

Facebook refusal: Hipster trend or activist movement?

April 12 2013, by Courtney Bowe

Laura Portwood-Stacer, visiting assistant professor of media, culture, and communication at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, recently published a study of people who quit Facebook and how the media cover the phenomenon of Facebook "refusal."

"People have a variety of reasons for quitting or refusing a platform like Facebook," says Portwood-Stacer, "Yet many media accounts of the phenomenon portray quitters as hipsters or elitists. Even some of the refusers themselves describe their decision to quit in terms that make it sound like they're 'too cool' for Facebook."

But Portwood-Stacer asserts that many people have ethical and political concerns about media services like Facebook.

"While quitting may seem like an ideal solution, it's an individual strategy that doesn't necessarily result in structural changes to the [media landscape](#)," Portwood-Stacer notes. "Those political and [ethical concerns](#)—about privacy, about exploitation, about user agency—go unaddressed."

The study, titled "Media Refusal and Conspicuous Non-Consumption: The Performative and Political Dimensions of [Facebook](#) Abstinence," was published in *New Media & Society*.

Provided by New York University

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