

# Concentrating on the social billions

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Using online social media does not lead to long-term problems with our ability to concentrate, according to new research published in the *International Journal Social Media and Interactive Learning Environments*.

We are [social animals](#), so it is really no surprise that billions of us now use [online tools](#) to communicate, educate and inform each other. The advent of [social media](#) and [social networking](#) has nevertheless been phenomenally rapid. "These networks have become an imprint of our everyday life and part of pop culture, revolutionizing the way people communicate and in the way organizations act, says Deborah Carstens of the Florida Institute of Technology." "With the abundance of technological devices, an increasing number of users of all ages rely on technology and specifically social media."

There are, however, worries about the impact such tools have on our psyche and our ability to concentrate, for instance. Now research from Carstens' team and their colleagues at Barry University also in Florida, demonstrates that despite the often skittish and transient nature of online social interactions there is no difference to be seen in the attention span or "offline" sociability of occasional users and frequent users of online social media. These modern communication tools do not, it seems, interfere with our primal instincts, such as long-term attitudes, time appreciation, and concentration, in the way that many critics have suggested in recent years.

"Social media is not a fad as it continues to play an increasing role in the

individuals' lives. Understanding how to utilize this social media epidemic to enhance learning, relationships and business knowledge is essential as individuals are spending an increasing amount of time on these networks," the researchers conclude.

**More information:** Samuel K. Doss et al, Episodic social media impact on users, *International Journal of Social Media and Interactive Learning Environments* (2016). [DOI: 10.1504/IJSMILE.2016.079505](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSMILE.2016.079505)

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