

HIDDEN COSTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

INPSYCHFUL

Quarterly Newsletter by the Department Of Psychology

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

In a world constantly buzzing with updates and highlights, it's easy to feel like we're falling behind or missing out. This issue of our newsletter dives deep into the phenomenon of FOMO—a feeling many of us know all too well.

Through insights and reflections, we hope to shed light on how this fear shapes our choices, emotions, and connections in the digital age.

Have a thoughtful and meaningful read!

– Riya Sanghi
MA Psychology, 1st year



This Issue Entails...

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More Than Just Screen Time

Social media has revolutionized the way we connect, share, and communicate. While it offers countless benefits like instant access to information, global networking, and entertainment, it also comes with hidden costs that often go unnoticed. One of the most significant is its impact on mental health. Constant exposure to curated images and highlight reels can lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and low self-esteem. People often compare their lives to others, forgetting that what they see online is rarely the full picture.

In essence, while social media appears to be free, it demands a high price in terms of mental well-being, time, and privacy. Being mindful about how and why we use these platforms is crucial for maintaining a healthy balance in our digital lives.

Vipul Kapoor
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The Endless Scroll — Where Does the Time Go?

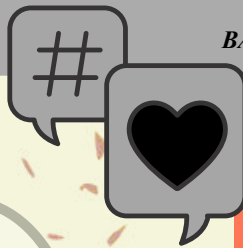
We often joke about losing hours on social media, but it's not really funny when you think about it. Many of us pick up our phones "just for five minutes" — but that five minutes turns into half an hour or more. This habit has a name too: doom scrolling.

We scroll through reels, videos, posts, and tweets until our eyes hurt. Meanwhile, we forget about assignments, chores, or sleep. We tell ourselves we're relaxing, but our brain is getting tired and overloaded.

This constant feed of new content also feeds FOMO. We feel we'll miss something if we don't check our phones every few minutes. But this 'always on' mindset can drain our energy, disturb our focus, and even make us anxious.

A good way to fight this is to notice your screen time. Try putting your phone away while studying or spending time with people. It's not easy — but even small changes help. The online world will still be there. It's your real life that shouldn't pass by unnoticed while you're stuck in an endless scroll.

Siddhi Chopra
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The fear that follows you even in the crowd

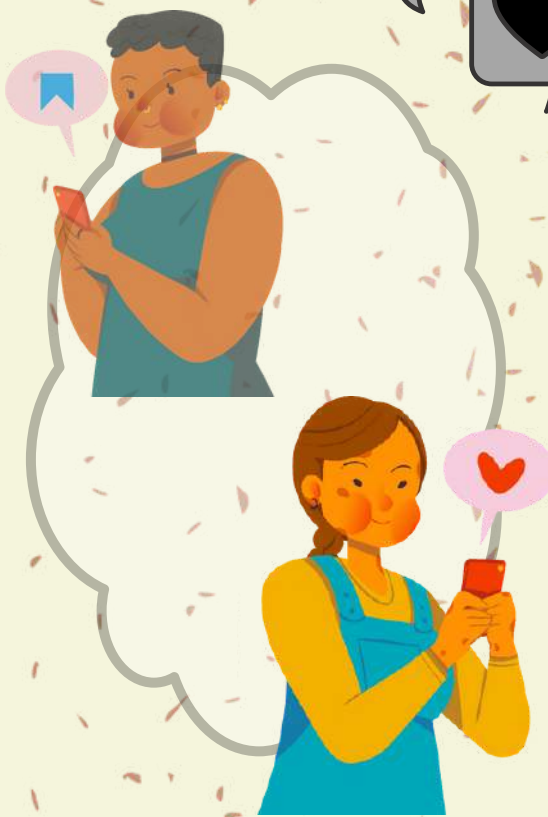
FOMO—Fear of Missing Out—is often seen as the feeling you get when you're not invited or are left out of something exciting. But for many, it shows up even when they're surrounded by friends. It's a quiet sense of disconnect—a feeling that the moment they're in might not be the "best" one possible.

Social media amplifies this. Even during real-life conversations, it's easy to glance at a screen and see others doing something seemingly more fun, more interesting, or more meaningful. The result? A sense that you're always one step behind, even when you're exactly where you thought you wanted to be.

FOMO isn't always about missing events—it's often a deeper fear of not living fully or meaningfully. Constant comparison can make people feel left out of a better version of life.

Managing FOMO starts with recognizing it. Choosing to be present, limiting social media use, and focusing on gratitude in the moment can help reduce its grip. No one can be everywhere, and that's okay—what matters most is learning to value where you are.

Mehak
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Scroll Regret

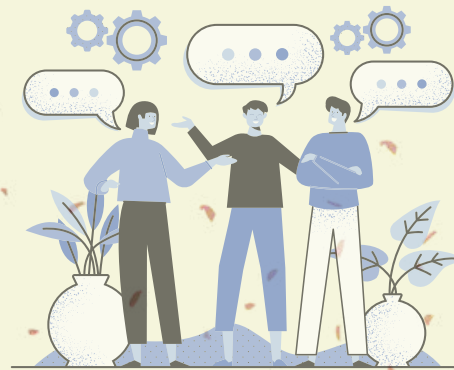
In today's digital age, social media is more than just a way to connect — it's a constant stream of highlight reels. From exotic vacations to aesthetic meals and picture-perfect relationships, it often seems like everyone else is living a better, more exciting life. This illusion gives rise to FOMO — the Fear of Missing Out — and the endless drooling over lives that may not even reflect reality.

What we don't often see is the hidden cost behind this virtual obsession. Scrolling through idealized posts for hours leads to mental exhaustion, low self-esteem, and a distorted view of one's own life. The comparison trap creates anxiety and a feeling of inadequacy, especially among teenagers and young adults. You begin to chase validation through likes and views, rather than focusing on real experiences and self-worth.

Moreover, this digital envy consumes time and productivity. What starts as a few minutes of browsing turns into hours of mindless scrolling — time that could be spent nurturing real friendships, pursuing hobbies, or simply resting.

It's important to remember: what you see online is only a curated slice, not the full story. Real life has flaws, pauses, and raw moments — and that's where the true beauty lies. Step back, log off, and reclaim your peace. You're not missing out — you're just being present.

Anvee Batra
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FOMO- the feeling that never sleeps.

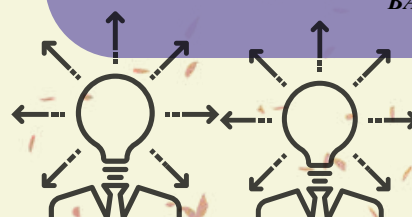
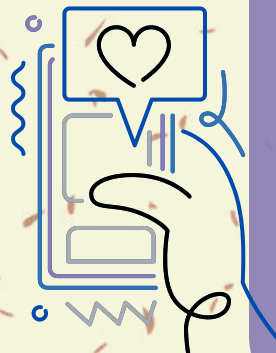
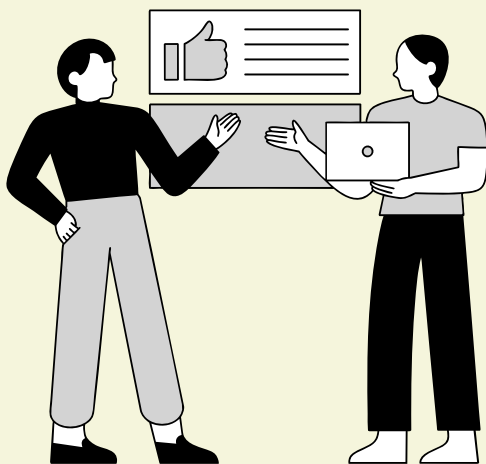
Have you ever felt restless while lying in bed at night, scrolling through stories of people partying, travelling, or just hanging out together? That sinking feeling that you're missing out on something fun or important is what we now call FOMO — Fear of Missing Out.

Social media has made FOMO a part of our daily life. Every time we open Instagram or Snapchat, there's always someone doing something "cooler" than what we're doing right now. Even if we're exhausted and need rest, seeing others having fun can make us feel like we're not doing enough.

Because of this fear, many of us say 'yes' to plans we don't even enjoy, just so we don't feel left out. Or we keep checking our phones again and again to see what's happening, even when we're with friends or family. Ironically, this keeps us distracted and stops us from fully enjoying the moment we are in.

The truth is, nobody shares their boring days online. Social media shows us everyone's highlight reel, not their reality. So, the next time you feel FOMO creeping in, remind yourself: you're not really missing out — you're just seeing someone's best five seconds of the day.

Mayank
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To ponder upon the unseen impact of social media

Social media may seem fun and entertaining, but it often comes with a hidden cost. Seeing others constantly post happy moments, achievements, or luxurious lifestyles can create pressure and lead to FOMO — the fear of missing out. This feeling can quietly affect mental health, making people feel less confident or unhappy with their own lives. They may feel that they are not enough. Many start comparing themselves without realizing that most posts show only the good parts, not the whole truth. Over time, these feelings can lead to anxiety, low self-esteem, and a desire to fit in the social standards. That is why it's important to take breaks from social media and focus on real life, not just what is shown on the screen.



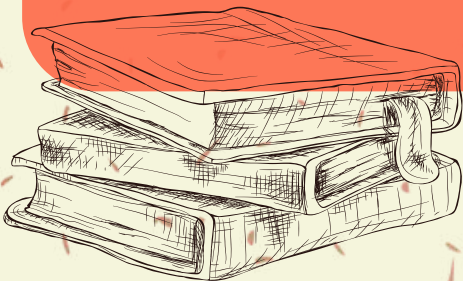
Agasa kaur
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Behind the Screen: The Hidden Cost of Social Media on Mental Health

While social media connects billions globally, its psychological toll is often overlooked. Behind curated posts and highlight reels lies a growing sense of inadequacy, comparison, and anxiety. Users may feel pressured to present perfect lives, leading to low self-esteem and distorted self-image. The constant need for validation through likes and comments can create a cycle of dependency and reduce real-life satisfaction. Moreover, social media fosters FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), making individuals feel excluded or left behind. Overuse can also contribute to sleep disruption, decreased attention span, and emotional burnout. Despite its benefits in communication and entertainment, social media carries hidden mental health risks. To mitigate these effects, users must practice digital mindfulness, set healthy boundaries, and prioritize offline well-being. Only by balancing our virtual and real lives can we protect our psychological health in the digital age.

Brahmami Arora
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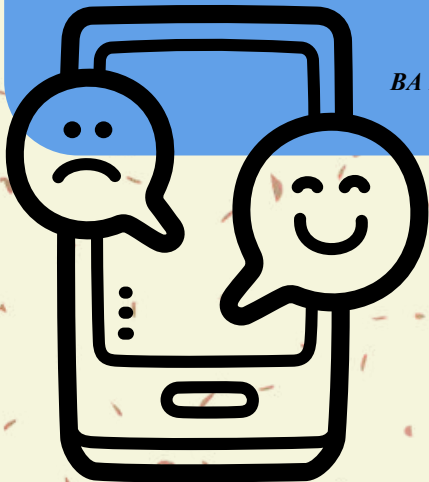
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THE PULSE OF FOMO

In the glow of endless screens,
Where everyone's living out their dreams,
A scroll, a swipe, a flashing light,
Another party, another flight.
Laughter echoing through the feed,
Smiles that mask what hearts might need.
A fear grows deep, a silent shout—
What if life is passing out?
A concert missed, a trend gone by,
A moment lost beneath the sky.
The mind runs fast, the soul feels slow,
Caught in the undertow of FOMO.
But pause—breathe in the here and now,
You're not behind; you're not left out.
Joy is not in every post,
But in the quiet things we host.
A walk alone, a page well read,
A thought that's kind, a word that's said.
Not every dream is made to show—
Some blossom where no cameras go.
So let the moments come and pass,
Not every shadow's meant to last.
You are not missing—just alive,
In your own rhythm, you will thrive.

Suzain Garg
BA Psychology, 2nd year



ILLUSION OF CONNECTION

We speak in hearts and double taps,
In stories told through photo maps.
We write in likes, we nod in shares,
Yet no one sees how much we care.

A thousand faces in a screen,
But not one asks where we have been.
We laugh with memes, emojis cry—
But silence echoes in reply.

We're always "on," yet feel alone,
In crowded chats, our thoughts unknown.
A blinking dot, a message read,
Still leaves so many words unsaid.

We chase the warmth behind the glass,
But feel it slip each time we pass.
Connection once so deep, so true,
Now pixelated, split in two.

So let us meet beyond the feed,
Where presence is a truer need.
A voice, a glance, a hand to hold—
The kind of love that won't grow cold.

Because in a world that's always near,
What we long for most... is someone here

Riya Sanghi
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Emotional Desensitization: The Numbing of Empathy

Social media bombards users with a relentless stream of content—tragedies, celebrations, conflicts, and personal milestones—all within seconds. This constant exposure can lead to emotional desensitization. When everything from war zones to wedding photos appears in the same scroll, our capacity to empathize gradually diminishes.

The result? A population that reacts with emoji rather than genuine emotion. Compassion fatigue sets in, and the line between reality and content blurs. Over time, this can lead to shallower relationships and a reduced ability to process grief, trauma, or even joy in meaningful ways.

Hargunjot Kaur
BA Psychology, 2nd Year



DROOMSCROLLING

Compulsively consuming negative news online, often at night or for long periods, even if distressing. This habit grew during COVID-19 and persists, hijacking our attention and triggering survival instincts. Our brains aren't built for 24/7 tragedy.

PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND IT

1. Negative bias – We focus more on bad news; it kept ancestors safe but causes anxiety now.
2. Addiction & algorithms – Platforms keep us scrolling with unpredictable rewards.
3. Illusion of control – Information feels like control, but isn't.

CONSEQUENCES

1. Anxiety, depression
2. Sleep issues
3. Emotional exhaustion
4. Low focus
5. Social withdrawal

BREAKING THE CYCLE

1. Set limits – Use apps or trackers.
2. Curate feed – Unfollow triggers, follow positive pages.
3. Mindful scrolling – Ask: why am I scrolling?
4. Worry windows – Set 15-min daily to process news

FINAL THOUGHT

In an era of endless info, protecting your peace is strength. Droomscrolling feels stimulating, but steals clarity. Next time your thumb reaches for the news app—pause. Choose calm over panic.

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REPRESS & REFRESH

Me trying to calm down by thinking "it's fine I've had a good year" even though that statement has no factual basis



HA
HA

Me watching everyone go out on Friday night while I cancel plans to "work on myself" and then proceed to do absolutely nothing.



Just finished a 2-minute task. Time to reward myself with 2 hours of scrolling through the collapse of humanity.



Relationship status: Got ignored by someone who's texting someone who's ignoring them.

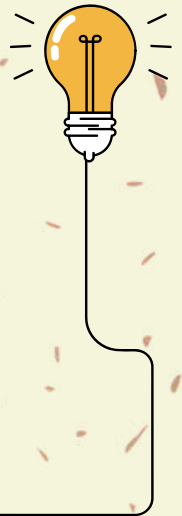


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Ultimate Guide to Digital Detox



- **Start with a Digital-Free Zone**

Designate spaces like your bedroom or dining area as tech-free zones to create boundaries.

- **Set Screen Time Limits**

Use apps or built-in phone features to monitor and limit your daily screen usage.

- **Schedule a Detox Day**

Dedicate one day a week to disconnect from all screens and reconnect with yourself.

- **Declutter Your Digital Space**

Organize your apps, delete unused ones, and clear out your email inbox.

- **Reconnect with Loved Ones**

Spend quality time with family and friends without the interference of technology.

- **Plan Tech-Free Activities**

Replace scrolling with hobbies like reading, cooking, or spending time outdoors.

- **Unplug Before Bed**

Turn off devices at least an hour before sleep to improve rest and reduce blue light exposure.

- **Use Analog Alternatives**

Swap digital tools for physical ones, like a journal, planner, or printed books.

- **Turn Off Notifications**

Silence non-essential notifications to minimize distractions and stay present.

- **Practice Mindful Scrolling**

Be intentional about how and why you use your devices, avoiding mindless swiping.

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Fear of missing out scale : FoMOs

Below is a collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the scale provided please indicate how true each statements is of your general experiences.

Response Anchors

Not at all true of me	1
Slightly true of me	2
Moderately true of me	3
Very true of me	4
Extremely true of me	5

Items

1. I fear others have more rewarding experiences than me.
2. I fear my friends have more rewarding experiences than me.
3. I get worried when I find out my friends are having fun without me.
4. I get anxious when I don't know what my friends are up to.
5. It is important that I understand my friends "in jokes."
6. Sometimes, I wonder if I spend too much time keeping up with what is going on.
7. It bothers me when I miss an opportunity to meet up with friends.
8. When I have a good time it is important for me to share the details online (e.g. updating status).
9. When I miss out on a planned get-together it bothers me.
10. When I go on vacation, I continue to keep tabs on what my friends are doing.

SCORING

10 to 20

Low FOMO- Tend to feel secure and connected without excessive worry about missing

21 to 30

Moderate FOMO- You experience some anxiety about missing out, but it's manageable

31 to 40

High FOMO- You frequently feel anxious about missing out on events, experiences etc.

41 to 50

Extremely FOMO- You're highly sensitive to FOMO, and it significantly impacts your daily life.

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