Social Media: Friend or Foe?

Understanding the role and implications of social media and technology on youth

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Objectives:

- Different types of social media and their uses
- The impact of social media on self esteem, body image and mental health
- The use of film and photography as a means of advocacy and its potential for suggestibility among young people
- A discussion about supportive social media tools for people struggling with mental health concerns
- A discussion on our role in both using and knowing about these tools when working with young people

Let's Get Real…

Youth & Young Adults aren't the ONLY ones ALWAYS On their devices!

% of U.S. adults who use at least one social media site, by age

18–29   30–49   50–64   65+
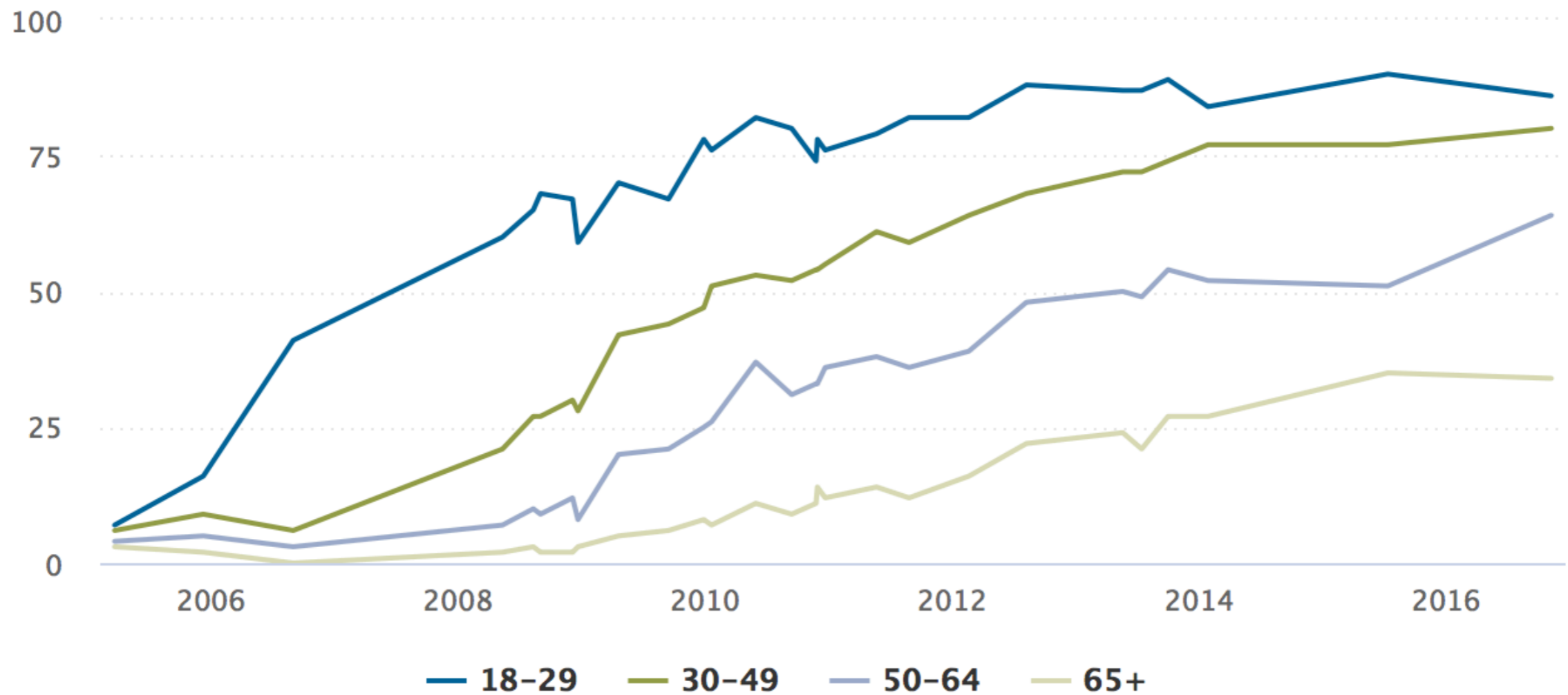
(PEW Research Center, 2016)

- 88% of 18–29 year olds use Facebook.

- 84% of 30–49 year olds use Facebook.

- 72% of 50–64 year old use Facebook.

- 62% of 65+ year old use Facebook.

(PEW Research Center, 2017)

Statistics

✤92% of teens report going online at least once a day,

✤56% admit they go online "several times"

✤24% of teens admit to going online "almost constantly"

✤88% of teens ages 13-17 say they have a cell phone with 90% of them saying they use them to text.

✤The average teen sends and receives 30 texts per day (not including messaging apps like Facebook message).

(Pew, 2016); (Pew, 2014)

Types of Social Media & Technology

- ✤ Snapchat

- ✤ Instagram

- ✤ Facebook

- ✤ Twitter

- ✤ YouTube

- ✤ Netflix

- ✤ Others?

Is It An Addiction?

✤ "Likes" and Correspondence can stimulate brain's reward center

✤ Attune brain to read "likes" and shares versus facial expressions and nonverbal

✤ May change neuroplasticity

(East, 2016)

Potential Risks

✤ Time Engaging in Social Media

✤ Time Logging on to Social Media

✤ Digital Footprint

✤ Unfiltered & Unregulated information

   ✤ May engage in unhelpful coping
   strategies or read triggering
   information
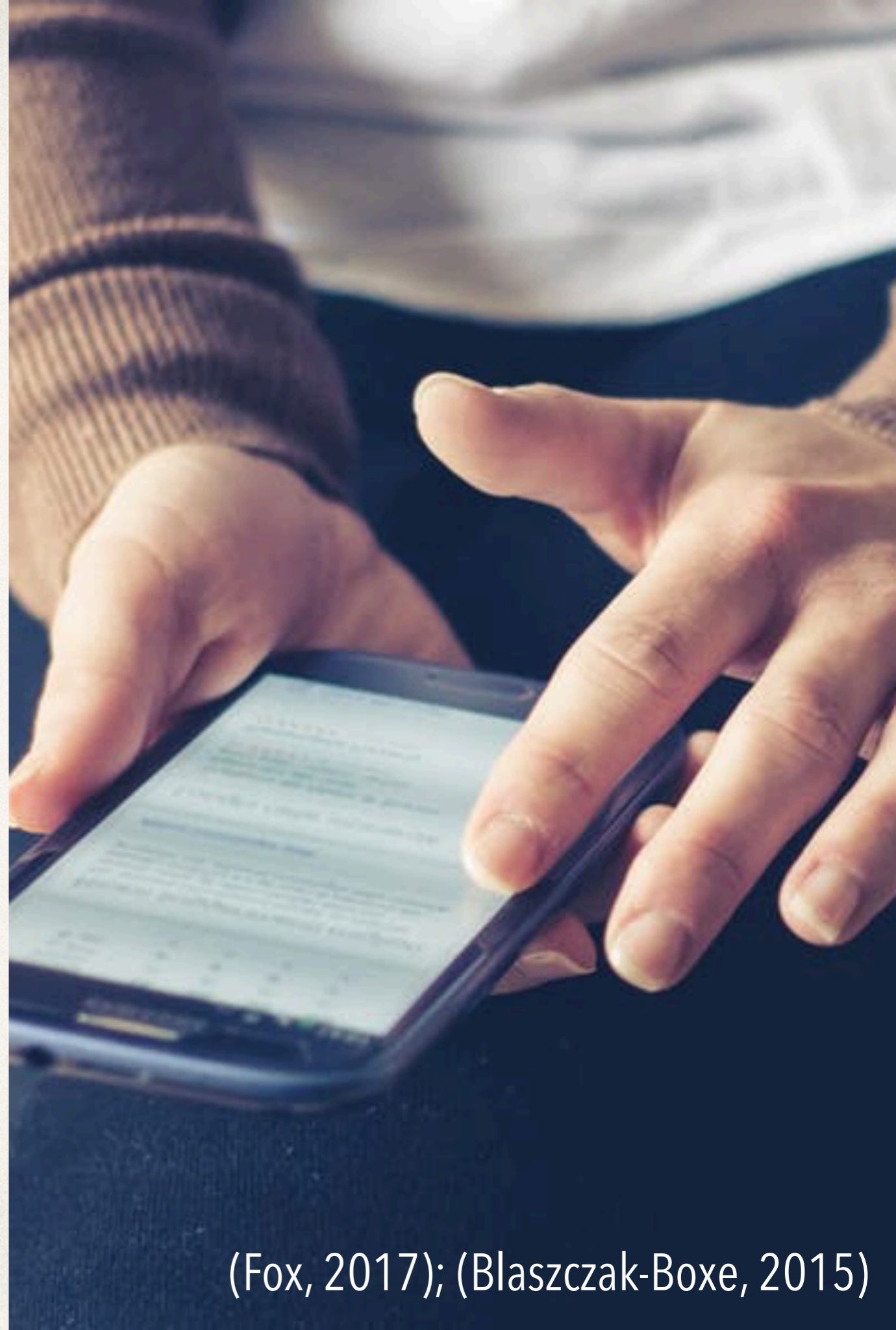
(Fox, 2017); (Blaszczak-Boxe, 2015)

Perception vs Reality

✤ Lack of real-time perpetuates perfectionism & ideal image maintenance

✤ Profiles = Reality; Increase in Imposter Syndrome

✤ More identities = Less integration = Lowered Self Esteem

(Ehmk, n.d.); (Fox, 2017)

Mental Health

✤ "Facebook Depression" (Steers et al, 2014)

✤ APA (2011) found links to social media use and traits in Depression and Schizophrenia

Impact on Social Skills

✤ "nonverbal learning disability" (Ehmke, n.d.)

✤ Less risk-taking especially in forming & maintaining friendships

✤ In person/phone conversations "too intense"

✤ Pervasive & Constant FOMO

✤ Hyperconnectivity depletes energy and leads to chronic fear of loneliness

(Ehmk, n.d.); (Fox, 2017)

"Sexting"

♣ "…action of sending sexually revealing pictures of themselves or sexually explicit messages to another individual or group" (Ramasubbu, 2015)

♣ No true anonymity - <u>17 percent of sexters admittedly share</u> the messages they receive with others, and 55 percent of those share them with more than one person (Ramasubbu, 2015)

♣ Can be a misdemeanor or felony depending on state

Cyberbullying

✤ 32% of online teens admit to having experienced a range of menacing online advances from others (Ramasubbu, 2015)

✤ What is it?

   ✤ APA describes it as aggressive behavior that causes discomfort - ex. trolling, sharing pictures, direct messages/emails, etc

   ✤ Almost ALWAYS by someone you know - only 23% of people saw it has been from someone unknown (Ramasubbu, 2015)

Why Does It Happen?

* Screen & distance creates mask/false-courage

    * Anonymity possible

    * Impact of consequences smaller

* (-) Self-Esteem = (+) Relational Aggression

(Dove, 2016); New York Behavioral Health, 2014)

Body Image

- Social media comparisons greater impact than any other comparison

  - In that, comparisons among people we know worst of all

- Instagram = largest impact (-)

  - "compare themselves against unrealistic, largely curated, filtered and Photoshopped versions of reality…" (Fox, 2017)

- 70% of women aged 18 to 35 regularly edit their images before posting them – as do 50% of men in the same age group (Renfrew Center Foundation; 2014)

Counteracting It?

✤ Follow comedians like Celeste Barber

✤ Get to know the "Instagram Idols" in reality

+ a normal angle 🙆 how I am 99% of the time

Suggestibility

Positive Impacts

✤ Self-expression and creativity

✤ Stay connected to family & friends

✤ Exchange new ideas

✤ May enhance learning opportunities

✤ Easier access to collaborate and connect

✤ Can increase sense of connection and social trust

✤ YouTube = Overall + Impact

(Fox, 2017); (Ramasubbu, 2015)

Social Media & Advocacy

* Allows you to share & read about issues and experiences of people you might not otherwise meet

* Allows you to maximize impact of communications

* Can work as technological grass-roots campaign

* Allows direct communication with reporters, representatives, and leaders

* Easy access to generate and receive donations and funders

(Rehr, 2017)

So What Do We Do?

✤ Assess our own relationship with social media

✤ Reduce our use first - learn to give our full attention to people, not screens

✤ Don't negate the potential or presence of social media

✤ "Tech can give your children more information that you can, and it doesn't have your values" (Ehmke, n.d.)

✤ Focus on who people are not what they can do and how they look

(Fox, 2017)

Proposed Changes/Additions

✤ Ex. Instagram & Snapchat Note when Photo Edited

✤ Integrate more mediation and support services for self-harm, suicide, sexting and cyberbullying

✤ Pop-Up Warnings when online for too long

✤ Use "Digital Sunsets" on devices and apps

✤ Increase legal ramifications for cyberbullying and sexting

(Fox, 2017); (Blaszczak-Boxe, 2015)

When Someone At Risk

- **OPERATION REACH OUT:** Developed to prevent suicide and self-harm in military families but can be used by all.

- **SUICIDE PREVENTION ON FACEBOOK:** Report behavior that suggests thoughts of self harm. After that, Facebook will look at the post. If Facebook feels like the post indicates distress, it will contact the person who posted it. If he person decides they'd like to talk to someone, they'll be prompted to call a friend, send a friend a Facebook message or contact a suicide helpline. They can either call or message a suicide prevention expert. Facebook even provides videos that use true stories of people who have dealt with suicidal thoughts.

- **SUICIDE PROOF:** Reduce the risk of death and make sure their home environment is suicide proof.

- **HOPELINE:** 24/7 Text Line to support teens and young adults facing thoughts of suicide and self-harm

Social Media Apps as Tools for Support

Discussion

Resources

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✤ East, Susan (2016) Teens: This Is How Social Media Affects Your Brain. CNN. http://www.cnn.com/2016/07/12/health/social-media-brain/index.html

✤ Ehmke, Rachel (n.d.) How Using Social Media Affects Teenagers. Child Mind Institute. https://childmind.org/article/how-using-social-media-affects-teenagers/

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✤ York, Alex (2017). Social Media Demographics to Inform a Better Segmentation Strategy. https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/