

Addicted?

Lots of people describe themselves as addicted to Twitter or Facebook, or to social media in general.

Are you addicted?

With alcohol, there is **social use** (drinking in social situations), **habitual use** (drinking consistently, part of your usual routine) and **alcoholism** (where you *need* to drink, can't function without alcohol and which is a medical condition requiring treatment).

With social media, I think most people are not addicts, they are habitual users. Just like we have become habitual users of email, but we are not addicted to it. We use social media in our everyday life, it is part and parcel of our work life. But do we NEED social media to do what we do? No. We can use other tools to communicate (although lots of people can't seem to use the phone to have actual conversations) Can we live without it? Yes (if Twitter went down you would still know how to get in touch with people, right?).

Are we ruining our health by using it? Only if you never leave your computer or smart phone and limit your physical activity to keying in.

The key is to realize that social media is a tool and not a substitute for interaction, strategy, etc. You may use social media habitually, even heavily, but you probably are not addicted to it. You could shut down the computer or power off your smart phone and still talk to people. Right?

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