

KSCF- CU PATRONS & ASSOCIATES SEMINAR

“Social Media (Benefits, Dangers and non-issues)”

April 12, 2022

Our objective is to assist the members address the questions below:

1. What does social media include?
2. What is each media best used for?
3. How can social media be used to minister either to associate or students?
4. What are cost implications of the use of each media?
5. What are the possible misuses of social media and how can you manage them?
6. How best can you deal with addictions of social media as individual and among youth groups?

Introduction (Slide 2)

Social media is any digital tool that allows users to quickly create and share content with the public. Social media encompasses a wide range of websites and apps. ... What makes social media unique is that it is both broad and relatively uncensored. While many social media companies impose some limitations—such as taking down images that display violence or nudity—there are much fewer limitations on what someone can share than there with other means of mass communication like newspapers, radio stations, and television channels.¹

Types of Social Media (Slide 3)

- Facebook – for adults
- Instagram – ages 12-18
- WhatsApp – most popular due it is internet based
- TikTok – universal popularity
- Twitter – 16+
- Snapchat – 25 and below (screenshots challenge)
- Telegram – allows unlimited subscribers in a group
- YouTube

¹ <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/what-is-social-media-2890301>

The Worldwide Social Networking Platforms Industry is Expected to Reach \$939+ Billion by 2026. ... The rise in demand is not only just from the millennials but has also risen due to significant adoption by all age groups. Moreover, the application of social networking platforms witnessed a substantial rise owing to the demand coming from the companies which use the platforms for marketing purposes as well.²

There are those who consider Social Media as:

- Time wasting
- Not for mature people
- Just for entertainment
- Unspiritual
- Where the devil lives

However, even those “deep” Christians had to shift to Social Media to reach to the congregants. Those who regarded it as worldly, carnal, and unspiritual had to start figuring out what is FB Live and YouTube.

As of January 2022³, (**Slide 4, 5**)

- Facebook had **2.910 billion** monthly active users
- YouTube’s potential advertising reach was **2.562 billion**
- WhatsApp had at least **2 billion monthly** active users
- Instagram’s potential advertising reach was **1.478 billion**
- TikTok had **1 billion monthly** active users
- Facebook Messenger’s potential advertising reach was **988 million**
- Snapchat’s potential advertising reach was **557 million**
- Telegram had **550 million monthly** active users
- Pinterest had **444 million monthly** active users
- Twitter’s potential advertising reach was roughly **436 million**

² <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210827005308/en/The-Worldwide-Social-Networking-Platforms-Industry-is-Expected-to-Reach-939-Billion-by-2026---ResearchAndMarkets.com>

³ <https://datareportal.com/social-media-users>

If such numbers of huge numbers are on the Social Media, where are the ministers of the Gospel?

Does “earth” and “world” in Matthew 5:13, 14 include the Social Media? (“You are the salt of the earth....You are the light of the world?”)

Does “disciples of nations” include people Social Media users? (Matthew 28:19, 20 - Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”)

Top Five Reasons for Social Media⁴ (Slide 6)

1. Keeping in touch with friends – 47.6%
2. Filling spare time – 36.3%
3. Reading News Stories – 35.1%
4. Finding Content – 31.6%
5. Seeing What is Being Talked About – 29.5%

The Social Media Management market size is projected to grow from USD 14.4 billion in 2021 to USD 41.6 billion in 2026⁵. This translates to

Globally, users spend 2 hours and 27 minutes per day on Social Media⁶.

(Slide 7)

In Kenya⁷:

1. There were **21.75 million** internet users in Kenya in January 2021.
2. Internet penetration in Kenya stood at **40.0%** in January 2021.
 - There were **11.00 million** social media users in Kenya in January 2021.
 - The number of social media users in Kenya **increased** by **2.2 million** (+25%) between 2020 and 2021.

⁴ <https://datareportal.com/social-media-users>

⁵ <https://www.marketsandmarkets.com/Market-Reports/social-media-management-market-321810.html>

⁶ <https://datareportal.com/social-media-users>

⁷ <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-kenya>

- The number of social media users in Kenya was equivalent to **20.2%** of the total population in January 2021.

It appears like most industries have found their place in the Social Media. What about the church?

Luke 16:8 says, "...the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Is this what we experiencing with the children of world strategically positioning themselves in the Social Media while the church (you and I) keeps off?

With COVID-19, it looked like the church at last would take up the socials. However, with the easing of constraints we are back to "normal." Perhaps in a few months some of the virtual congregations will be orphaned as ministers go back to "somebody say amen" and "shake your neighbor" which could not happen in virtual services.

Would Jesus or Paul be on Social Media? Would the 12 apostles be in the same WhatsApp group? Do you think Judas would be managing a Till Number or Pay Bill? Do you think after he betrayed Jesus, the group would have been notified "Judas left?"

The Social Media is huge socially and economically. Christians have to ask themselves: Is it a necessary evil or an evil to be avoided?

If Jesus and Paul used the then available technology⁸ – Boats and Roman roads, do you think they would use tech today in making disciples?

Of interest to KSCF since you work with young people is a report that was released by OneHope⁹ under the title "Global Youth Culture Report."¹⁰ The 2021 Report covered Teens 13-19 years in 20 countries (including Kenya). It was discovered that 8,394 teens are digitally connected.

⁸ "The application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, especially in industry."

⁹ <https://onehope.net/>

¹⁰ <https://onehope.net/global-outreach/research/>

On average, Teens in Kenya spend 7 hours and 40 minutes daily. This time is spent mostly in gaming, chatting, videos and social media.

(Slide 8)

Heavy Internet use leads to:

Depression – 53%

Anxiety – 62%

Sexually active – 35%

Suicidal thoughts – 35%

Suicide attempts – 12%

The Global Outreach Report concludes with:

1. Videos are teens' go to and are a powerful vehicle to reach young people. Remember, 94% of teens are engaging with videos every day. How can we use this appealing medium to reach young people for Christ?
2. There's a good chance that the teen spending a lot of time on a screen might be struggling deeply. Those who are spending a lot of time online may be dealing with some very serious mental health issues, so think about how you can be prepared to respond in conversations that might arise.

Having laid the foundation, we now look at few more details:

(Slide 9)

What are the benefits of Social Media?

- Education
- E-commerce
- Entertainment
- Communication
- Interaction with one another
- Personal devotions
- Church work
- Etc.

(Slide 10)

What are the risks?

- Living for likes and follows – building Social Capital)
- Feelings of inadequacy/poor self-image due to comparisons
- Cyberbullies - can lead to low self-esteem, suicide, depression, etc.
- Sexual predators
- Pornography, sexting, and nudity
- Recruitment into drugs, gangs, gay and lesbian clubs
- Time wastage
- Costly - bundles

(Slide 11)

Why is Social Media risky?

- Popular/Fashionable – we love being where action is
- Escapism hub – a place to hide/a personal world/wall
- Easily accessible – opening an account is so easy age restrictions notwithstanding
- Free market for criminals – swindlers, conmen, pedophiles, sex traffickers, gangs, terrorists
- Free market for illicit substances – drugs, recruitment by drug traffickers
- Misrepresentation - not true profiles
- Lack of accountability - easy to hide
- Not strictly censored – rules not strictly followed, on a FB a post has to be reported by 10+ posts for action and could take up to 3 days)

Should children/teens be given smart phones or access to the internet? Why or why not?

Between teaching them to use internet responsibly or shielding them from internet completely, which one would have better returns?

(Slide 12, 13)

How can the Risks be Mitigated?

- Be where the people are – how will you reach to them if you stay away from them. Get that app where the young people are.

- Create physical and virtual friendships. Follow each other on Social Media. Save their numbers and you will always see when they update the WhatsApp status.
- Make sure you are not all over their posts. Liking and following each post. “Be as wise as a serpent but innocent as a dove” – Matthew 10:16. Do not openly rebuke something you don’t like. Pray for wisdom and a one-on-one moment. However, cases of harming themselves or others should be attended to immediately. Do not ignore them.
- Have constructive discussions on Social Media. Be open to learn. Suspend your judgment.
- Use the social media for helpful educational, spiritual, and life skills activities. Do-It-Yourself videos on many activities can be found on YouTube. There are Bible reading and devotional plans and sermons that can keep teens engaged. You can also open discussion groups/Bible study groups on FB, IG, and Twitter Spaces. You can challenge the teens to make value-adding clips using TikTok. Have WhatsApp groups that are not for forwards but valuable communication and peer development.
- If you give your child/teen access to Social Media have very clear ToRs e.g. following each other, not posting personal information like school and home address, never posting nudes, revenge porn, etc. Agree on consequences of flouting the ToRs.
- Model the expected behavior – what you post will influence what your children/young friends will post.
- Always share with the young people the dangers of misusing electronic gadgets. Most people (young and old) are not aware of the serious consequences of misusing electronic gadgets. They think hiding behind a keyboard is too good to be discovered. Section 27 of the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act, 2018¹¹ is very strong against cyber harassment. Let your children and your friends’ children know they can be jailed (worse still you are

¹¹ (1) A person who, individually or with other persons, wilfully communicates, either directly or indirectly, with another person or anyone known to that person, commits an offence, if they know or ought to know that their conduct—

(a) is likely to cause those persons apprehension or fear of violence to them or damage or loss on that persons’ property; or

(b) detrimentally affects that person; or

(c) is in whole or part, of an indecent or grossly offensive nature and affects the person.

(2) A person who commits an offence under subsection (1) is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding twenty million shillings or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years, or to both.

(3) A person may apply to Court for an order compelling a person charged with an offence under subsection (1) to refrain from—

(a) engaging or attempting to engage in; or

(b) enlisting the help of another person to engage in, any communication complained of under subsection (1).

the one to be in trouble because mostly it is your SIM card, computer, or internet that will be flagged).

(Slide 14)

Conclusion

In closing, Paul said in 2 Corinthians 9:22, 23 - I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.” We need to pray for wisdom on how to make spread the gospel using the available technology.

In the times of Jesus and Paul, the Roman road network was the highway. Paul missionary journeys were in urban centres well connected with the road network. Today, the Internet Highway is available to us.

Paul wrote letters which were delivered by hand. Today, on a simple phone you can communicate with the world in seconds.

If you believe the devil lives in the Social Media, take the war to him. That means you have to be in there.

If you believe the Social Media is a necessary evil, then ride on it strength and win some to Christ.

If you believe the sinners are all found in the Social Media, then go and check them out. Jesus was known as a friend of sinners (John 5:30-32).

If you believe the Social Media is part of the wider knowledge that God gives to human beings in developing technology, then make maximum use of it.

(Slide 15)

I hereby affirm that:

1. The Social Media world is part of the people to made disciples, baptized and taught (Matthew 28:19, 20).

2. The Social Media world needs the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” (Matthew 5:13, 14).
3. The Social Media world needs someone to bring the preach the Gospel to its people (Romans 10:14).