



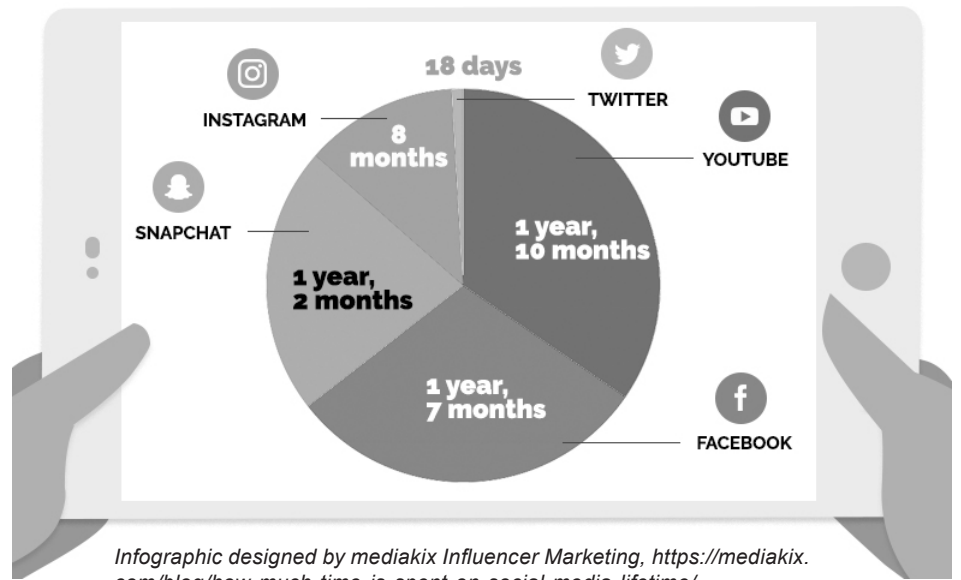
Setting limits on social media



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INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES is provided by your child’s school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Insights is produced by Marcia Latta, communications consultant.

TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL IN A LIFETIME



Lifetime social media use = 5 years, 4 months

The latest estimates of social media use over an average lifetime is five years and four months. That is not simply screen time; it is time spent from childhood to old age on currently popular social platforms. Specifically, it is Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.

These numbers don’t include time shopping online or streaming movies or texting. And MediaKix, the researchers behind that number, admit that this is a snapshot of a growing and rapidly changing environment.

Kids and teens on social media

It is interesting, and even sobering, to see how most of us spend our time on digital platforms. Second only to watching TV, which has a lifetime estimate of seven years and eight months, social media use tops time spent eating and drinking, grooming and in-person socializing.

For kids and teens, who have never known a time before digital tools, lifetime usage is likely to keep growing. Do we understand the health and social effects of this relatively new environment on child and teen development?

Effects on mental health

“A new groundbreaking study called “Association of Screen Time

and Depression in Adolescence,” published this week in the Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics journal links social media usage to depression and it’s one of the most comprehensive pieces of research on this subject to date.” <http://bit.ly/2lSGiuE>

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Taking steps to prevent social media-related depression

As mental health researchers study the effects of social media on teens, they are connecting increased use to increased depression and anxiety. Parents, and even teens themselves, should consider setting limits.

“Every hour of screen time results in becoming more vulnerable to anxiety, depressive episodes, loneliness, sadness or hopelessness. Not only that, but psychologists are talking today about “second-hand anxiety.” This is the anxiousness a teen can pick up just from being around a peer who is anxious. Just like second-hand smoke, when being around someone puffing on cigarettes, it’s contagious” <http://bit.ly/2lzBM4k>

Setting limits on digital devices and online interaction can be easier said than done. Tim Elmore, Millennial and Generation Z expert, suggests the following:

1. Set your smartphone up to track the screen time you spend on it each day.
2. After you spend some time on social media, observe how you’re feeling.
3. Set time limits when you’re on a favorite site; stop when your alarm goes off.
4. Discuss the data on this reality: People who spend under two hours a day on social media are less vulnerable to anxiety; those who spend more than two hours daily become significantly more vulnerable.

Talking to your kids, tweens and teens is an important first step, but it is often overlooked. Your children may want to protect their own self interest--their phones--at all costs, but they may also be reasonable about limits after a discussion of the risks and your concerns.

Consider the following suggestions for family rules about screen use:

- No texting during meals.
- No TV during meals.
- No TV or devices until homework and chores are completed.
- No TVs in bedrooms.
- Computer use should be done in a public room in the house.
- Set and observe curfews for screen use.
- Set daily limits for phone use. Most phones will track time and content use.

<https://wb.md/2lXEgJT>