

## **The Rising Concern: Addiction to Social Networks**

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**Abstract:** In the digital age, social networks have become an integral part of our lives. They offer us a platform to connect with friends, family, and even strangers from around the world. However, with their increasing popularity, an alarming issue has emerged – addiction to social networks. This article aims to shed light on the addictive nature of social networks, its impact on individuals, and strategies to manage this modern-day challenge.

**Key words:** information, social networks, "popular culture", information attacks.

The Allure of Social Networks:

Social networks are designed to captivate and engage users. They provide instant gratification through likes, comments, and shares, triggering the release of dopamine in our brains, which is associated with pleasure and rewards. This neurological response can create a cycle of seeking validation, as users constantly crave more likes and attention. The addictive properties of social networks are further enhanced by their accessibility through smartphones, making them available 24/7.

Signs of Social Network Addiction:

Addiction to social networks can manifest in various ways. Some common signs include:

1. Excessive preoccupation: Spending an excessive amount of time on social networks, often at the expense of other important activities such as work, studies, or personal relationships.
2. Neglecting real-life interactions: Prioritizing virtual connections over face-to-face interactions, leading to a decline in social skills and meaningful relationships.
3. Emotional dependence: Feeling anxious, restless, or irritable when unable to access social networks, and experiencing a constant urge to check notifications or updates.
4. Negative impact on well-being: Experiencing sleep disturbances, decreased productivity, low self-esteem, and a distorted sense of reality due to the constant comparison with others' highlight reels.

Consequences of Social Network Addiction:

Social network addiction can have detrimental effects on individuals' mental, emotional, and physical well-being:

1. Mental health issues: Excessive use of social networks has been linked to increased rates of anxiety, depression, and loneliness. The constant exposure to curated online lives can lead to feelings of inadequacy and social isolation.
2. Impaired productivity: Spending excessive time on social networks can hinder academic or professional performance, leading to decreased productivity and missed opportunities.
3. Sleep disturbances: The blue light emitted by screens and the addictive nature of social networks can disrupt sleep patterns, resulting in poor quality sleep and daytime fatigue.

4. Cyberbullying and online harassment: Social networks provide a platform for cyberbullying, trolling, and online harassment, which can profoundly impact users' mental well-being and self-esteem.

#### Managing Social Network Addiction:

Recognizing and addressing social network addiction is crucial for maintaining a healthy balance between our online and offline lives. Here are some strategies to manage and reduce dependency:

1. Self-awareness: Acknowledge the addictive nature of social networks and assess your own usage patterns to identify areas of concern.
2. Setting boundaries: Establish specific time limits for social network usage and designate device-free periods throughout the day to engage in other activities.
3. Digital detox: Take occasional breaks from social networks to recalibrate and focus on real-life experiences and relationships.
4. Find alternative activities: Engage in hobbies, exercise, or spend time with loved ones to divert attention from social networks and develop a healthier lifestyle.
5. Seek support: If addiction persists or significantly affects your daily life, consider reaching out to mental health professionals who can provide guidance and support.

#### Conclusion:

While social networks have revolutionized the way we connect and communicate, it is crucial to be aware of their addictive potential. By understanding the signs, consequences, and implementing strategies to manage social network addiction, we can strike a balance between the virtual and real world, leading to healthier and more fulfilling lives. Remember, it's important to use social networks as tools for connection and enrichment, rather than allowing them to control our lives.

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