

# Twitter use linked to infidelity and divorce, study finds

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Twitter and other social networking services have revolutionized the way people create and maintain relationships. However, new research shows that Twitter use could actually be damaging to users' romantic relationships. Russell Clayton, a doctoral student in the University of Missouri School of Journalism, found that active Twitter users are far more likely to experience Twitter-related conflict with their romantic partners. Clayton's results showed that Twitter-related conflict then leads to negative relationship outcomes, including emotional and physical cheating, breakup and divorce.

In his study, Clayton surveyed 581 Twitter users of all ages. Clayton asked participants questions about their Twitter use such as how often they login in to Twitter, tweet, scroll the Twitter newsfeed, send direct

messages to others, and reply to followers. Clayton also asked how much, if any, conflict arose between participants' current or former partners as a result of Twitter use. For example, Clayton asked: "How often do you have an argument with your current or former partner because of too much Twitter use?" Clayton found that the more often a respondent reported being active on Twitter, the more likely they were to experience Twitter-related conflict with their partner, which then significantly predicted [negative relationship](#) outcomes such as cheating, breakup and divorce.

"The aim of this study was to examine whether the findings of Claytons' [recent study](#), which concluded that Facebook use predicted Facebook-related conflict, which then led to breakup and divorce were consistent with another social networking site platform: Twitter."

In his previous research on Facebook, Clayton found that Facebook-related conflict and negative relationship outcomes were greater among couples in newer relationships of 36 months or less. In his new research regarding Twitter, Clayton found these outcomes occurred regardless of duration of relationship.

"I found it interesting that active Twitter users experienced Twitter-related conflict and negative relationship outcomes regardless of length of romantic relationship," Clayton said. "Couples who reported being in relatively new relationships experienced the same amount of conflict as those in longer relationships."

If Twitter users are experiencing Twitter-related conflict with their partner, Clayton recommends couples of all ages limit their daily and weekly use of [social networking sites](#) to more healthy, reasonable levels.

"Although a number of variables can contribute to relationship infidelity and separation, social networking site usage, such as Twitter and

Facebook use, can be damaging to relationships," Clayton said. "Therefore, users should cut back to moderate, healthy levels of Twitter use if they are experiencing Twitter or Facebook – related conflict. Some couples share joint social networking site accounts to reduce relationship [conflict](#), and there are some [social networking](#) site apps, such as the 2Life app, that facilitates interpersonal communication between partners."

**More information:** Clayton's study, "The Third Wheel: The Impact of Twitter Use on Relationship Infidelity and Divorce," was published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*. A full copy of the study can be viewed here: [dx.doi.org/10.1089/yber.2013.0570](https://dx.doi.org/10.1089/yber.2013.0570)

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