS**

Problems have arisen most commonly with school kids. In typical cases, mobile phone devices have had to be confiscated because exam results have fallen severely. This is because of the children's lack of attention on homework or studies.

Schools in many westernised countries have had to take drastic action- banning smartphones, iPad and most portable devices from school premises. This is because the devices have become a huge distraction in the classroom setting. Ironically, other schools use these devices for educational purposes and as a rewards system for their pupils.

Research has also indicated unsurprisingly that Facebook is the most common activity that university students switch to when studying. Worryingly, it has also found that those who most engage in this type of internet browsing tend to have lower levels of educational achievement (Rosen et al., 2013).

Also, there have been many cases of students posting or sharing content that is unethical, which has caused parents and academic institutions to limit the use of these online networking channels.

*Too much of anything is bad*

Sociologists and psychologists have also been exploring the effect of social networking on real-world relationships. Marriages, family relations and friendships have said to be compromised due to excessive use of social media- or inappropriate use.

Although social media may be good for business- all these mitigating factors must be considered in your marketing efforts.

People with friends live longer and get sick less. Social media is a platform that must be monitored and advanced in ways that would benefit relationships, rather than destroy them.

Implications for business for every brand, company, and marketer trying to understand these relationships can be significant- especially when your motive is to spread brand awareness and build trust.

## CHAPTER 6

### SOCIAL MEDIA PSYCHOLOGY AND BUSINESS MARKETING

As simplistic as it may seem, having platforms at our fingertips like Facebook and Pinterest activates sub-conscious impulses which result in an emotional buzz-like satisfaction. Searching and finding on social media is like finding a deer and bringing it home.

Takeaway: Each of us instinctively wants to hunt, gather and track something. That said, give customers something to discover.

*Why are we tethered to our devices?*

I don't think any of us would deny that our culture is obsessed with getting instant results. (A line at the bank? \*eye roll\*!) Social media is the perfect answer to our "now now now" society.

It allows us to skip waiting by getting everything we want at the click (or swipe) of a device. This is perhaps the reason we jump at every ping, ding, jingle and whistle our devices make.

So, we are given constant but unpredictable stimulation, and that fulfills one of our needs. But more than that – what urges us to instantly check our devices the moment we hear a techno chirp is the allure of knowing who wants to interact with us.

Our devices keep our minds constantly stimulated while simultaneously gratifying us with the ability to be heard and feel needed.

For business to initiate stronger connections with a target audience (TA), follow these guidelines:

- ✓ Respond to comments, tweets, and any connections people make on your business social media platforms.
- ✓ Jump into conversations where you can add value – just don't get spammy!
- ✓ Stimulate your consumer base through your own content.
- ✓ Pay attention to your TA's content and use that as a connection base.

Takeaway: At our core, everyone desires connection and contribution. Remember, we all love attention!

### *3. Why is social media so appealing?*

We are emotional beings whose state of mind is typically first demonstrated through facial expressions, followed by verbal expression. Emotional expression has a new outlet, though, and its name is social media.

There are six basic universal emotions regardless of language or culture. This theory has recently been whittled down to four basic emotions, and research is finding that social media taps into each of them.

For years, social media has been a premier way to touch, tap into, and share moods across a broad range of topics. It might surprise you to discover how interconnected emotional outlets of social expression and business marketing really are.

Here's what researchers found: through data analysis of the IPA dataBank, case studies from 1,400 successful advertising campaigns revealed that campaigns with an emotional content performed almost twice as well. So let's get emotional!

#### 4. *Why are we drawn to some things more than others?*

Emotion is even more contagious than content! And positive emotion goes viral. Psychology Today found that negative posts on social media resulted in only 1.29 re-shares, but positive posts gained an average of 3.75.

It's not only a positive message, but a positive emotional connection that is important. For example, a smiley face is happy, but lacks the emotional trigger of a video of a baby giggling hysterically.

Takeaway: Keeping messages positive should give you greater impact and expand your viewing audience.

So what does it all mean?

The psychological knowledge behind social media informs our online marketing approach by providing insight into what motivates every like, share or retweet. So return back to your lazy Sunday and recreational social media scanning, and consider that behind the faces, the filtered photos, and the eye candy, is a narrative.

Notice why you like or share one image or idea over another. It's evident that each of us are sharing much more than a video or an image; we're sharing the emotional connection that valuable content creates.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **REHAB FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTS**

"Addiction - The state of being enslaved to a habit or practice or to something that is psychologically or physically habit-forming, as narcotics, to such an extent that its cessation causes severe trauma."

That is the definition of the word addiction. Apart from narcotics, the term has been used to describe the obsession that people develop for social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. But is this really true? Do people really get so fixated on a website that it can be called an addiction?

And if this is really the case, is it a good thing or a bad one? There are a lot of people out there who seem to be condemning these sites, saying the younger generation spends less time studying now because of them or that the time spent on these sites is a waste in general.

But no matter what people complain about and how much they complain, the fact of the matter is that these sites are here and they are here to stay. They will probably be a more advanced and developed form of the same sites in a few years, but they will still be here because the web evolving as a social platform is what it was ultimately destined to be.

This is what our human nature demands. It was inevitable that we become social even in the comfort of our own homes.

So, going back to the first question, are these social media sites an addiction or are people who are not used to change overreacting? It might seem like an easy question but the answer will depend on your own perspective of the situation. That means the question is a simple one to answer, but it is too diverse and personal.

Some will complain about its supposed ill effects but all that talk will mostly come to nothing in the end. The reason for that is this - there will always be someone who opposes the new 'toy' and at the same time, some who cannot resist it. The latter being the majority of the population, (or lets say the part of the population with the louder voice on the web), the end of social media becomes impossible.

I personally believe that it is for the good of society as a whole. Communication is developing at an increasingly fast pace and social media has suddenly taken the lead and taking us to a whole new level.

Take Google Wave for example and don't think about the fear of monopoly for a moment. It is quite an achievement. Of course, it is the next obvious step to merge IM chat, e-mail, wiki, etc. within one single platform, but you and I did not predict it, it just looks obvious now that we're looking back.

So my point is, (and I'm sorry if I didn't make it too clear at the beginning) that no matter what field the progress is in, there will always be opposition (although it is very important to have a few cynics around to keep our heads in balance). But you must also remember that progress will come no matter how much you try to stop it, and things will change.

## **CONCLUSION**

One of the reasons people may give in to the desire to constantly check and update their social media is that there is no obvious or immediate downside to it- apart from being a huge drain on the user's time.

Similarly, you may find it hard to switch off from work mode- commonplace now with the invention of smartphones and their instant email notifications. A recent move by car giant Volkswagen in Germany means that many workers have their work-related emails stopped from their BlackBerry half an hour after they finish work for the day- a motion very positively received!

How to relax your mind and reduce addiction to social media and the internet. As well as taking up a big portion of your down time, social media/email addiction does not allow you to be completely relaxed.

While it's great to be in constant touch with friends or feel like you're one step ahead of the game with work matters- you need some 'me time'!

Why not give yourself a break from work emails and detach from social networking for a short period everyday? Here are some tips on giving your mind some true relaxation time:

1. Allow yourself only 2-4 times a day to check your emails, messages, tweets and anything else. Be disciplined and set specific times to log in.
2. Take action as soon as possible. If something has come in, for example requests, don't wait for them to accumulate. Instead, take whatever action you can in your allocated checking in time, so that your in box does not over flow.
3. Delegate what you can to others, colleagues or delete if it is not important. You do not need to react to or read everything that is sent to you.
4. Plan your goals the night before so that your mind has the chance to plan ahead for you. This will allow you to immediately appreciate priorities and to get rid of the rest.
5. Close the PC, laptop or mobile phone at least 2 hours before bed time.

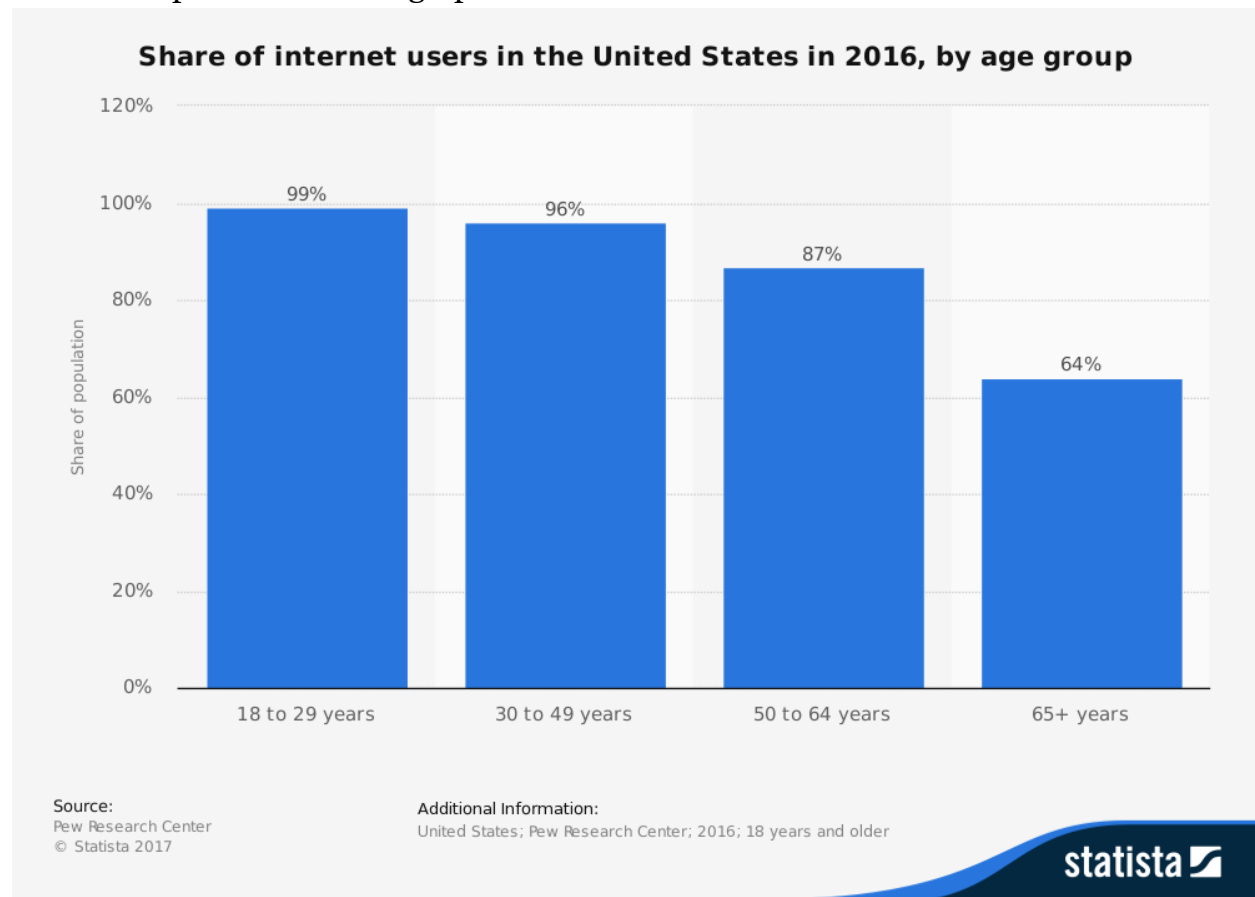
Now go and relax. You've become 100% more organised and it's time to put your feet up.

## **STATISTICS ON SOCIAL MEDIA USE**

### **1. Internet Usage**

The number of people using the internet on a daily basis continues to increase with time. More particularly, the youth are the majority of internet users. That means they are more likely to be on social media. Consequently, it is more likely to find a member of the public aged between 18 to 29 years addicted to any social networking site. Internet use

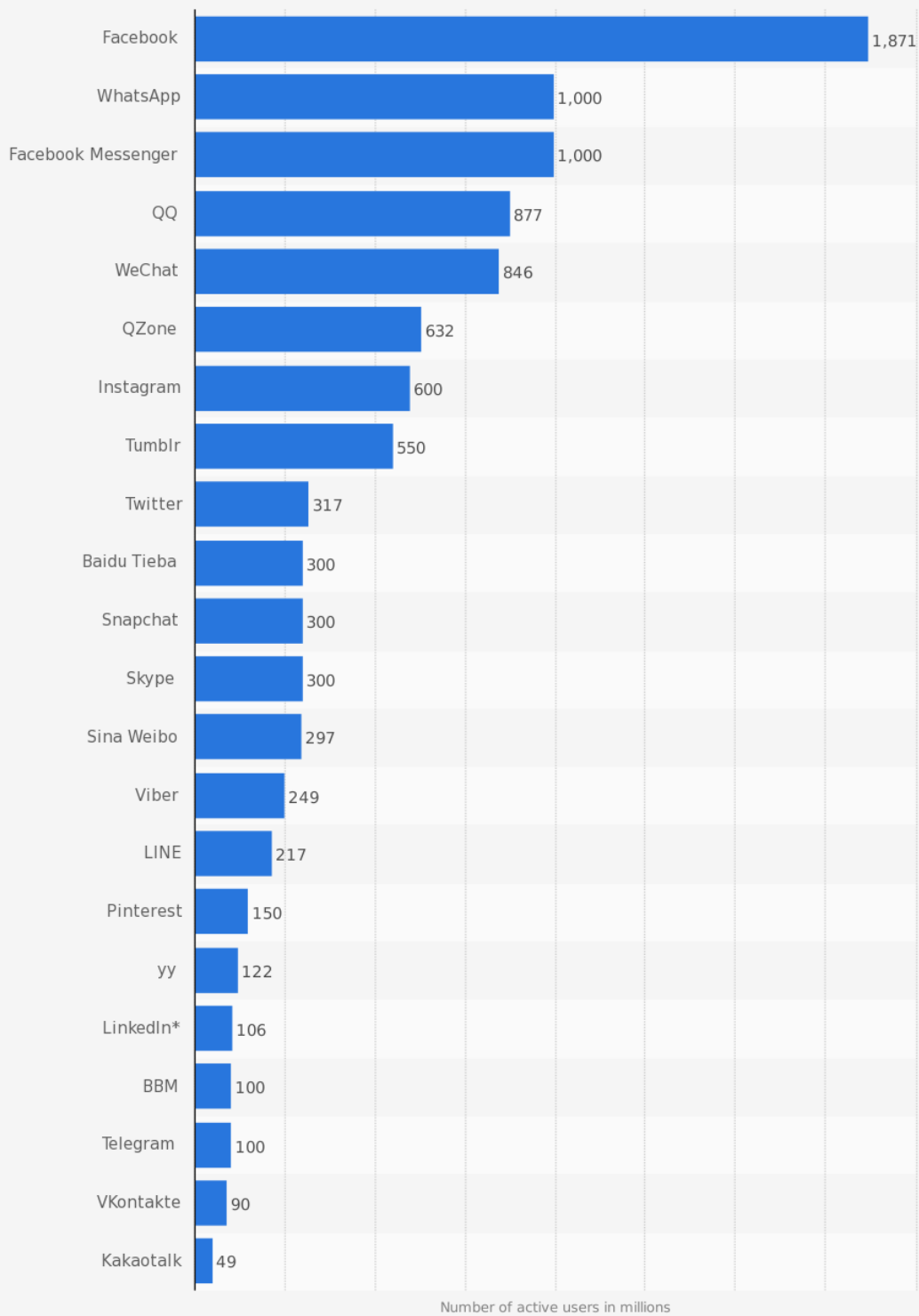
has been represented in the graph below.



## 2. The Fame of social media sites

Facebook, closely followed by WhatsApp, leads the social media outlets in terms of popularity. The fact that Facebook can easily be accessed through any internet-enabled device means it could be an easily addictive site.

### Leading social networks worldwide as of January 2017, ranked by number of active users (in millions)

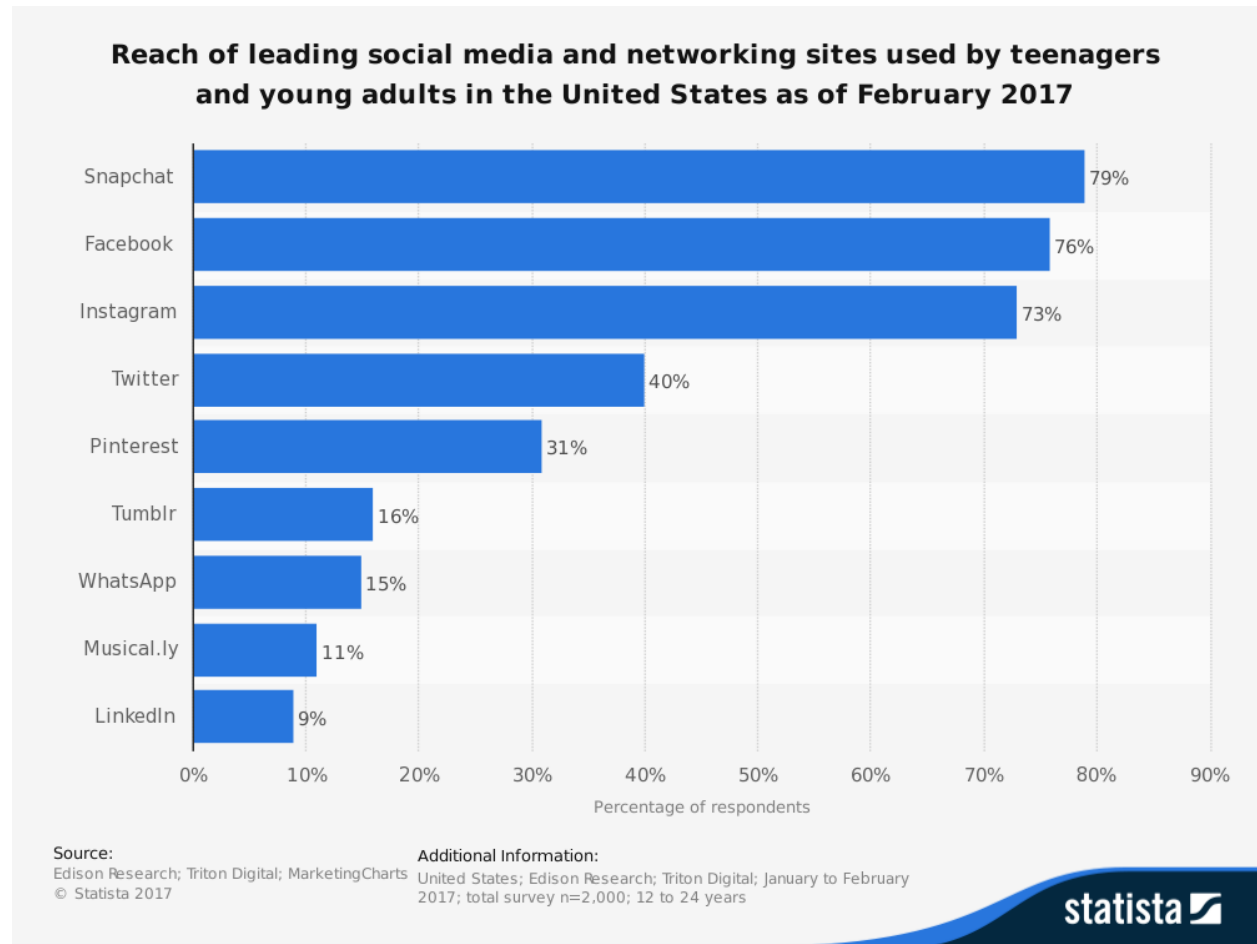


**Source:**  
Facebook; We Are Social; WhatsApp; Twitter;  
Tumblr; LinkedIn; Google  
© Statista 2017

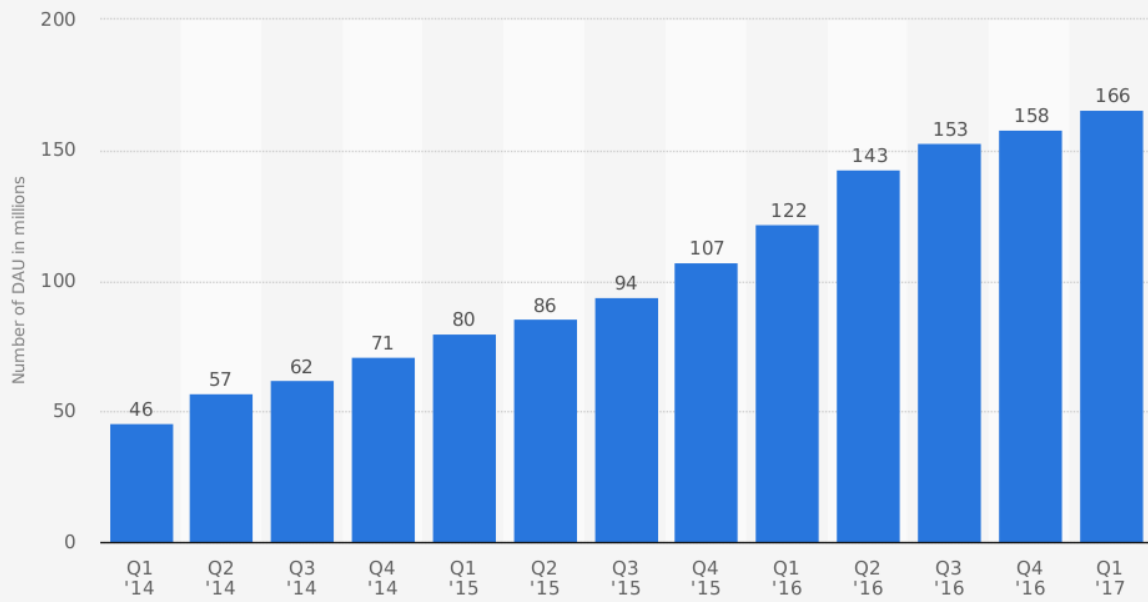
**Additional Information:**  
Worldwide; We Are Social; WhatsApp; Tumblr; LinkedIn; Google;  
as of January 26, 2017; social networks and messenger/chat  
app/voip included

### 3. The Frequency of social Media Use

A majority of the public check their social media accounts regularly. Additionally, an increasing number of youth are engaging in Snapchat as compared to the worldwide majority who use Facebook.



### Number of daily active Snapchat users from 1st quarter 2014 to 1st quarter 2017 (in millions)



Source:  
Snap Inc.  
© Statista 2017

Additional Information:  
Worldwide; 1st quarter 2014 to 1st quarter 2017; quarterly average

