

Benefits and Dangers of Facebook

December 27, 2019

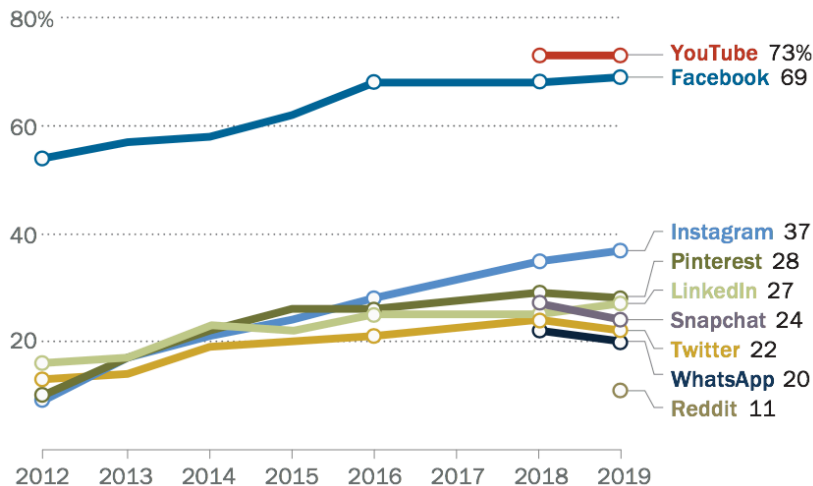
Facebook is the biggest social network in the world. It has been about 15 years since Facebook came into existence. Its popularity has skyrocketed in the decade after its launch, although the network's growth has flatlined in the last few years.

Here are a few statistics published in 2019 by the Pew Research Center that give some indication of the huge impact Facebook has had on the world.

1. **Around seven-in-ten U.S. adults (69%) use Facebook**, according to a survey conducted in early 2019. That's unchanged since April 2016, but up from 54% of adults in August 2012.

Facebook, YouTube continue to be the most widely used online platforms among U.S. adults

% of U.S. adults who say they ever use the following online platforms or messaging apps online or on their cellphone



Note: Pre-2018 telephone poll data is not available for YouTube, Snapchat and WhatsApp.

Comparable trend data is not available for Reddit.

Source: Survey conducted Jan. 8-Feb. 7, 2019.

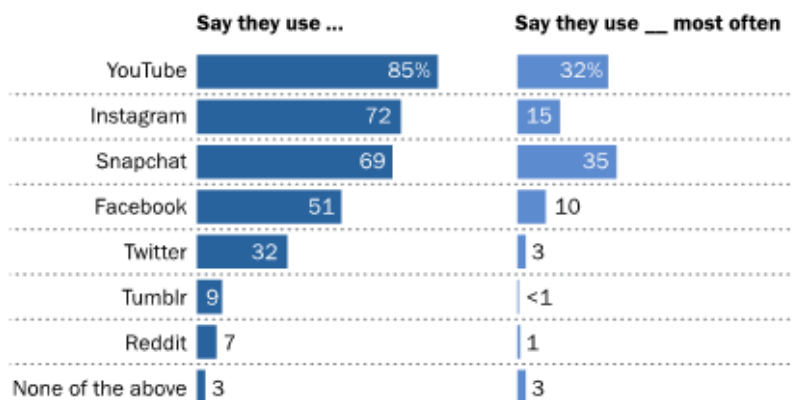
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With the exception of YouTube - the video-sharing platform used by 73% of adults - no other major social media platform comes close to Facebook in terms of usage. Around four-in-ten U.S. adults (37%) say they use Instagram, while smaller shares say they use Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter and WhatsApp. Facebook owns Instagram and WhatsApp.

- Facebook is used by around half of America's teens, but it no longer dominates the teen social media landscape as it once did, according to a survey of U.S. teens conducted in March and April 2018. Now, 51% of those ages 13 to 17 say they use the platform, down from 71% in a 2014-2015 survey.

YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat are the most popular online platforms among teens

% of U.S. teens who ...



Note: Figures in first column add to more than 100% because multiple responses were allowed. Question about most-used site was asked only of respondents who use multiple sites; results have been recalculated to include those who use only one site. Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 10, 2018.

"Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018"

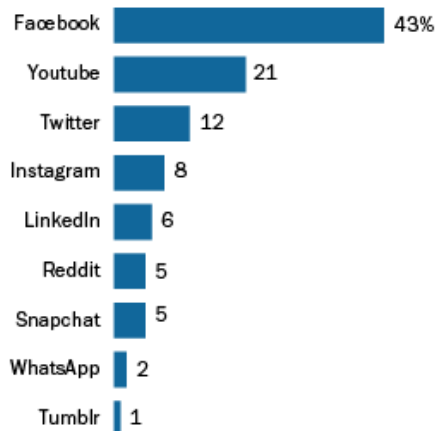
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The top sites among today's teens include YouTube (85%), Instagram (72%) and Snapchat (69%). In the 2014-2015 survey, Facebook was the only platform used by a clear majority of teens.

- Around four-in-ten U.S. adults (43%) get news from Facebook, according to a survey conducted in July and August 2018. The share of U.S. adults who get news through Facebook is much higher than the shares who get news through YouTube (21%), Twitter (12%), Instagram (8%), LinkedIn (6%) and other platforms.

Facebook is a pathway to news for around four-in-ten U.S. adults

% of U.S. adults who get news on each social media site



Source: Survey conducted July 30-Aug. 12, 2018.

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These statistics demonstrate that Facebook has been hugely successful, but why, considering concerns over privacy, the selling off of user data, constant changes to the default settings, and experiments on unsuspecting members of the public, does anyone carry on using it?

Here are several reasons, collected from various contributors across the internet:

1. **Because it's the easiest method for remembering birthdays.** Many people note this as their favorite feature on Facebook. But did you know you can export your friends' birthdays to Google Calendar, iCal, or Outlook?

To export your Facebook friends to your calendar, go to Events on the left side of the page. Copy the link for "Upcoming Events" or "Birthdays." Open Google Calendar, click the down arrow next to Other Calendars > Add by URL, and paste the URL

From <<http://www.theonlinemom.com/11-useful-facebook-tips-tricks/>>

2. **Because Facebook works as an RSS reader for news (see stat above).**
3. **Because it's required to log in to other websites.** Many online stores and other websites allow a person to use their Facebook profile to login to the 3rd party website. This saves the time of creating a profile and the person doesn't have to remember another user name and password!
4. **Because you can use it to build a professional profile and marketing, especially for self-employed small business owners.** Facebook has made marketing products and selling goods and services so easy, it's difficult to remember how we advertised without it. And who of us could survive without Facebook Swap (aka Marketplace)!?

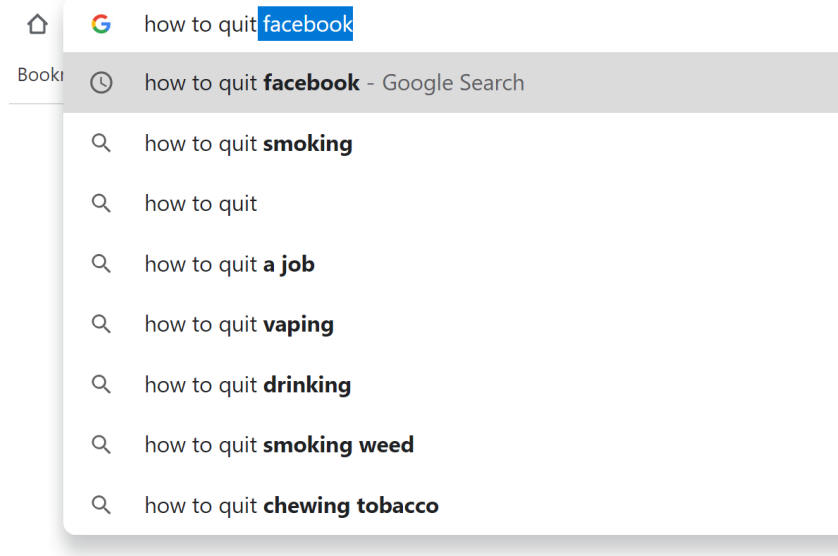
5. **Because it's an easy way of organizing and finding events.** This is another one of the most frequently cited reasons that people use their Facebook account. The events feature allows a person to find local events that fit his or her interests. It's also very easy to create an event (birthday party, class reunion, etc...) and invite people (who are on Facebook, of course!) to it.
7. **Because it helps us catch up with old friends.** We have old friends staying in different parts of the country or even across the globe. The existence of a platform like Facebook has helped billions of people to get in touch with their family and friends.

However, as noted above, there are increasingly more and more reasons to avoid Facebook. Especially in the last few years, there are documented cases and studies demonstrating why we should minimize the use of Facebook or even considering deleting it.

Below are a few reasons, with links to articles with more involved discussion.

1. **Facebook is a time waster.** While being on Facebook and scrolling down through the news feed, many are not aware of the time they actually spend on viewing others' life events or sharing.
2. **Facebook has way too much information about you, and it isn't afraid to use it.** [Here](#) is a link to an article published in Time magazine in 2014 that detailed some of the ways Facebook had manipulated user data. And [here](#) is a link to a BBC news article published in 2015 about the fact that Facebook was even tracking internet users who were not members of the social media network. Information is power and Facebook has a mountain of it. Scary, right?
3. **Facebook genuinely makes people feel depressed and inadequate.** There are many studies published on this subject - [click here](#) for a link to just one of them.
4. **Social media encourages over-sharing, and it's easy to post things you shouldn't.** In an era when every potential employer or business partner is going to search for your profile online right after checking out your resume, it's a bad idea to share offensive posts, go on political rants, or otherwise make comments that can be taken out of context. The moral of the story is that if you're prone to over-sharing, or find yourself posting without thinking about the consequences, Facebook is a social network that you should likely avoid.
5. **Facebook damages our communication skills.** When is the last time you actually hung out in real life with your friends, relatives or colleagues? Because of the social media that is supposed to help us communicate, we forget about real communication, and therefore, have difficulty communicating effectively which negatively affects our relationship at home, at work or anywhere else.

So after reading all that, are you considering quitting Facebook? Apparently you aren't the only person. When doing a Google search on the topic, "how to quit facebook" is the top recommended search topic, even above "how to quit smoking"!!!



There are many, many articles giving advice on how to either minimize or completely quit using Facebook. [This link is](#) just one example.

Above all, let us remember we have all been created in the image of God. Even as fallen sons and daughters of Adam, it is our responsibility to daily be the image bearers of our Creator. Is our use of Facebook and other social media reflecting God's image? Are we responsibly 'redeeming the time' we have been given? Let each of us consider these questions and honestly assess: are you using Facebook; or is Facebook using you?