



## Social media-a cause of dual personality

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### Abstract

Social media is fun and almost everyone is hooked to it. But it definitely does not come without its side effects. There are a number of studies that will tell you how social media has led to some serious problems such as stalking, bullying, and narcissism. The present research article is an attempt to throw light on the ill effects of social media. The research also analyses other studies conducted to study the effects of social media.

**Keywords:** Social media, personality

### Introduction

Social media is fun and almost everyone is hooked to it. But it definitely does not come without its side effects. There are a number of studies that will tell you how social media has led to some serious problems such as stalking, bullying, and narcissism. A new study conducted by Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) tells that almost all social media platforms have an impact on our mental health. Though some have a positive effect but some are hazardous, which further has resulted in a rise of mental disorders among youngsters, the avid social media users.

The study, called Status of Mind, was carried out and published by RSPH in collaboration with Young Health Movement. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube are some of the social media platforms studied. Today, 91 percent of 16 to 21 year-olds are hooked onto social media websites. They use not just use one such platform at a time but are a part of multiple social media sites and adapt their virtual personalities as per the demands of each site. As a result of constant pressure and comparison with others on these sites, teens and youngsters develop multiple personality disorders and also face severe mental health issues.

Social media has afforded us many things-Farm Ville, unflappable knowledge of everyone's birthdays, countless memes-it's also given the uncanny ability for a single person to become many different people. All at the same time. The idea of a person soloing different aspects of her personality, never mind personal and professional personas, into different web-presences seems strange. Or narcissistic and even sinister-a lot like Harry Potter's Lord Voldemort, who breaks his soul into seven far-flung pieces in an attempt at immortality.

Sock puppetry-using false identities for deception-is centuries old, but the advent of the web has made creating sock puppets, and falling for their tricks, easier than ever before. We can't physically meet most of the people we interact with on the internet. So we create avatars who represent us in the online world, personae that are designed-on some level, conscious or subconscious-to shape others' ideas about who we really are. Indeed, it's natural for us to create avatars that represent what we want to be rather than what we are. And it's only a short step from there to manipulating others' perceptions of us to give ourselves an advantage of some sort, to deceive. To become puppet masters.

### **So what motivates people to fake it online? It's to do with online media making us present different versions of ourselves.**

One thing that tends to be said about the people behind fake online personalities is that the perpetrator must be somehow "damaged" or mentally ill. But according to psychologists, it's not that simple – there are lots of reasons someone might feel the need to be someone else on the internet. Dr Chris Fullwood, a cyber psychologist at the University of Wolverhampton, told Buzz Feed News that by creating a false identity, some people are trying to narrow the gap between their imagined ideal self and how they actually see themselves. And in an era in which young people are obsessed with taking selfies, we have an increasingly fluid concept of our own identity.

"The contemporary notion of self is that we don't have a single stable self," Dr. Chris Fullwood says. "We have different selves that relate to different environments and different individuals. In the online world these boundaries become more difficult to

navigate. "So for a generation who have a slightly tweaked version of their personality for different platforms and situations – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, private Whats App groups, Snapchat, text messages, real-life interactions – perhaps it's understandable that people make the leap to making significant changes to their persona, or even inventing new ones. The problem might mean someone seeking to be 'something they're not' to escape the shackles of their normal, ordinary self.

Catfishing is an extension of stalking, which is increasingly becoming normalised online. One study found that 88% of people spy on their exes on social media after a break-up through looking at their pictures and status updates, sometimes via a mutual friend. Dr. Emma Short, a psychologist at the University of Bedfordshire, stated, this behavior is increasingly normalized these days – it's sometimes referred to as "creeping". But previous generations would have been shocked that it's possible to covertly spy on other lives. "In years gone by that kind of behaviour would have been called surveillance or stalking," Short says. "People joke about having stalkers on Facebook but it is actually the same behavior. It's about a fixation that stops you moving through life, it's not always a bad thing, it's just something you observe. "You lose no social currency though it because no one sees it – you don't have to account for your behavior." In many catfishing cases, the person running the fake account spends a lot of time before and during the hoax observing the real account they're stealing from – and nobody knows. Another reasons people catfish is because they can: Anyone can find and download pictures from Facebook, Instagram, or anywhere else, in seconds. The Facebook generation is the first to be able to create a believable fake identity in the time it takes to make a cup of tea.

### **Why then do people fall for it time after time?**

"If someone presents to us an intact, detailed identity, we immediately trust it," says Short. "That's because if we recognize just the outline of the individual – online or in the real world – we assume that is real, with no verification. So identity equals trust, even if it's not real. If someone looks like a person, we think they are a person. "Emma Short explains that it got a lot to do with instinct: "It's partially an evolutionary default. We're social creatures, that's just what we do: We see a pattern that looks like an individual and we think it must be a real person. "Unconscious social cues tell us what we want to know about someone depending on what we want, says Short. So if we're looking for a friend, colleague, or a lover, we're predisposed to find people who fit the bill.

Even if there are details missing or there's something suspicious – for example, someone's webcam is always broken, or their career seems sketchy – human brains are happy to fill in the blanks."Just as we stereotype people in the physical world and immediately make judgments, the same thing is happening online," Emma Short says. "We look at profiles and fill in the gaps – you do the dot-to-dot and make all sorts of assumptions about who this person is."This is happening very, very fast and we're not switched on to the fact that verification is very poor [online]. In the physical world, people lie but at least you know it's them in front of you. You just don't know that in an online relationship."

### **Conclusion**

Thus, with the advent growth of technology, People are falling prey to stalking, cyberbullying, getting deceived from people with fake identity causing emotional and mental damage. Emotional damage results into inability to develop new relationship, poor health, Isolation from society etc. Therefore it is essential to use social media just for the sake of entertainment and time pass and not for serious relationships as we are unaware who is real and who is fake.

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