

What makes social media so addictive?

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Social media addiction has become a significant concern in modern society, driven by a combination of psychological, technological, and social factors. Here I will explain the key elements that make social media platforms so addictive.

One of the primary factors contributing to social media addiction is the activation of the brain's reward system. Social media platforms are designed to trigger dopamine release, the neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and reward. Each time a user receives positive feedback, such as likes or comments, their brain experiences a surge of dopamine, creating a sense of euphoria. This neurochemical response reinforces the behaviour, encouraging users to seek more interactions and engagement on these platforms.

The design of social media apps plays a crucial role in fostering addiction. Platforms use sophisticated algorithms to personalise content, keeping users engaged for extended periods. Features like infinite scrolling, autoplay videos, and push notifications are intentionally utilised to maximise user engagement and time spent on the app. These design elements create a sense of urgency and fear of missing out (FOMO), compelling users to check their accounts frequently.

Social validation is another powerful factor in social media addiction. Many users rely on these platforms to showcase the best parts of their lives, seeking approval and validation from their peers. The constant comparison to others' curated online personas can lead to feelings of inadequacy and a compulsive need to maintain an idealised digital presence.

Furthermore, psychological factors such as low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety can increase the risk of social media addiction. Individuals with these predispositions may turn to social media as a coping mechanism or escape from real-world challenges, further reinforcing their dependence on these platforms.

As social media continues to evolve and integrate further into our daily lives, it is crucial to develop strategies for healthy usage and to raise awareness about the potential risks of excessive engagement. Future research should

focus on developing effective interventions, and policies, to mitigate the negative impacts of social media addiction while preserving its beneficial aspects.

In conclusion, social media addiction is a complex issue driven by a combination of neurological, psychological, and social factors. Overall, social media is very fun, but to our brains it can cause serious addiction. So put down your phone and start to focus on real life.