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Podcast on Social media and Attention Spans

Source 1: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563212003305>

Quotes:

“A recent study by CourseSmart and Wakefield Research ([Kessler, 2011](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563212003305%22%20%5Cl%20%22b0135)) queried 500 college students and found that 73% were not able to study without some form of technology and 38% reported that they were not able to go more than 10 min without checking with their laptop, smartphone, tablet or e-reader.”

Questions:

* What are your thoughts about the conclusions to this study?
* Do you feel like this is an accurate representation of college students?
	+ If yes, what do you think draws students to be so addicted to their phones? Is it the desire to be constantly updated or is it the dopamine release that satisfies them?
	+ If no, why not?

 “Multitasking has also been shown to be predictive of academic performance in survey research. For example, [Junco and Cotton (2012)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563212003305%22%20%5Cl%20%22b0130)found that college students who spent more time using information and communication technologies while doing homework—specifically Facebook and texting—had lower college grade point averages. [Junco and Cotton (2011)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563212003305%22%20%5Cl%20%22b0285) found that students who spent more time using instant messaging while studying or doing schoolwork had lower grades. Further [Wood et al. (2012)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563212003305%22%20%5Cl%20%22b0280) reported that students who used Facebook or instant messaging during a college lecture did worse on an exam than those students who were not allowed to use a computer or access Facebook.”

Questions:

* What are your thoughts about students being distracted and having lower GPA’s?
* Do you think this could result in a lower attention span and why?

Source 2: <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/127/4/800.full.pdf>

“Engaging in various forms of social media is a routine activity that research has shown to benefit children and adolescents by enhancing communication, social connection, and even technical skills.1 Social media sites such as Facebook and MySpace offer multiple daily opportunities for connecting with friends, classmates, and people with shared interests.

Questions

* This study talks about the benefits of social media… do you feel like these benefits are accurate and do they outweigh negative aspects highlighted in other studies.
* Have you experienced any of these benefits?

Source 3: <https://sites.psu.edu/aspsy/2018/10/21/social-media-attention-span/>

“We pay attention to what we want, and when we want. If something is incapable of visually capturing our attention, we will only focus on what we deem to be worthy of our attention at that moment. In a way, the attention (or lack of attention) we distribute to things and people is our brains currency. It is the psychological version of supply and demand; as social media increasingly continues to play an active role in our lifestyle, so will the demand for our attention.”

Questions:

* According to a researcher at Penn State, (quote)… do you think people are focusing on social media as they deem it is important or do you think there is a physiological component involved with the dopamine release that urges people to want the constant satisfaction from checking social media and notifications.
* Do you think it is as easy as this researcher makes it seem to focus on what we want to focus on?
* What do you think about people diverting their attention to useful and productive areas of social media, like the creator side? Do you think people have gained knowledge by diverting their attention to producing material for social media?

Source 4: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tykiisel/2012/01/25/is-social-media-shortening-our-attention-span/#3d11efc83f96>

According to Ty Kiisel,

It's probably unfair to blame social media specifically, but I think it's safe to say that the 24/7 media barrage of soundbites we face every day could be taking its toll. Twitter users need to make their point in 140 characters or less, USA Today, Fox News and others have shortened stories to be quickly digested and even media outlets like CNN rely on the pretty faces of their news anchors to keep our attention. As a result any substantive conversation lasting over five minutes is met with glazed eyes and shuffling feet. "Didn't my iPhone just ring?"

Questions:

* Do you think social media formats have contributed to the statistics of human attention spans decreasing? For example, memes (short phrases attached to a picture, gifs short clips with or without words, or tweets. These limiting platforms could impact peoples patients and ability to pay attention.

Source 5: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/culture-shrink/201812/is-social-media-destroying-our-attention-spans>

“Finally, there is concern about a numbing effect from information overload, particularly with violent imagery and stories. [Desensitization](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/eye-movement-desensitization-and-reprocessing-therapy%22%20%5Co%20%22Psychology%20Today%20looks%20at%20Desensitization) and rapid [attention](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/attention) shifts can result, leading to outrage fatigue or distraction, when the need for action and concern are still warranted with serious issues like mass shootings, wars, and human rights violations. The speed at which people move on to the next “high” of a dramatic news flash and forget the last one is becoming disturbingly quick.

Hopefully, as people step back and continue to study and analyze these media effects, and think hard about previously unforeseen consequences as they play out historically, we can implement reasonable safeguards against frank [lying](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/deception) and manipulation. The key is to be open to learning and continue to prioritize critical thinking.”

Questions:

* Do you think the effects are negative or positive?
* Do you think more studies should be run on the positive impacts? This new arena of social media postings give people the opportunity to become more creative and post their own content, isn’t that a positive aspect of social media posting?