

# Social media

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**Social media** is the interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.<sup>[1]</sup> 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, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content."<sup>[2]</sup> Furthermore, social media depend on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. They introduce substantial and pervasive changes to communication between organizations, communities, and individuals.<sup>[3]</sup>

Social media differ from traditional or industrial media in many ways, including quality,<sup>[4]</sup> reach, frequency, usability, immediacy, and permanence.<sup>[5]</sup> There are many effects that stem from internet usage. According to Nielsen, internet users continue to spend more time with social media sites than any other type of site. At the same time, the total time spent on social media in the U.S. across PC and mobile devices increased by 37 percent to 121 billion minutes in July 2012 compared to 88 billion minutes in July 2011.<sup>[6]</sup> For content contributors, the benefits of participating in social media have gone beyond simply social sharing to building reputation and bringing in career opportunities and monetary income, as discussed in Tang, Gu, and Whinston (2012).<sup>[7]</sup>

Geocities, created in 1994, was one of the first social media sites. The concept was for users to create their own websites, characterized by one of six "cities" that were known for certain characteristics.<sup>[8]</sup>

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## Classification of social media

Social media technologies take on many different forms including magazines, Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, social networks, podcasts, photographs or pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. Technologies include blogging, picture-sharing, vlogs, wall-posting, music-sharing, crowdsourcing and voice over IP, to name a few. Social network aggregation can integrate many of the platforms in use.

By applying a set of theories in the field of media research (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure), Kaplan and Haenlein created a classification scheme in their *Business Horizons* (2010) article, with seven different types of social media:

1. collaborative projects (for example, Wikipedia)
2. blogs and microblogs (for example, Twitter)
3. Social news networking sites (for example, Digg and Leakernet)
4. content communities (for example, YouTube and DailyMotion)
5. social networking sites (for example, Facebook)
6. virtual game-worlds (e.g., *World of Warcraft*)
7. virtual social worlds (e.g. *Second Life*)

However, the boundaries between the different types have become increasingly blurred. For example, Shi, Rui and Whinston (2013) argue that Twitter, as a combination of broadcasting service and social network, classes as a "social broadcasting technology".<sup>[9]</sup>

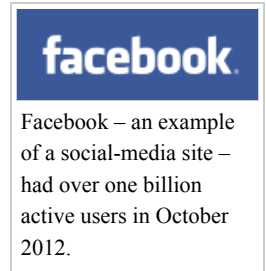
## Mobile social media

Mobile social media refers to the combination of mobile devices and social media. This is a group of mobile marketing applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.<sup>[10]</sup> Due to the fact that mobile social media run on mobile devices, they differ from traditional social media by incorporating new factors such as the current location of the user (location-sensitivity) or the time delay between sending and receiving messages(time-sensitivity). According to Andreas Kaplan, mobile social media applications can be differentiated among four types:<sup>[10]</sup>

1. Space-timers (location and time sensitive): Exchange of messages with relevance for one specific location at one specific point in time (e.g., Facebook Places; Foursquare)
2. Space-locators (only location sensitive): Exchange of messages, with relevance for one specific location, which are tagged to a certain place and read later by others (e.g., Yelp; Qype)
3. Quick-timers (only time sensitive): Transfer of traditional social media applications to mobile devices to increase immediacy (e.g., posting Twitter messages or Facebook status updates)
4. Slow-timers (neither location, nor time sensitive): Transfer of traditional social media applications to mobile devices (e.g., watching a YouTube video or reading a Wikipedia entry)

## Mobile social media and business potential

While traditional social media offer a variety of opportunities for companies in a wide range of business sectors, mobile social media makes use of the location- and time-sensitivity aspects of it in order to engage into marketing research, communication, sales



promotions/discounts, and relationship development/loyalty programs.<sup>[10]</sup>

- **Marketing research:** Mobile social media applications offer data about offline consumer movements at a level of detail heretofore limited to online companies. Any firm can now know the exact time at which a customer entered one of its outlets, as well as comments made during the visit.<sup>[10]</sup>
- **Communication:** Mobile social media communication takes two forms, the first of which is company-to-consumer in which a company may establish a connection to a consumer based on its location and provide reviews about locations nearby. The second type of communication is user-generated content. For example, McDonald's offered \$5 and \$10 gift cards to 100 users randomly selected among those checking in at one of the restaurants. This promotion increased check-ins by 33% (from 2,146 to 2,865), resulted in over 50 articles and blog posts, and prompted several hundred thousand news feeds and Twitter messages.<sup>[10]</sup>
- **Sales promotions and discounts:** While in the past customers had to use printed coupons, mobile social media allows companies to tailor promotions to specific users at specific times. For example, when launching its California-Cancun service, Virgin America offered users who checked in through Loopt at one of three designated Border Grill taco trucks in San Francisco and Los Angeles between 11 am and 3 pm on August 31, 2010, two tacos for \$1 and two flights to Mexico for the price of one.<sup>[10]</sup>
- **Relationship development and loyalty programs:** In order to increase long-term relationships with customers, companies are able to create loyalty programs that allow customers who check-in regularly at a location to earn discounts or perks. For example, American Eagle Outfitters remunerates such customers with a tiered 10%, 15%, or 20% discount on their total purchase.<sup>[10]</sup>
- **E-Commerce:** Mobile social media applications such as Amazon.com and Pinterest are influencing an upward trend in the popularity and accessibility of e-commerce, or online purchases.<sup>[11]</sup>

Business Marketing Analysts have stated that one of the key take aways of the Nielsen Company's "State of the media: The social media report 2012"<sup>[6]</sup> is that more consumers are accessing social media content today via mobile platforms, especially apps.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Distinction from other media

E-commerce businesses may refer to social media as consumer-generated media (CGM). A common thread running through all definitions of social media is a blending of technology and social interaction for the co-creation of value.<sup>[5]</sup>

People obtain information, education, news, and other data from electronic and print media. Social media are distinct from industrial or traditional media such as newspapers, television, and film as they are comparatively inexpensive and accessible. They enable anyone (even private individuals) to publish or access information. Industrial media generally require significant resources to publish information as in most cases the articles goes through many revisions before being published.

One characteristic shared by both social and industrial media is the capability to reach small or large audiences; for example, either a blog post or a television show may reach no people or millions of people. Some of the properties that help describe the differences between social and industrial media are:<sup>[5]</sup>

1. **Quality:** In industrial(traditional) publishing—mediated by a publisher—the typical range of quality is substantially narrower than in niche, unmediated markets. The main challenge posed by content in social media sites is the fact that the distribution of quality has high variance: from very high-quality items to low-quality, sometimes abusive content.<sup>[4]</sup>
2. **Reach:** Both industrial and social media technologies provide scale and are capable of reaching a global audience. Industrial media, however, typically use a centralized framework for organization, production, and dissemination, whereas social media are by their very nature more decentralized, less hierarchical, and distinguished by multiple points of production and utility.<sup>[5]</sup>
3. **Frequency:** The number of times an advertisement is displayed on social media platforms.
4. **Accessibility:** The means of production for industrial media are typically government and/or corporate (privately owned); social media tools are generally available to the public at little or no cost.<sup>[5]</sup>
5. **Usability:** Industrial media production typically requires specialized skills and training. Conversely, most social media production requires only modest reinterpretation of existing skills; in theory, anyone with access can operate the means of social media production.<sup>[5]</sup>
6. **Immediacy:** The time lag between communications produced by industrial media can be long (days, weeks, or even months)

compared to social media (which can be capable of virtually instantaneous responses).<sup>[5]</sup>

7. Permanence: Industrial media, once created, cannot be altered (once a magazine article is printed and distributed, changes cannot be made to that same article) whereas social media can be altered almost instantaneously by comments or editing.<sup>[5]</sup>

Community media constitute a hybrid of industrial and social media. Though community-owned, some community radio, TV, and newspapers are run by professionals and some by amateurs. They use both social and industrial media frameworks.

Social media have also been recognized for the way they have changed how public relations professionals conduct their jobs. They have provided an open arena where people are free to exchange ideas on companies, brands, and products. As stated by Doc Searls and David Wagner, two authorities on the effects of Internet on marketing, advertising, and PR, "The best of the people in PR are not PR types at all. They understand that there aren't censors, they're the company's best conversationalists."<sup>[13]</sup> Social media provides an environment where users and PR professionals can converse, and where PR professionals can promote their brand and improve their company's image by listening and responding to what the public is saying about their product.

## Managing social media

There is an increasing trend towards using social media monitoring tools that allow marketers to search, track, and analyze conversation on the web about their brand or about topics of interest.<sup>[14]</sup> This can be useful in PR management and campaign tracking, allowing the user to measure return on investment, competitor-auditing, and general public engagement. Tools range from free, basic applications to subscription-based, more in-depth tools.

The honeycomb framework defines how social media services focus on some or all of seven functional building blocks.<sup>[3]</sup> These building blocks help explain the engagement needs of the social media audience. For instance, LinkedIn users are thought to care mostly about identity, reputation, and relationships, whereas YouTube's primary features are sharing, conversations, groups, and reputation. Many companies build their own social containers that attempt to link the seven functional building blocks around their brands. These are private communities that engage people around a more narrow theme, as in around a particular brand, vocation or hobby, rather than social media containers such as Google+, Facebook, and Twitter. PR departments face significant challenges in dealing with viral negative sentiment directed at organizations or individuals on social media platforms (dubbed "sentimentitis"), which may be a reaction to an announcement or event.<sup>[15]</sup>

### Honeycomb framework of social media

According to Jan H. Kietzmann, the honeycomb framework of social media is based on the following functional building blocks:<sup>[3]</sup>

- Identity: The identity block represents the extent to which users reveal their identities in a social media setting. This can include disclosing information such as name, age, gender, profession, location, and also information that portrays users in certain ways.<sup>[3]</sup>
- Conversations: The conversations block of the framework represents the extent to which users communicate with other users in a social media setting. Many social media sites are designed primarily to facilitate conversations among individuals and groups. These conversations happen for all sorts of reasons. People tweet, blog, et cetera to meet new like-minded people, to find true love, to build their self-esteem, or to be on the cutting edge of new ideas or trending topics. Yet others see social media as a way of making their message heard and positively impacting humanitarian causes, environmental problems, economic issues, or political debates.<sup>[3]</sup>
- Sharing: Sharing represents the extent to which users exchange, distribute, and receive content. The term 'social' often implies that exchanges between people are crucial. In many cases, however, sociality is about the objects that mediate these ties between people—the reasons why they meet online and associate with each other.<sup>[3]</sup>
- Presence: The framework building block presence represents the extent to which users can know if other users are accessible. It includes knowing where others are, in the virtual world and/or in the real world, and whether they are available.<sup>[3]</sup>
- Relationships: The relationships block represents the extent to which users can be related to other users. By 'relate,' we mean that two or more users have some form of association that leads them to converse, share objects of sociality, meet up, or simply just list each other as a friend or fan.<sup>[3]</sup>
- Reputation: Reputation is the extent to which users can identify the standing of others, including themselves, in a social media setting. Reputation can have different meanings on social media platforms. In most cases, reputation is a matter of trust, but since information technologies are not yet good at determining such highly qualitative criteria, social media sites rely on 'mechanical Turks': tools that automatically aggregate user-generated information to determine trustworthiness.<sup>[3]</sup>

- Groups: The group functional block represents the extent to which users can form communities and sub communities. The more 'social' a network becomes, the bigger the group of friends, followers, and contacts.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Building "social authority" and vanity

It is through this process of "building social authority" that social media becomes effective. One of the foundational concepts in social media has become that you cannot completely control your message through social media but rather you can simply begin to participate in the "conversation" expecting that you can achieve a significant influence in that conversation.<sup>[16]</sup>

However, this conversation participation must be cleverly executed because while people are resistant to marketing in general, they are even more resistant to direct or overt marketing through social media platforms. This may seem counterintuitive but is the main reason building social authority with credibility is so important. A marketer can generally not expect people to be receptive to a marketing message in and of itself. In the Edelman Trust Barometer report (<http://www.edelman.com/trust/2008/>) in 2008, the majority (58%) of the respondents reported they most trusted company or product information coming from "people like me" inferred to be information from someone they trusted. In the 2010 Trust Report ([http://www.slideshare.net/slides\\_eoi/edelman-trust-barometer-2010](http://www.slideshare.net/slides_eoi/edelman-trust-barometer-2010)), the majority switched to 64% preferring their information from industry experts and academics. According to Inc. Technology's Brent Leary, "This loss of trust, and the accompanying turn towards experts and authorities, seems to be coinciding with the rise of social media and networks."<sup>[17][18]</sup>

## Internet usage effects

An increasing number of scholars have sought to study and measure the impact of social media. A 2010 study by the University of Maryland suggested that social media services may be addictive,<sup>[19]</sup> and that using social media services may lead to a "fear of missing out," also known as the phrase "FOMO" by many students.<sup>[20]</sup> It has been observed that Facebook is now the primary method for communication by college students in the U.S.<sup>[21][22]</sup> According to Nielsen, global consumers spend more than six hours on social networking sites. "Social Media Revolution" produced by *Socialnomics* author Erik Qualman contains numerous statistics on social media including the fact that 93% of businesses use it for marketing and that if Facebook were a country it would be the third largest.<sup>[23]</sup> Several colleges and universities such as Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Columbia and Stanford among others have even introduced classes on best social media practices, preparing students for potential careers as digital strategists.<sup>[24]</sup>

There are various statistics that account for social media usage and effectiveness for individuals worldwide. Some of the most recent statistics are as follows:

- Consumers continue to spend more time on social networks than on any other category of sites—roughly 20 percent of their total time online via personal computer (PC), and 30 percent of total time online via mobile.<sup>[6]</sup>
- Total time spent on social media in the U.S. across PCs and mobile devices increased 37 percent to 121 billion minutes in July 2012, compared to 88 billion in July 2011.<sup>[6]</sup>
- Facebook remains the most-visited social network in the U.S. via PC (152.2 million visitors), mobile apps (78.4 million users) and mobile web (74.3 million visitors), and is multiple times the size of the next largest social site across each platform.<sup>[6]</sup>
- 51% of people aged 25–34 used social networking in the office, more than any other age group.<sup>[6]</sup>
- On average, 47% of social media users engage in social care.<sup>[6]</sup>
- While the computer is still the primary device used to access social media despite dropping 4% in usage in 2012, the last year saw a significant increase in usage, most notably through tablets from 3% to 16%, internet enabled TVs from 2% to 4%.<sup>[6]</sup>
- As of 2012, Facebook has 152,226,000 unique PC visitors and 78,388,000 unique mobile app visitors. Twitter reported 37,033,000 unique PC visitors and 22,620,000 unique mobile app visitors. Pinterest reported 27,223,000 unique PC visitors and 14,316,000 unique mobile web visitors. Google+ reported 26,201,000 unique PC visitors and 9,718,000 unique mobile app visitors.<sup>[6]</sup>
- A total of 234 million people age 13 and older in the U.S. used mobile devices in December 2009.<sup>[25]</sup>
- Twitter processed more than one billion tweets in December 2009 and averages almost 40 million tweets per day.<sup>[25]</sup>
- Over 25% of U.S. Internet page views occurred at one of the top social networking sites in December 2009, up from 13.8% a year before.<sup>[25]</sup>
- Australia has some of the highest social media usage in the world. In usage of Facebook, Australia ranks highest, with over nine million users spending almost nine hours per month on the site.<sup>[26]</sup>
- Twitter has risen as the go to site for customer support in 2013, while Email's usage has decreased by 7%.<sup>[27]</sup>

- The number of social media users age 65 and older grew 100 percent throughout 2010, so that one in four people in that age group are now part of a social networking site.<sup>[28]</sup>
- As of May 2012 Facebook has 901 million users.<sup>[29]</sup>
- Social media has overtaken pornography as the No. 1 activity on the web.<sup>[30]</sup>
- In June 2011, it was reported that iPhone applications hit one billion in nine months, and Facebook added 100 million users in less than nine months.<sup>[30]</sup>
- In June 2011, it was also reported that U.S. Department of Education study revealed that online students out-performed those receiving face-to-face instruction.<sup>[30]</sup>
- YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world.<sup>[30]</sup>
- In four minutes and 26 seconds 100+ hours of video will be uploaded to YouTube.<sup>[30]</sup>
- One out of eight couples married in the U.S. last year met via social media according to statistics released June 2011.<sup>[30]</sup>
- One in six higher education students are enrolled in an online curriculum.<sup>[30]</sup>
- In November 2011, it was reported Indians spend more time on social media than on any other activity on the Internet.<sup>[31]</sup>
- 1 in 5 divorces have been blamed on Facebook.<sup>[32]</sup>
- In a study conducted by the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology in Abu Dhabi, it was found that on average, any individual is just 12 hours of separation from another around the world, using social networking sites.<sup>[33]</sup>
- In a study titled "Mastering the Art of Social Media," the researcher found that online communication has become a central part in the communication of political actors. In the study, Klinger focuses on Switzerland, where broadband, internet use, and media literacy are among the highest in the world, and how all major political parties in Switzerland run their own websites and social media sites.<sup>[34]</sup>

According to a report by Nielsen<sup>[35]</sup>

"In the U.S. alone, total minutes spent on social networking sites has increased 83 percent year-over-year. In fact, total minutes spent on Facebook increased nearly 700 percent year-over-year, growing from 1.7 billion minutes in April 2008 to 13.9 billion in April 2009, making it the No. 1 social networking site for the month."

## Global usage

According to the article "The Emerging Role of Social Media in Political and Regime Change" by Rita Safranek, "The Middle East and North Africa region has one of the most youthful populations in the world, with people under 25 making up between 35-45% of the population in each country. They make up the majority of social media users, including about 17 million Facebook users, 25,000 Twitter accounts and 40,000 active blogs, according to the Arab Advisors Group.<sup>[36]</sup>

## Effects of using social media for news purposes

Social media has disrupted the personal and commercial habits of Americans to a degree not seen since the early days of television. Just as television turned a nation of people who *listened* to media content into *watchers* of media content, the emergence of social media has created a nation of media content creators. According to 2011 Pew Research data, nearly 80% of American adults are online and nearly 60% of them use social networking sites.<sup>[37]</sup> More Americans get their news, such as it is, via the Internet than from newspapers or radio, as well of three-fourths who say they hear of news from e-mail or social media sites updates, according to a new report published by CNN. The survey suggests that Facebook and Twitter make news a more participatory experience than before. On Facebook, people share links to news articles, share and post articles, and tweet them on Twitter in 140 characters or less. 75% got their news forwarded through e-mail or social media posts, while 37% admit they've shared a news item via Facebook or Twitter.<sup>[38]</sup>

In the United States, people (81%) say they look online for news of the weather, first and foremost. National news at 73%, 52% for sports news, and 41% for entertainment or celebrity news.

Based on this study, done for the Pew Center, two-thirds of the sample's online news users were younger than 50, and 30% younger than 30. The survey was daily-tracking of 2,259 adults 18 or older.<sup>[39]</sup> 33% YA get news from social networks, the day before. 34% watched TV news and 13% read print or digital content. 19% Americans got news from FB, Google+, or LinkedIn. 36% of those who get news from social network got it yesterday from survey. More than 36% of Twitter users use accounts to follow news organizations or journalists. 19% of users say they got information from news organizations of journalists. TV remains most popular source of news, but audience is aging (only 34% of young people).

29% of those younger than 25 say they got no news yesterday either digitally or through traditional news platforms. Only 5% under 30 say they follow news about political figures and events in DC. Only 14% of responders could answer all four questions about which party controls the House, current unemployment rate, what nation Angela Merkel leads, and which presidential candidate favors taxing higher-income Americans. Facebook and Twitter now pathways to news, but are not replacements for traditional ones. 70% get social media news from friends and family on Facebook.<sup>[40]</sup>

For children, using social media sites can help promote creativity, interaction, and learning. It can also help them with homework and class work. Moreover, social media enable them to stay connected with their peers, and help them to interact with each other. Some can get involved with developing fundraising campaigns and political events. However it can affect mental health of teens. Teens who use Facebook frequently and who especially susceptible may become more narcissistic, antisocial, and aggressive. Teens become strongly influenced by advertising, and it influences buying habits for the future. Since the creation of Facebook in 2004, it has become a distraction and a way to waste time for many users.<sup>[41]</sup> Americans spend more time on FB than any other website in the United States. Based on a Nielsen study, the average American has spent more than 17 minutes per day on the social media site.<sup>[42]</sup>

In a recent study conducted, high school students ages 18 and younger were examined in an effort to find their preference for receiving news. Based on interviews with 61 teenagers, conducted from December 2007 to February 2011, most of the teen participants reported reading print newspapers only "sometimes," with fewer than 10% reading them daily. The teenagers instead reported learning about current events from social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and blogs.<sup>[43]</sup>

Using nanotechnology as an example, Runge et al. (2013)<sup>[44]</sup> studied tweets from Twitter and found that some 41% of the discourse about nanotechnology focused on its negative impacts, suggesting that a portion of the public may be concerned with how various forms of nanotechnology are used in the future. While optimistic-sounding and neutral-sounding tweets were equally likely to express certainty or uncertainty, the pessimistic tweets were nearly twice as likely to appear certain of an outcome than uncertain. These results imply the possibility of a preconceived negative perception of many news articles associated with nanotechnology. Alternatively, these results could also imply that posts of a more pessimistic nature that are also written with an air of certainty are more likely to be shared or otherwise permeate groups on Twitter. Similar biases need to be considered when the utility of new media is addressed, as the potential for human opinion to over-emphasize any particular news story is greater despite the general improvement in addressed potential uncertainty and bias in news articles than in traditional media.<sup>[45]</sup>

On October 2, 2013, the most common hashtag throughout the country was "#governmentshutdown," as well as ones focusing on political parties, Obama, and healthcare. Most news sources have Twitter, and Facebook, pages, like CNN and the New York Times, providing links to their online articles, getting an increased readership. Additionally, several college news organizations and administrators have Twitter pages as a way to share news and connect to students.<sup>[46]</sup> According to "Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2013",<sup>[47]</sup> in US, among those who use social media to find news, 47% of these people are under 45 years old, 23% are above 45 years old. Social media as a main news gateway is not the same pattern across countries. For example, in this report, in Brazil, 60% of the respondents said social media was one of the five most important way to find news online, 45% in Spain, 17% in UK, 38% in Italy, 14% in France, 22% in Denmark, 30% in U.S., 12% in Japan.<sup>[47]</sup> Moreover, there are differences among countries about commenting news in social networks, 38% of the respondents in Brazil said they commented news in social network in a week. These percentages are 21% in U.S. and 10% in UK. The authors argued that difference among countries may due to culture difference rather than access to technical tools.<sup>[47]</sup>

## History and memory effects

News media and television journalism have been instrumental in the shaping of American collective memory for much of the twentieth century.<sup>[48][49]</sup> Indeed, since the United States' colonial era, news media has influenced collective memory and discourse about national development and trauma. In many ways, mainstream journalists have maintained an authoritative voice as the storytellers of the American past. Their documentary style narratives, detailed exposes, and their positions in the present make them prime sources for public memory. Specifically, news media journalists have shaped collective memory on nearly every major national event – from the deaths of social and political figures to the progression of political hopefuls. Journalists provide elaborate descriptions of commemorative events in U.S. history and contemporary popular cultural sensations. Many Americans learn the significance of historical events and political issues through news media, as they are presented on popular news stations.<sup>[50]</sup> However, journalistic influence is growing less important, while social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, provide a constant source of alternative news sources for users.

As social networking becomes more popular among older and younger generations, sites such as Facebook and YouTube, gradually undermine the traditionally authoritative voices of news media. For example, American citizens contest media coverage of various social and political events as they see fit, inserting their voices into the narratives about America's past and present and shaping their own collective memories.<sup>[51][52]</sup> An example of this is the public explosion of the Trayvon Martin shooting in Sanford, Florida. News media coverage of the incident was minimal until social media users made the story recognizable through their constant discussion of the case. Approximately one month after the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin, its online coverage by everyday Americans garnered national attention from mainstream media journalists, in turn exemplifying media activism. In some ways, the spread of this tragic event through alternative news sources parallels that of the Emmitt Till – whose murder became a national story after it circulated African American and

Communists newspapers. Social media was also influential in the widespread attention given to the revolutionary outbreaks in the Middle East and North Africa during 2011.<sup>[53][54][55]</sup> However, there is some debate about the extent to which social media facilitated this kind of change.<sup>[56]</sup> Another example of this shift is in the on-going Kony 2012 campaign, which surfaced first on YouTube and later garnered a great amount of attention from mainstream news media journalists. These journalists now monitor social media sites to inform their reports on the movement. Lastly, in the past couple of presidential elections, the use of social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter were used to predict election results. U.S. President Barack Obama was more liked on Facebook than his opponent Mitt Romney and it was found by a study done by Oxford Institute Internet Experiment that more people liked to tweet about comments of President Obama rather than Romney.<sup>[57]</sup>

## Criticisms

### Criticisms of social media

Criticisms of social media range from criticisms of the ease of use of specific platforms and their capabilities, disparity of information available, issues with trustworthiness and reliability of information presented,<sup>[58]</sup> the impact of social media use on an individual's concentration,<sup>[59]</sup> ownership of media content, and the meaning of interactions created by social media. Although some social media platforms offer users the opportunity to cross-post simultaneously, some social network platforms have been criticized for poor interoperability between platforms, which leads to the creation of information silos- isolated pockets of data contained in one social media platform<sup>[60]</sup> However, it is also argued that social media have positive effects such as allowing the democratization of the internet<sup>[61]</sup> while also allowing individuals to advertise themselves and form friendships.<sup>[62]</sup>

Due to the increase in social media websites, there seems to be a positive correlation between the usage of such media with cyber-bullying, online sexual predators, and the decrease in face-to-face interactions.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Social media may expose children to images of alcohol, tobacco, and sexual behaviors.<sup>[63]</sup>

British-American entrepreneur and author Andrew Keen criticizes social media in his book *The Cult of the Amateur*, writing, "Out of this anarchy, it suddenly became clear that what was governing the infinite monkeys now inputting away on the Internet was the law of digital Darwinism, the survival of the loudest and most opinionated. Under these rules, the only way to intellectually prevail is by infinite filibustering."<sup>[64]</sup> This is also relative to the issue "justice" in the social network. For example, the phenomenon "Human flesh search engine" in Asia raised the discussion of "private-law" brought by social network platform.

Comparative Media professor José van Dijck contends in her book "The Culture of Connectivity" (2013) that to understand the full weight of social media, their technological dimensions should be connected to the social and the cultural. She critically describes six social media platforms. One of her findings is the way Facebook had been successful in framing the term 'sharing' in such a way that third party use of user data is neglected in favour of intra-user connectedness.

### Exclusiveness

Tim Berners-Lee contends that the danger of social networking sites is that most are silos and do not allow users to port data from one site to another. He also cautions against social networks that grow too big and become a monopoly as this tends to limit innovation.<sup>[65]</sup>

### Disparity

Eric Ehrmann contends that social media in the form of public diplomacy create a patina of inclusiveness that covers<sup>[66]</sup> traditional economic interests that are structured to ensure that wealth is pumped up to the top of the economic pyramid, perpetuating the digital divide and post Marxian class conflict. He also voices concern over the trend that finds social utilities operating in a quasi-libertarian global environment of oligopoly that requires users in economically challenged nations to spend high percentages of annual income to pay for devices and services to participate in the social media lifestyle.

The phrase "Digital divide" was coined in 1996 by Lloyd Morrlsett, a founder of the Children's Television Workshop and President of the Markle Foundation, to describe the chasm that purportedly separates information technology (IT) haves from have-nots in the US. As Virginia Eubanks explains the digital divide in terms of social structure that have-not side users don't have much consumer power but the have side have the power. Money and labors go from the have-not to have.

Neil Postman also contends that social media will increase an information disparity between winners – who are able to use the social media actively – and losers – who are not familiar with modern technologies.

### Trustworthiness

Since large-scale collaborative co-creation is one of the main way forming information in the social network, the user generated content is sometimes viewed with skepticism; readers do not trust it as a reliable source of information. Aniket Kittur, Bongowon Suh and Ed H. Chi took Wiki under examination and indicated that, "One possibility is that distrust of wiki Content is not due to the inherently mutable nature of the system but instead to the lack of available information for judging trustworthiness."<sup>[67]</sup> To be more specific, the authors mention that reasons for distrusting collaborative systems with user-generated content, such as Wikipedia, include lack of information regarding accuracy of contents, motives and expertise of editors, stability of content, coverage of topics and not available sources.<sup>[68]</sup> Social media is also an important source of news. According to 'Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2013', social media is one of the important way (the others are traditional brands, search engines and news exaggerators)for people find news online.<sup>[47]</sup> The report suggested that in UK, trust in news which from social media source is low,compared to news from other sources (e.g. online news from traditional broadcaster,and online news from national newspaper). People who aged at 24-35 trust social media most, whereas trust declined with the increase of age. Rainie and Wellman have argued that media making now has become a participation work,<sup>[69]</sup> which makes communication system changed. The center of power is shifted from only the media (as the gatekeep) to the peripheral area, which may include government, organizations, and out to the edge, the individual.<sup>[70]</sup> These changes in communication systems brings empirical question about trust to media effect. Prior empirical studies have shown that trust in information sources plays a major role in people's decision making.<sup>[71]</sup> People's attitude are more easily change when hear a message from their trustworthy sources. In the Reuter's report, 27% of respondents agree that they worry about the accuracy of the story on blog.<sup>[47]</sup> However, 40% of them believe the stories on blog are more balanced than traditional papers since they are provided with a range of opinions. Recent research has shown that in the new social media communication environment, the nature (civil/uncivil)comments will bias people's information processing even the message is from a trustworthy source,<sup>[72]</sup> which bring the practical and ethical question about the responsibility of communicator in the social media environment .

## Concentration

Some have said that "fast (social) media and deep slow thought don't mix well." From Nicholas Carr, "As media theorist Marshall McLuhan pointed out in 1960s, media are not just passive channels of information. They supply the stuff of thought, but they also shape the process of thought. And what the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation." However, there are several benefits brought from deep reading. For example, "our ability to interpret text, to make the rich mental connection that form when we read deeply and without distraction, remains largely disengaged." But needs for convenience often make it difficult to choose this slower, more deliberate way.<sup>[73]</sup>

## Few real impacts

For Malcolm Gladwell<sup>[74]</sup> the role of social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, in revolutions and protests is overstated. On the one hand, social media make it easier for individuals, and in this case activists, to express themselves. On the other hand, it is harder for that expression to have an impact.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Gladwell distinguishes between social media activism and high risk activism, which brings real changes. Activism and especially high-risk activism involves strong-tie relationships, hierarchies, coordination, motivation, exposing oneself to high risks, making sacrifices.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Gladwell discusses that social media are built around weak ties and he argues that "social networks are effective at increasing participation —by lessening the level of motivation that participation requires"<sup>[citation needed]</sup> According to him "...Facebook activism succeeds not by motivating people to make a real sacrifice, but by motivating them to do the things that people do when they are not motivated enough to make a real sacrifice"<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## Reliability

Evgeny Morozov, 2009-2010 Yahoo fellow at Georgetown University contends that the contents uploaded to Twitter may have little relevance to the rest of the people who do not use Twitter. On the article "Iran: Downside to the "Twitter Revolution"" in the magazine "Dissent" fall 2009,<sup>[75]</sup> he says, "Twitter only adds to the noise: it's simply impossible to pack much context into its 140 characters. All other biases are present as well: in a country like Iran it's mostly pro-Western, technology-friendly and iPod-carrying young people who are the natural and most frequent users of Twitter. They are a tiny and, most important, extremely untypical segment of the Iranian population (the number of Twitter users in Iran — a country of more than seventy million people.)"

Even in the United States, the birth-country of Twitter, has only 107.7 million accounts(Media Bistro, 2012) in Twitter. Since there can be many multi-account users and there are more than 314.7 million population in U.S.(U.S. POPClock Projection". U.S. Census Bureau., 2012), only limited groups of people use Twitter in U.S..

Indiana University dean and professor Matthew Auer casts doubt on the conventional wisdom that social media are open and participatory.

He also speculates on the emergence of "anti-social media" used as "instruments of pure control."<sup>[76]</sup>

## Ownership of social media content

Social media content is generated through social media interactions done by the users through the site. There has always been a huge debate on the ownership of the content on social media platforms since it is generated by the users and hosted by the company. Added to this is the danger to security of information, which can be leaked to third parties with economic interests in the platform, or parasites who comb the data for their own databases.<sup>[77]</sup> The author of *Social Media Is Bullshit*, Brandon Mendelson, claims that the "true" owners of content created on social media sites only benefits the large corporations who own those sites and rarely the users that created them.<sup>[78]</sup>

## Privacy

Privacy rights advocates warn users about uses for the information that can be gathered through social media. Some information is captured without the user's knowledge or consent, such as through electronic tracking and third party application on social networks. Others include law enforcement and governmental use of this information,<sup>[79]</sup> including the gathering of so-called social media intelligence through data mining techniques.<sup>[80]</sup>

Additional privacy concerns regard the impact of social media monitoring by employers whose policies include prohibitions against workers' postings on social networking sites.<sup>[81]</sup> A survey done in 2010 from different universities revealed that there are lines drawn between personal and professional lives. Many of the users surveyed admitted to misrepresenting themselves online.<sup>[82]</sup> Employees can be concerned because their social media sites reflect their personal lives and not their professional lives, but yet employers are censoring them on the internet.

Other privacy concerns with employers and social media are when employers use social media as a tool to screen a prospective employee. This issue raises many ethical questions that some consider an employer's right and others consider discrimination. Except in the states of California, Maryland, and Illinois, there are no laws that prohibit employers from using social media profiles as a basis of whether or not someone should be hired.<sup>[83]</sup> Title VII also prohibits discrimination during any aspect of employment including hiring or firing, recruitment, or testing.<sup>[84]</sup>

## Effects on interpersonal relationships

Data suggests that participants use social media to fulfill perceived social needs, but are typically disappointed.<sup>[85]</sup> Lonely individuals are drawn to the Internet for emotional support. This causes problems as it interferes with "real life socializing".<sup>[86]</sup> Some of these views are summed up in an Atlantic article by Stephen Marche titled, "Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?" Marche argues that social media provides more breadth, but not the depth of relationships that humans require. While he makes interesting points about how social media is replacing face-to-face interaction, he fails to cite some of his sources.<sup>[87]</sup>

Sherry Turkle explores similar issues in her book *Alone Together*, as she discusses how people confuse social media usage with authentic communication. People tend to act differently online and are less afraid to hurt each other's feelings. Some online behaviors cause stress and anxiety, much of this associated with friends and the permanence of online posts. This anxiety is also associated with the fear of being hacked or of colleges and employers exploring social media pages and finding unsavory things posted. Turkle also speculates that people are beginning to prefer texting to face-to-face communication, which can contribute to feelings of loneliness.<sup>[88]</sup>

Researchers found that only exchanges that involved direct communication and reciprocation of messages to each other increased feelings of connectedness. However, passively using social media without sending or receiving messages to individuals does not make people feel less lonely unless they were lonely to begin with.<sup>[89]</sup>

A current controversial topic is whether or not social media addiction should be included in the DSM-V.<sup>[90]</sup> Extended use of social media has led to increased Internet addiction, cyberbullying, sexting, sleep deprivation, and the decline of face-to-face interaction.<sup>[91]</sup> According to several clinics in the UK, social media addiction is a certifiable medical condition. One psychiatric consultant claims he treats as many as one hundred cases a year. And as the title of this article states, "Social media addiction recognised as official condition".<sup>[92]</sup>

**Social Isolationism:** The largest form of social isolationism is caused by social networking websites, when the marketers affiliated with these websites actually limit the visibility of users to develop "artificial marketing." Artificial marketing is something that occurs because of social media platforms, where marketers can follow users through their activities on the web and their individual searches. They are fed information that they already have some interest in, and therefore automatically use this to feed them more information, products, or sources that are all similar. This is a form of isolationism because people are not being exposed to different information, and are constantly trapped into thinking they need more of similar information. At times they don't even see what else is out there, because of over exposure to the

same kind of things.

## Positive effects

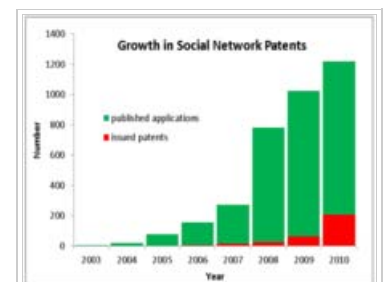
In the book “Networked – The new social operating system” by Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman, the two authors reflect on mainly positive effects of social media and other internet based social networks. According to the authors, social media is used to document memories, learn about and explore things, advertise oneself and form friendships. For instance, they claim that the communication through internet based services can be done more privately than in real life. Furthermore, Rainie and Wellman discuss that everybody has the possibility to become a content creator. Content creation provides networked individuals opportunities to reach wider audiences. Moreover, it can positively affect their social standing and gain political support. This can lead to influence on issues that are important for someone. As a concrete example of the positive effects of social media, the authors use the Egyptian revolution in 2011, where people used Facebook to gather meetings, protest actions, etc.<sup>[62]</sup>

Rainie and Wellman (Ibid) also discuss that content creation is a voluntary and participatory act. What is important is that networked individuals create, edit and manage content in collaboration with other networked individuals. This way they contribute in expanding knowledge. Wikis are examples of collaborative content creation.

## Patents

*Main article: Software patent*

There has been rapid growth in the number of US patent applications that cover new technologies related to social media, and the number of them that are published has been growing rapidly over the past five years. There are now over 2000 published patent applications.<sup>[94]</sup> As many as 7000 applications may be currently on file including those that haven't been published yet. Only slightly over 100 of these applications have issued as patents, however, largely due to the multi-year backlog in examination of business method patents, patents which outline and claim new methods of doing business.<sup>[95]</sup>



Number of US social network patent applications published and patents issued per year since 2003.<sup>[93]</sup>

## Social media in the classroom

### Wikipedia

In early 2013, Steve Joordens, a professor at the University of Toronto, encouraged the 1,900 students enrolled in his introductory psychology course to add content to Wikipedia pages featuring content that related to the course. Like other educators,<sup>[96]</sup> Joordens argued that the assignment would not only strengthen the site's psychology-related content, but also provide an opportunity for students to engage in critical reflection about the negotiations involved in collaborative knowledge production. However, Wikipedia's all-volunteer editorial staff complained that the students' contributions resulted in an overwhelming number of additions to the site, and that some of the contributions were inaccurate.<sup>[97]</sup>

Wikipedia can also be incorporated into assignments related to the gender gap. A 2010 survey of more than 58,000 self-selected Wikipedians indicated that 87% of contributors to the site are male, and 13% are women.<sup>[98]</sup> In response, the Wikipedia Foundation, which runs Wikipedia, has set a goal of raising the percentage of female contributors to 25% by 2015.<sup>[98]</sup> As of October 23, 2013, the site's “Wikipedians” page states that “Experienced women editors can be very successful—they are more likely to become administrators than men—but they are more likely to leave if treated aggressively in discussions, especially as new editors, when their good-faith contributions are more likely to be reverted than a similarly good-faith contribution by a man”.<sup>[99]</sup> Wikimedia, Wikipedia's meta-wiki, labels the gender gap a “very sensitive subject”.<sup>[100]</sup> Noting that “[p]eople who want to talk about the gender gap are sometimes victims of harassment,” Wikimedia argues that “The gender gap mailing list is the best place to talk about this with other people who are interested and can help.”

### Facebook and the classroom

Facebook represents a potentially useful tool in educational contexts. It allows for both an asynchronous and synchronous, open dialogue via a familiar and regularly accessed medium, and supports the integration of multimodal content such as student-created photographs and video and URLs to other texts, in a platform that many students are already familiar with. Further, it allows students to ask more minor questions that they might not otherwise feel motivated to visit a professor in person during office hours to ask.<sup>[101]</sup> It also allows students to manage their own privacy settings, and often work with the privacy settings they have already established as registered users.

Facebook is one alternative means for shy students to be able to voice their thoughts in and outside of the classroom. It allows students to

collect their thoughts and articulate them in writing before committing to their expression.<sup>[101]</sup> Further, the level of informality typical to Facebook can also aid students in self-expression and encourage more frequent student-and-instructor and student-and-student communication. At the same time, Towner and Munoz note that this informality may actually drive many educators and students away from using Facebook for educational purposes.

From a course management perspective, Facebook may be less efficient as a replacement for more conventional course management systems, both because of its limitations with regards to uploading assignments and due to some students' (and educators') resistance to its use in education. Specifically, there are features of student-to-student collaboration that may be conducted more efficiently on dedicated course management systems, such as the organization of posts in a nested and linked format. That said, a number of studies suggest that students post to discussion forums more frequently and are generally more active discussants on Facebook posts versus conventional course management systems like WebCT or Blackboard (Chu and Meulemans, 2008; Salaway, et al., 2008; Schroeder and Greenbowe, 2009).<sup>[102][103][104]</sup>

Additionally, Facebook's privacy settings can be difficult to understand and manage, leaving some potential users – particularly females and older students – uncomfortable about the level of privacy and safety afforded them.<sup>[103]</sup> Further, familiarity and comfortability with Facebook is often divided by socio-economic class, with students whose parents obtained a college degree, or at least having attended college for some span of time, being more likely to already be active users.<sup>[105]</sup> Instructors ought to seriously consider and respect these hesitations, and refrain from “forcing” Facebook on their students for academic purposes.<sup>[106][107]</sup> Instructors also ought to consider that rendering Facebook optional, but continuing to provide content through it to students who elect to use it, places an unfair burden on hesitant students, who then are forced to choose between using a technology they are uncomfortable with and participating fully in the course. A related limitation, particularly at the level of K-12 schooling, is the distrust (and in some cases, outright disallowal) of the use of Facebook in formal classroom settings in many educational jurisdictions.

However, this hesitancy towards Facebook use is continually diminishing in the United States, as the Pew Internet & American Life Project's annual report for 2012 shows that the likelihood of a person to be a registered Facebook user only fluctuates by 13 percent between different levels of educational attainment, 9 percent between urban, suburban, and rural users, only 5 percent between different household income brackets. The largest gap occurs between age brackets, with 86 percent of 18-29-year-olds reported as registered users as opposed to only 35 percent of 65-and-up-year-old users.<sup>[108]</sup>

## Twitter

Twitter, also, promotes social connections among students. It can be used to enhance communication building and critical thinking. Domizi (2013) utilized Twitter in a graduate seminar requiring students to post weekly tweets to extend classroom discussions. Students reportedly used Twitter to connect with content and other students. Additionally, students found it “to be useful professionally and personally”<sup>[109]</sup> Junco, Heiberger, and Loken (2011) completed a study of 132 students to examine the link between social media and student engagement and social media and grades. They divided the students into two groups, one used Twitter and the other did not. Twitter was used to discuss material, organize study groups, post class announcements, and connect with classmates. Junco and his colleagues (2011) found that the students in the Twitter group had higher GPAs and greater engagement scores than the control group<sup>[110]</sup> Gao, Luo, and Zhang (2012) reviewed literature about Twitter published between 2008 and 2011. They concluded that Twitter allowed students to participate with each other in class (back channel), and extend discussion outside of class. They also reported that students used Twitter to get up-to-date news and connect with professionals in their field. Students reported that microblogging encouraged students to “participate at a higher level”<sup>[111]</sup> Since the posts cannot exceed 140 characters, students were required to express ideas, reflect, and focus on important concepts in a concise manner. Some students found this very beneficial. Other students did not like the character limit. Also, some students found microblogging to be overwhelming (information overload). The research indicated that many students did not actually participate in the discussions, “they just lurked”<sup>[112]</sup>

## YouTube

*See also: Social impact of YouTube*

YouTube is the most frequently used social media tool in the classroom.<sup>[113]</sup> Students can watch videos, answer questions, and discuss content. Additionally, students can create videos to share with others. Sherer and Shea (2011) claimed that YouTube increased participation, personalization (customization), and productivity. YouTube also improved students' digital skills and provided opportunity for peer learning and problem solving<sup>[114]</sup> Eick and King (2012) found that videos kept students' attention, generated interest in the subject, and clarified course content<sup>[115]</sup> Additionally, the students reported that the videos helped them recall information and visualize real world applications of course concepts.

## Advertising on social media

In 2013, the ASA began to advise celebrities and sportstars to make it clear if they had been paid to tweet about a product or service by using the hashtag #spon or #ad within tweets containing endorsements. In July 2013, Wayne Rooney was accused of mis-leading followers by not including either of these tags in a tweet promoting Nike. The tweet read:

"The pitches change. The killer instinct doesn't. Own the turf, anywhere. @NikeFootball #myground."<sup>[116]</sup>

The tweet was investigated by the ASA but no charges were pressed. The ASA stated that "We considered the reference to Nike Football was prominent and clearly linked the tweet with the Nike brand."<sup>[116]</sup> When asked about whether the number of complaints regarding misleading social advertising had increased, the ASA stated that the number of complaints had risen marginally since 2011 but that complaints were "very low" in the "grand scheme."<sup>[117]</sup>

## See also

- Brand infiltration
- Citizen media
- Coke Zero Facial Profiler
- Connectivism (learning theory)
- Human impact of Internet use
- Internet and political revolutions
- List of photo sharing websites
- List of video sharing websites
- List of social networking websites
- Media psychology
- Metcalfe's law
- MMORPG
- Networked learning
- New media
- Online presence management
- Online research community
- Participatory media
- Social media marketing
- Social media surgery

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- Social Media: Establishing Criteria for Law Enforcement Use ([http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/law-enforcement-bulletin/2013/february/social-media-establishing-criteria-for-law-enforcement-use?utm\\_campaign=email-Immediate&utm\\_content=175293](http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/law-enforcement-bulletin/2013/february/social-media-establishing-criteria-for-law-enforcement-use?utm_campaign=email-Immediate&utm_content=175293)), FBI
- The Museum of Social Media ([http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/subject/code/000037/homepage/museum\\_of\\_social\\_media\\_\\_home.htm](http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/subject/code/000037/homepage/museum_of_social_media__home.htm)) – Museum of scholarly articles on the rise and impact of social media

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