

Politics and social media: Americans see overload

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The political debate on Facebook and Twitter is getting too mean for many Americans.

While social networks have become a key part of the [political landscape](#) in recent years, many users are getting fed up with the tone of the debate, according to a survey released Tuesday.

The Pew Research Center survey found 37 percent of social media users are "worn out" by the amount of political discussion they encounter.

That is far more than the 20 percent who say they like seeing [political information](#) on these platforms.

The survey comes with Twitter and Facebook increasingly used in [political campaigns](#) and playing an important role in social movements, and with Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump making Twitter a key element in his campaign.

But many people have become frustrated by the acrimonious and partisan tone of the discussion, Pew found.

"A substantial share of social media users feel these platforms are uniquely angry and disrespectful venues for engaging in [political debate](#)," the report said.

Many social media users get news and commentary in their feeds even

when they are not looking for it, the report noted.

"In these spaces, users can encounter statements they might consider highly contentious or extremely offensive—even when they make no effort to actively seek out this material," report authors Maeve Duggan and Aaron Smith wrote.

"Similarly, political arguments can encroach into users' lives when comment streams on otherwise unrelated topics devolve into flame wars or partisan bickering."

Some 59 percent of those surveyed described their online interactions with those they disagree with politically as "stressful and frustrating," the report authors said.

It can be complicated to filter out unwanted content because many users see items shared from friends, acquaintances and public figures.

"Most users try to ignore political arguments on social media as best they can; when that fails, they take steps to curate their feeds and avoid the most offensive types of content," the report said.

Four-fifths said they steer clear of getting into online spats over politics while 15 percent with respond with their own comments.

Nearly one-third of social media users—31 percent—said they have changed their settings in order to see fewer posts from someone because of something related to politics, Pew found.

The report was based on a survey of 4,579 adults between July 12 and August 8 online and by mail. The margin of error was estimated at 2.4 percentage points.

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