College Students & Social Media
Chelsea Harrison
Social media has taken the world by storm.

I myself am addicted to social media.

It takes over my phone’s storage & leaves the battery consistently dead.
AND ONE DAY AFTER SPENDING ALMOST THE WHOLE DAY SCROLLING THROUGH THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

I BEGAN TO WONDER WHAT EFFECT SOCIAL MEDIA WAS HAVING ON ME AND IF IT WAS HELPING ME TO...

- EXPERIENCE THE WORLD?
- MAKE CONNECTIONS?
- HAVE BETTER SELF ESTEEM?
- GET BETTER GRADES?

... OR WAS IT PREVENTING ME FROM DOING THESE THINGS:
SO, I STARTED RESEARCHING...

I BEGAN MY RESEARCH WITH SOME KEY TERMS

SOCIAL MEDIA:
“TRUE SOCIAL MEDIA SITES SEEM TO HAVE THREE DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS: (1) THE INFORMATION BEING POSTED IS NOT DIRECTED AT ANYONE IN PARTICULAR; (2) THE INFORMATION BEING POSTED CAN BE EDITED AND/OR DISCUSSED BY ALL WHO SEE IT; AND (3) THE INFORMATION POSTED INCLUDES AND EASY WAY TO SHARE IT WITH PEOPLE NOT INCLUDED WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE ORIGINAL POST” (BROOKS 55).

ADDICTED:
“STRONGLY INCLINED OR COMPelled TO DO, USE, OR INDULGE IN SOMETHING REPEATEDLY” (MERRIAM-WEBSTER 2017).

SELF-ESTEEM: “A CONFIDENCE AND SATISFACTION IN ONESELF” (MERRIAM-WEBSTER 2017).

NOW THAT I HAD ALL THE TERMS I NEEDED I SEARCHED THROUGH THE ACADEMIC CONVERSATION AND HERE’S WHAT I FOUND…
NICOLE ELLISON

FACEBOOK AND THE ABILITY TO MAINTAIN CONNECTION WITH A GROUP OF PEOPLE FROM A PLACE THAT THE COLLEGE STUDENTS HAD ONCE LIVED HAD A VERY STRONG ASSOCIATION.

FACEBOOK MAY ALSO BE PROVIDING GREATER BENEFITS FOR THE USERS EXPERIENCING LOW LIFE SATISFACTION AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM WITH THE FINDING OF HOW IT INTERACTED WITH THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING.

BARNETT & COTHERN

"...IT WAS WITH ASSUMPTIONS THAT COLLEGE STUDENTS WHO USE AN EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF SOCIAL MEDIA HAVE LOWER ACADEMIC SUCCESS IN THE CLASSROOM, SPEND MORE TIME CONNECTING WITH FRIENDS THEN STUDYING, CONNECT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY VIRTUALLY RATHER THAN IN-PERSON, AND SEE CONFLICTS WITHIN THEIR SOCIAL GROUPS BECAUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA" (14).
Frequent use of ultra-brief social media can potentially lead to increased difficulty in formation of social relationships and a decline in academic performance. It also is associated with negative effects on the user’s use of reflective thought and presented some indicators of compromised moral judgement.

Ehrenberg, Juckes, White, & Walsh

Youth ages 17-24 “... are recognized as innovators and early adopters of the latest technologies and possess potential susceptibility to developing patterns of problematic use” (739).

Jacob Amedie

“Depression is one of the inadvertent consequences of excessive social media usage” (6).
AFTER LOOKING THROUGH THE ACADEMIC CONVERSATION
I REALIZED THAT I WANTED TO GIVE THE STUDENTS A VOICE IN
THE MATTER
HERE’S HOW I DID IT...

I made a survey online at surveymonkey.com. I then shared the link to the survey with 51 college students, male and female. The students ranged in ages from 18-24 and each had an individual lifestyle.

I sat down with a fellow college student and asked him a couple of questions. The main goal of the interview was to get a little more in depth than I could with the survey. I wanted to see how social media affected the student personally and discover their main purpose of using social media.

HERE’S HOW THEY WENT...
Chelsea

Do you check social media every day? Around how many hours do you spend on social media daily?

Yes and around 2-3

Chelsea

What social media platform would you say you use most often?

Instagram or Snapchat

Chelsea

Rate yourself on a scale from 1-10

A solid 6, nothing more, nothing less

Chelsea

How happy are you with your day to day life? (on a scale of 1-10)

4

Chelsea

Do you ever find yourself comparing yourself to people you see on social media?

5

So so. Not really comparing but using it to find a way to achieve my personal goals.

Chelsea

Would you say that social media affects your self-esteem?

5

Yeah, I feel like it glorifies wealth and sex-appeal in ways that are unrealistic for a "normal" person.

Chelsea

Does social media influence you to make more personal connections or does it give you the ability to be more introverted?

5

Neither. I use it to keep up with world events rather than using it to broaden my friend group.

Send a chat
AFTER ALL MY RESEARCH I CAME TO DISCOVER THAT SOCIAL MEDIA IS LIKE ANYTHING ELSE, IT IS BOTH GOOD AND BAD.

AND THAT IN MODERATION IT CAN HAVE SOME SERIOUS BENEFITS.

BUT, TOO MUCH CAN CAUSE HARM.
The results of the survey and interview showed me the students' perspective of the subject matter exposed some of the underlying factors of the results and how social media truly affected the students.

But there's still much more research that could be done on the subject matter such as social media's effect on life experiences or further examining the underlying factors that may be affecting behaviors.
AND WITH THE FACT THAT

“... NEW TECHNOLOGY HAS PRODUCED A GENERATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE – THE “DIGITAL NATIVES” AGED 13 TO 30 – WHO SHARE A COMMON CULTURE OF COMMUNICATION WITH THEIR GENERATIONAL PEERS ACROSS BORDERS AND ACROSS CONTINENTS, A “MACRO CULTURE”, THE POTENTIAL OF WHICH IS YET TO BE FULLY APPRECIATED OR EVEN ACKNOWLEDGED” (ALLISON 69).

WE MUST CONTINUE TO RESEARCH SOCIAL MEDIA AND HOW IT TRULY AFFECTS THE “DIGITAL NATIVES”
Works Cited


Chelsea Harrison

Chelsea Harrison is a junior at UCF studying computer science with a minor in digital media. Upon graduation, she hopes to become a business analyst at a large technology company and go on to graduate school to get a master's and eventually a doctorate degree.