DIGITAL ME

A survey exploring the effect of social media and digital technology on Australians’ wellbeing
Overview

*Digital Me*, is the latest in a series of surveys conducted by the Australian Psychological Society, to examine issues affecting the wellbeing of Australians.

It has been conducted as part of Psychology Week, an annual initiative that aims to increase public awareness of how psychology can help Australians lead healthier, happier and more meaningful lives.

This national survey of Australian adults and teens examines how the widespread use of digital technology and social media is affecting their wellbeing, behaviour and self-image.

It found Australians overwhelmingly find life online a positive experience, using technology to maintain important connections with friends and family.

But is also reveals some downsides: teens are increasingly being contacted by strangers online. Australians of all ages report feeling pressure about how they look and how others react to their posts.

This is a growing area of psychological interest and research, as these technologies become deeply embedded within Australian life, creating psychological challenges and opportunities. It is also an area of community concern as these technologies shape relationships between Australians of all ages.

The Australian Psychological Society, which represents 23,000 psychologists around Australia, has developed a series of resources to help Australians of all ages to have a healthy online life.
About the survey

- This 10 minute online survey explored digital and social media consumption among Australian teens and adults. The survey fieldwork was conducted by an independent research company, Forethought.
- A representative sample of Australian adults (n= 1,020) and teens (aged 14-17; n =156) who use social media were asked to answer an online survey about their social media usage and online experiences.
- Survey participants were also asked to respond to a number of behavioural and psychological measures on mobile phone involvement, self esteem and life satisfaction.
- The data presented has been selected on the basis of a preliminary analysis of noteworthy findings.

Note: Further information on the specific scales, demographics and methodology used in this survey are provided in the Appendices (page 35).
Survey highlights

• 90 per cent of Australians surveyed use social media, with Facebook and Youtube the most popular channels across all age groups.
• Teens spend 3.3 hours a day on social media and adults 2.6 hours. Some teens log on to their favoured channels as much as 50 times a day.
• Australians are highly attached to their mobile devices: 78.8 per cent of teens and 53.5 per cent of adults have what psychologists refer to as high mobile phone involvement. This can involve behaviour like using a mobile phone for no particular purpose and being unable to reduce mobile phone use.
• Australian adults who are highly involved with their mobile phones are also more likely to use mobile phones immediately before sleep, immediately on waking and while eating.
• The high use of social media and technology is impacting on self esteem, with two in three teens feeling pressure to look good. Adults find Instagram in particular fuels concern about their appearance.
• Many teens are contacted by or make contact with strangers via Facebook – 15 per cent say this occurs daily.
• 60 per cent of parents do not monitor the online activity of their children.
• Teens and adults report experiencing or perpetrating bullying and antisocial behaviour online.
• Almost half of adults say they have been followed online by, or have followed, a former partner or friend.
• Despite this, Australians report that their experiences of using their favoured online social media platforms is generally positive. Many using social media channels to connect with family, friends and to entertain themselves.
Australians of all ages are increasingly heavy users of technology and social media – with young and old reporting Facebook and YouTube as the most commonly used platforms. Overwhelmingly, they report finding the experience positive.
What technology do Australians use?

Australians have a rich array of technology in use in their daily lives. Adults and teens’ use of these devices have similarities, though teens report being more likely to use games consoles.

- Mobile phones and computers (PC or laptop) were the most commonly used digital devices across both groups.
- More than a quarter of Australian teens and adults used wearable fitness or health devices every day.
- More than half of teens use a games console or iPod/digital music player daily.

Q. How much time do you spend on the following digital devices... on a typical day?
How involved are Australians with their mobile phones?

Australians are increasingly reliant on their mobile phones in particular. The Mobile Phone Involvement Questionnaire (MPIQ) was devised by Walsh et al (2010) to gauge the extent to which people rely on their phones. More than three in four teens (79%) and more than half of adults (54%) were found to be highly involved with their mobile phones. More than one in three teens (35%) find the thought of being without their mobile phone distressing. More than one in five adults often use their mobile phone for no particular reason (21%) or lose track of how much they are using it (22%).

% who agree or strongly agree

Q. How much do you agree with the following statements? 8-item measure scored on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 7(strongly agree)

Low Mobile Phone Involvement Cluster (MPIQ Score 8-28)
High Mobile Phone Involvement Cluster (MPIQ Score 29-56)
All of the respondents reported using some form of digital device daily. But one in ten **did not use any** social media. Most of those were over 65.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>% Not Using Social Media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who doesn’t use social media?**

The survey reveals that use of technology and social media is increasingly widespread across Australians of all ages. Just **one in ten** say they do not use any social media platforms.

Q. Which of the following social media do you use? *(please select all that apply)*

*Australian who do not used any forms of social media were screened out.*
Social media: Who uses what and for how long?
Top 5 channels by age

Across all age groups, Facebook and YouTube were the two most commonly used social media platforms. Instagram and Snapchat were more commonly used by younger Australians, particularly teens.

Teens on average spent **3.3 hours per day** on social media. The average for adults was **2.6 hours** for adults.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 14 – 17</th>
<th>Age 18 – 34</th>
<th>Age 35 – 49</th>
<th>Age 50 – 64</th>
<th>Age 65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n= 156</td>
<td>n= 355</td>
<td>n= 264</td>
<td>n= 233</td>
<td>n= 168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Facebook**
  - Age 14 – 17: 80.8%
  - Age 18 – 34: 86.5%
  - Age 35 – 49: 80.7%
  - Age 50 – 64: 83.7%
  - Age 65+: 84.5%

- **YouTube**
  - Age 14 – 17: 72.4%
  - Age 18 – 34: 68.2%
  - Age 35 – 49: 58.3%
  - Age 50 – 64: 47.6%
  - Age 65+: 43.5%

- **Instagram**
  - Age 14 – 17: 66.0%
  - Age 18 – 34: 57.7%
  - Age 35 – 49: 31.8%
  - Age 50 – 64: 17.6%
  - Age 65+: 17.9%

- **Snapchat**
  - Age 14 – 17: 64.7%
  - Age 18 – 34: 43.9%
  - Age 35 – 49: 24.6%
  - Age 50 – 64: 17.2%
  - Age 65+: 17.3%

- **Twitter**
  - Age 14 – 17: 27.6%
  - Age 18 – 34: 26.5%
  - Age 35 – 49: 21.6%
  - Age 50 – 64: 15.5%
  - Age 65+: 11.3%

Q Which of the following social media channels do you use?
Q. On average, how many hours per day do you spend on using social media & other forms of interactive online communication?
How involved in social media are Australians throughout the day?

Social media engagement

Australians report heavy social media use throughout the course of the day. Social media is now commonly used before **going to sleep** (two in five adults and three in five teens), despite research showing the negative impact of this on sleep. Close to a half the teens surveyed reported doing this **every day**. It was also common for Australians to use social media within minutes of waking up, when with others and when eating.

**Instances of social media use 5 or more days in the last week**

Q. Please reflect on how often you used social media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter) in last week and respond to the following items. How often did you use social media ...?  *(Not one day/One day/Two days/Three days/Four days/Five days/Six days/Every day)*

Teens n=156; Adults n=1020
How Australians use Facebook
Top 5 reasons by age

Facebook is an increasingly important means of connection for Australians of all ages. Across all age groups, the most common reason was to interact with friends. About one third of Australians aged 18-34 (31%) and 35-49 (30%) use it to pass the time or relax. Australians aged 50 and above reported also using it to interact with family.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 14-17 n= 94</th>
<th>Age 18-34 n= 277</th>
<th>Age 35-49 n= 196</th>
<th>Age 50-64 n= 188</th>
<th>Age 65+ n= 139</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interact with my friends</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass the time / relax</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertain myself</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interact with my family</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share information</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. I mainly use Facebook to...

For Australians who selected Facebook as one of the two social media platforms that they used most often.
**Australians’ experience of Facebook**

**By age**

Strikingly, Australians of all ages overwhelmingly report that they find the use of Facebook generally a positive experience.

![Bar chart showing the experience of Facebook by age group]

- **Age 14-17**: Always negative 1%, Generally negative 32%, Neutral 49%, Generally positive 18%, Always positive 1%
  - n = 94
- **Age 18-34**: Always negative 3%, Generally negative 37%, Neutral 48%, Generally positive 11%, Always positive 1%
  - n = 277
- **Age 35-49**: Always negative 3%, Generally negative 31%, Neutral 52%, Generally positive 13%, Always positive 1%
  - n = 196
- **Age 50-64**: Always negative 1%, Generally negative 32%, Neutral 52%, Generally positive 11%, Always positive 4%
  - n = 188
- **Age 65+**: Always negative 3%, Generally negative 28%, Neutral 60%, Generally positive 9%, Always positive 9%
  - n = 139

*Q. My experience using Facebook is... For Australians who selected Facebook as one of the two social media platforms that they used most often.*
How Australians use YouTube
Top 3 reasons by age

Australians report using YouTube for enjoyment, with almost half of those who responded using the channel for *entertainment*. This was closely followed by people using the site to pass the time or relax.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 14-17</th>
<th>Age 18-34</th>
<th>Age 35-49</th>
<th>Age 50-64</th>
<th>Age 65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n= 60</td>
<td>n= 135</td>
<td>n= 97</td>
<td>n= 85</td>
<td>n= 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertain myself</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>Entertain myself</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>Entertain myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass the time / relax</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>Pass the time / relax</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Pass the time / relax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow celebrities / media personalities</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Follow celebrities / media personalities</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Get inspiration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. I mainly use YouTube to...
For Australians who selected YouTube as one of the two social media platforms that they used most often.
Australians’ experiences on YouTube

By age

Australians report YouTube use positively. More than 80% of all respondents state it was at least generally positive.

For Australians who selected YouTube as one of the two social media platforms that they used most often.
How Australians use Instagram
Top 3 reasons by age

Instagram use differs between age groups. Teens report they typically use Instagram to **interact with friends** (40%). Those aged 18-34 and 35-49 were more likely to use Instagram to **pass the time and relax** or to **get inspiration**. Following celebrities and media personalities was one of the top three activities for those aged 35-49.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 14-17 n= 52</th>
<th>Age 18-34 n= 113</th>
<th>Age 35-49 n= 50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interact with my friends</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Pass the time / relax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass the time / relax</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Get inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get inspiration</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Interact with my friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. I mainly use Instagram to...

For Australians who selected Instagram as one of the two social media platforms that they used most often.

Note: Sub-samples for age 50/+ are too small and hence excluded from here.
Australians’ experience of Instagram

By age

Australians reported having a **generally positive experience** of Instagram.

Australians’ experience of Instagram by age:

- **Age 14-17**: 2% Always negative, 19% Generally negative, 58% Neutral, 21% Generally positive, 2% Always positive (n = 52)
- **Age 18-34**: 1% Always negative, 20% Generally negative, 59% Neutral, 18% Generally positive, 2% Always positive (n = 113)
- **Age 35-49**: 2% Always negative, 18% Generally negative, 56% Neutral, 24% Generally positive, 2% Always positive (n = 50)

Q. My experience using Instagram is...

*For Australians who selected Instagram as one of the two social media platforms that they used most often.*

Note: Sub-samples for age 50/+ are too small and hence excluded from here.
KEY FINDINGS FOR TEENS (N = 156)

Teens are more heavily involved in social media, having grown up with technology. They report being exposed to problematic behaviour – such as cyberbullying and contact from strangers – but few have their online activities monitored by parents.

Note: The following significant findings were reported for teens. Caution should be exercised due to the small sub-sample sizes for this age group.
Many teens are highly involved with their phones
In comparison to adults they were significantly more likely to...

*Be highly involved with their phones, resulting in a high MPIQ^ 78.8% vs. 53.5%

*Think about their phone when not using it 11.5% vs. 3.7% (strongly agree)

*Feel connected to others when using their mobile phone 21.8% vs. 7.1% (strongly agree)

*Use their phone for no particular reason 18.6% vs. 7.7% (strongly agree)

*Have been involved in arguments because of mobile phone use 12.2% vs. 3.1% (strongly agree)

*Have been unable to reduce mobile phone use 15.4% vs. 3.9% (strongly agree)

*Use Instagram 66.0% vs. 32.8%
and Snapchat 64.7% vs. 21.7%

*Have more than 500 friends on Facebook 21.3% vs. 9.1%

*Use Youtube more than one hour each time 21.7% vs. 9.6%

Note: Significance testing was conducted between Teens and Adults at the 5% level of significance.
*All findings listed here were statistically significant (p<.05)
^See slide 6 for MPIQ details
How often do teens use social media platforms?

Australian teens are logging on multiple times a day, and most days of the week. They reported using social media platforms **5 to 9 times in a day** with some reporting using their favoured channels up to **50 times** in a day.

On average, teens use Facebook **5.5 times** in a day, **6.4 days** a week. Some reported logging on 30 times a day.

On average, teens use YouTube **6.6 times** in a day, **6.3 days** a week. Some reported logging in 50 times a day.

On average, teens use Instagram **6.8 times** in a day, **5.9 days** a week. Some reported logging on 40 times in a day.

On average, teens use SnapChat **9.1 times** in a day, **6.1 days** a week. Some reported logging in 40 times in a day.

Q. Of the social media platforms you use, which two platforms below do you use most often?

Q. On average, I use [Top Social Media Channel] [0-7] day(s) a week. I typically use it [0 - 200] times in a day.

Facebook n = 94; YouTube n = 60; Instagram n = 52; SnapChat n = 63
How much time do teens spend on social media each time they use it?

Australian teens are logging on repeatedly throughout the day. The majority of teens spent **half an hour or less** each time they used Instagram, Facebook or SnapChat, but the total time spent online was 3.3 hours on average per day. Close to **one in four** of teens spent **more than an hour** on YouTube each time they logged on.
Do teens feel pressure online?

Social media is affecting the wellbeing of Australian teens. Almost **two in three** reported feeling pressure to look good on social media. **Three in five** agreed that they felt validated when others ‘liked’ or ‘retweeted’ their posts. Close to half felt bad about themselves if no one responded in this way to their posts.

**% of teens who agreed with the statement:**

- **63%** feel pressure to look good in the photos on social media.
- **59%** feel validated and recognised when others ‘like’ or ‘retweet’ their posts.
- **56%** feel left out or excluded after seeing photos of their friends together at something they weren’t invited to.
- **53%** avoid choosing profile pictures showing certain personal characteristics.
- **46%** feel bad about themselves when nobody comments on or ‘likes’ or ‘retweets’ their photos or posts.
- **44%** find it easier to interact with people online rather than face-to-face.
- **41%** sometimes feel everyone is living the dream except them after looking at social media posts.
- **40%** find it annoying when people add filters / edit their profile pictures and don’t look how they actually are.
- **38%** add filters / edit their profile pictures to represent who they want to be or to be more attractive.
Contact with strangers

Interaction with strangers online is now common via social media. Fifteen per cent of teens reported being contacted by strangers daily in Facebook alone. Nearly 10% reported that they actively communicated with, or responded to, strangers daily.

**Stranger contact**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th>n = 94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every two to six months</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than every six months</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Communication with strangers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th>n = 94</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every two to six months</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than every six months</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Cyberbullying and antisocial behaviour online in teens

Australian teens are being exposed to worrying behaviour online – or engaging in it themselves. **One-third** of the Australian teens had argued with someone they don’t know and posted content that they later regretted. **Over a quarter** had experienced bullying on social media over the past 12 months.

### % sometimes/often/all the time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve posted content on social media that I later regretted</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve argued with someone I don’t know on social media</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve seen content about me on social media that I would like to be removed</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been bullied or trolled on social media</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve put negative comments on someone’s social media posts</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Thinking about your usage of social media over the past 12 months, how do the following statements apply to you? (Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often/All of the time)

n = 156
Monitoring of social media by parents

Teens and parents agree that little checking of social media activity occurs. Teens report that the majority of parents don’t check their Facebook profile or know their password. Three in five parents stated they never monitor their child's social media accounts or use.

Parents check their child’s Facebook

Parents know their child’s password

Parents monitoring their child’s social media account or use

Q. My parents [know/don’t know] my Facebook password and [do/don’t] check up on what I do on Facebook. (n= 94 teens)

Q. I have monitored my child’s social media account/use over the past 12 months. (n=650 parents)
Australian adults are increasingly reliant on their mobile phones, which for some means they are exposed to antisocial behaviour and pressure to look good. This exposure is related to a negative impact on self-esteem and wellbeing. Despite this, most report social media is a generally positive experience.

Note: This section presents significant findings for adults. Where no significant findings were uncovered for particular groups, such as gender, State, metro/regional and work status, results were omitted from this report.
Australian adults and their mobile devices

Australian adults make regular use of digital devices and many rely heavily on their mobile phones. More than half (54%) report being **highly involved** with their mobile phones. High mobile phone involvement was more common among adults aged 18-49 than among Australians aged 50+.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Low MPI (n=474)</th>
<th>High MPI (n=546)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recap: The Mobile Phone Involvement Questionnaire (MPIQ) has 8 items to measure the extent to which people are involved with their mobile phones.
Mobile phone involvement and social media engagement

Australian adults who are highly involved with their mobile phones are also more likely to be more active on social media, using it during daily activities – particularly before sleep (42% vs. 18%).

Q. Please reflect on how often you used social media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter) in last week and respond to the following items. How often did you use social media…?

*Not one day/One day/Two days/Three days/Four days/Five days/Six days/Every day*

Note: Significance testing was conducted between High and Low MPI groups. *Statistically significant (p<.05)*
Do adults feel pressure online?

Australian adults who have a high level of mobile phone involvement are more likely to feel the pressure to look good on social media. They are also more likely to report feeling left out after seeing friends’ photos online.

% of adults who agreed with the statement by level of mobile phone involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Low MPI (n=474)</th>
<th>High MPI (n=546)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I add filters / edit my profile pictures to represent who I want to be / to be more attractive</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel left out or excluded after seeing photos of my friends together at something I wasn’t invited to</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel a pressure to look good in the photos on social media</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It annoys me when people add filters / edit their profile pictures and don’t look like they actually are</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I avoid choosing profile pictures showing certain personal characteristics</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Thinking about your usage of social media over the past 12 months, how do the following statements apply to you?
Response: 1(strongly disagree) to 7(strongly agree)
Note: Significance testing was conducted between High and Low MPI groups. *Statistically significant (p<.05)
Adults and pressure online, continued

Australian adults who have a high level of mobile phone involvement are also more likely to feel validated and recognised when others ‘like’ or ‘retweet’ their posts (50%\textsubscript{high MPI} vs. 20%\textsubscript{low MPI}). Over one-third of those in the high MPI group felt bad about themselves when nobody commented on or ‘liked’ or ‘retweeted’ their posts (vs. 8%\textsubscript{low MPI}).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Low MPI (n=474)</th>
<th>High MPI (n=546)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel bad about myself when nobody comments on or “likes” or “retweets” my photos or posts</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sometimes feel everyone was living the dream except me after looking at social media posts.</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it easier to interact with people online rather than face-to-face</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>45.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel validated and recognised when others ‘like’ or ‘retweet’ my posts</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Thinking about your usage of social media over the past 12 months, how do the following statements apply to you? Response: 1(strongly disagree) to 7(strongly agree)
Note: Significance testing was conducted between High and Low MPI groups. *Statistically significant (p<.05)
Instagram and self-esteem

Instagram was a particular source of pressure for adults about appearance. **Over half** of the Instagram users felt pressured to look good and were more likely to edit their pictures than Instagram non-users. More Instagram users (20.6%) than non-users (12.6%) were classified as having low self-esteem.

*I feel a pressure to look good in the photos on social media.*

*Note: Self-esteem Score Ranges: Low RSES Cluster (0-13); Medium RSES Cluster (14-21); High RSES Cluster (22-30)*

*Findings are significant at 5% significance level.*

Instagram Users: n=335; Instagram non-users: n=685; *Findings are significant at 5% significance level.*

*I add filters / edit my profile pictures to represent who I want to be / to be more attractive.*

Note: Self-esteem Score Ranges: Low RSES Cluster (0-13); Medium RSES Cluster (14-21); High RSES Cluster (22-30)

Instagram Users: n=335; Instagram non-users: n=685; *Findings are significant at 5% significance level.*
**Adults exposure to anti-social behaviour online**

Australian adults are facing or engaging in antisocial behaviour online. **Over a quarter** of the Australian adults surveyed had **argued** with someone they **don’t know** and had **posted or seen content** that they **no longer wanted** to be on social media. **One in five** had experienced **bullying** on social media at least sometimes over the past 12 months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>% Sometimes/Often/All the Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ve posted content on social media that I later regretted</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve argued with someone I don’t know on social media</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve seen content about me on social media that I would like to be removed</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve been bullied or trolled on social media</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve put negative comments on someone’s social media posts</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. Thinking about your usage of social media over the past 12 months, how do the following statements apply to you? (Never/Rarely/Sometimes/Often/All of the time)  
N = 1020
Adults who report they were bullied or trolled online were more likely to have **higher mobile phone involvement**, spend significantly **more time** on internet browsing and apps and be **younger**.

**Note:** Significance testing was conducted between Adults- Bullied/Trolled on Social media and –Never Bullied/Trolled on Social media groups. *Statistically significant (p<.05)*
Cyberbullying hurts adults’ wellbeing

This online bullying is affecting the wellbeing of Australians. Those that had been bullied were more likely to report lower self-esteem and poorer satisfaction with life than those that hadn't.

Note: Significance testing was conducted between Adults - Bullied/Trolled on Social media and –Never Bullied/Trolled on Social media groups.
*Statistically significant (p<.05)
Mobile phone use and ‘cyberstalking’

Adults report being followed by or following former partners or friends via social media. Around half of those who are highly involved with their mobile phones had experienced ‘cyberstalking’ in this way.

*I’ve suspected I’ve been followed on social media by a former partner/friend.

![Bar chart showing percentage of respondents in Low and High MPI groups.](chart)

*I’ve used social media to secretly follow a former partner/friend.

![Bar chart showing percentage of respondents in Low and High MPI groups.](chart)
Detailed methodology: Sample and timeframe

**WHO/WHAT:** The Australian Psychological Society, in collaboration with a market research agency, Forethought, conducted an online survey of a representative sample of Australian social media users. The national sample, collected through an ISO-accredited sample partner, consisted of 1,020 adults plus 156 teenagers who were aged 14-17 and recruited through their parents, with consent.

**HOW/WHY:**

*Sampling approach for Adults:* Adaptive Response Bias Sampling (ARBS), where a nationally-representative cohort of 400 were invited to start the survey, from which respondents who did not qualify were screened out. The remaining adults who qualified for the survey were therefore representative of our addressable market (i.e. users of social media). The demographic profile of these qualifiers was used to set quotas on completes until we reached our desired sample of 1,000 adults, who were representative of social media users. In this way, weighting was not required.

*Sampling approach for Teens:* Due to sampling constraints, the teenage sample collected, with parental consent, was collected on a best-efforts approach only. The teenage sample was skewed slightly to females, which corresponds to previous research conducted into social media use by teenagers. This teenage sample was not weighted.

**WHEN:** The online survey was conducted over a period of ten days from 21\textsuperscript{st} August to 30\textsuperscript{th} August 2017.
Detailed methodology: Psychological/Behavioural Measures/Scales

The full survey covered questions relating to demographics, behavioural and attitudinal profiling, social media use and engagement, mobile phone involvement, wellbeing, and self-esteem. Several psychological and behavioural scales were employed, including the followings:

- **Mobile Phone Involvement Questionnaire (MPIQ, 2010):** An 8-item measure for mobile phone involvement based broadly on Brown’s behavioural addiction components, scored on a 7-point Likert scale, 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).
- **Social Media Engagement Questionnaire (SMEQ, 2013):** A 5-item measure for the extent to which people’s key daily activities tend to involve social media. Response options from Not one day to Everyday.
- **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES, 1965):** A 10-item measure for global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self, scored on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.
- **Ed Diener’s Satisfaction with Life Measure (SWLS, 1985):** A 5-item measure for global cognitive judgments of satisfaction with one's life, scored on a 7-point Likert scale, 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

References:
Detailed methodology: Data analyses

Scoring/Grouping: The scores for SWLS were grouped into seven predefined categories ranging from Extremely Dissatisfied to Extremely Satisfied. For RSES and MPIQ, k-means clustering was used to identify the most heterogeneous clusters, which were then grouped into “high” and “low”.

Group comparisons: Analyses were run for the total sample across all key demographic variables and where sub-sample sizes permitted. When comparing binary groups, such as high against low self-esteem, teenagers against adults, and Instagram users against non-users, parametric t-tests were used to test for differences. For groups of more than two categories, one-way ANOVA was used in conjunction with Tukey’s and Games-Howell post-hoc tests to look at differences in sub-groups.

Findings: The results presented in this report have been selected based on issues or trends currently of interest in relation to social media use, and any findings that were deemed noteworthy. All significance testing has been conducted at the 5% significance level. Where no significant findings were uncovered for given groups or demographic variables, results were omitted from this report.
## Demographics statistics for survey sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AGE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 34</td>
<td></td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 49</td>
<td></td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 64</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td></td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 - 17</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GENDER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STATE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AREA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>71.8%</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional/Rural</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORK STATUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time employment / Casual</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time employment</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time home duties</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full / Part-time student</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Respondents**: 156, 1020
RESOURCES

Thriving in the Digital Age: Tips for Adults and Teens
10 tips for teens

Thriving in the Digital Age

Technology is positive for many people but it can be bad for your mental health, stress you out or make you feel disconnected from others.

Psychologists, who are experts in the mind and emotions, recommend these tips to help you live a healthy life online.

1. Build relationships
Psychological research shows real-life social contact gives you the skills you need to use technology in ways that are good for you. Cultivate relationships offline as well as online.

2. Maintain perspective
Seeing the perfect lives of celebrities or friends can make you feel low. But remember these are just edited highlights, designed to show a certain image to the world. Keep it real on social media and you will be less stressed and feel better connected.

3. Choose support wisely
People with mental health issues often turn to online groups that reflect their thoughts and moods. Sometimes they withdraw from friends who are having a better time in life. Look for moderated forums like those on the ReachOut website.

4. Check less
"Constant checkers" are people who are always on social media or get notifications pushed to their phone constantly. Psychological research shows they are more stressed and get less done. Turn off constant notifications and limit when you check to certain times of day.

5. Connect with your family
The internet can make friendships stronger, but can create a wedge within families. Losing connection with other generations can be bad for your wellbeing. Put down the iPad and spend time connecting, in person. Really engage with the people around you in the here and now.

6. Switch off to sleep
Screen time is linked with poor sleep. Poor sleep has been linked to problems with physical health, mental health, work and study. Turn off all phones, devices, computers and television an hour or more before going to bed. Remember face-to-face contact with friends and family has actually been shown to help you sleep better.

Learn more about the psychology behind these tips at compassforlife.org.au
7. Choose friends, not bullies
Being bullied online can be deeply upsetting and hard to ignore. Cyberbullying and other harassment have been shown to harm people’s mental health and wellbeing. Consider reporting, blocking, unfollowing or unfriending any person who repeatedly posts material that offends you.

8. Be a good citizen
Being on the receiving end of negativity online (or even distancing out) is bad for you. Studies show that these interactions can leave you with social and emotional issues. Help create a positive environment online. If you witness bullying online, consider responding. Research suggests that ‘bystanders’ who witness bad behaviour can discourage online bullies and help the victim.

9. Think big picture
Images can spread like wildfire online. Before sending an image or video to anyone, think about what it would be like if your teacher, mother, or future employer saw this image. If you feel uncomfortable taking and sharing an image of yourself, don’t. It is your right to say no. Protect yourself.

10. Break out of your ‘technocoon’
Spending too much time locked away in your bedroom can lead to poorer health and fitness and can be a sign you are avoiding real-life problems. Find a supportive friend, family member or school adviser and start talking about what is troubling you. You can then start to solve the problems causing you stress and engage fully with life.

When to seek professional help
Social media and technology enrich the lives of millions of Australians but if you find your use is affecting your life, wellbeing or relationships, you may benefit from professional help.

A psychologist can help you identify patterns of behaviour and the underlying reasons for them. They can help you solve problems and establish more constructive habits that will help you thrive.

To talk to an APS psychologist, speak to your GP about a referral or contact the Find a Psychologist service on 1800 333 467 or visit findapsychologist.org.au.

Learn more about the psychology behind these tips at compassionforlife.org.au
8 tips for

Thriving in the Digital Age

Avoid the pitfalls of excess social media use, with these 8 tips from psychologists on making the most of life online.

1. Check less
   Constantly looking at social media increases stress and reduces productivity. Limit your checking.

2. Post positively
   Angry words online hurt mental and physical health. Do your bit to build a positive environment online.

3. Be proactive
   Passive social media use can contribute to stress and anxiety. But being an active contributor can boost your wellbeing.

4. Block the bullies
   Be selective. Ensure those in your online social network enrich your life.

5. Don’t compete
   Be genuine on social media. Studies show those who are authentic online are less stressed and better connected.

6. Take a break
   Constant access to technology creates a risk of never really disconnecting. Turn off work alerts in your down time.

7. Guard your sleep
   Using social media in bed can lead to sleep and well-being problems. Turn off screens an hour or more before bed.

8. Connect offline
   When your online world threatens to take over, put the phone away and connect face-to-face.

Learn more about the psychology behind these tips at compassforlife.org.au