

Career

Online community for professional women



Social media: necessary or not?

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'Infobesitas': it has been said to be a trend among young people. In their anxiety not to miss something, they become addicted to the constant requesting information through news channels; specifically through social media. Are we really that greedy for new information? Are Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn necessary? Using nine statements, two experts give their views on the weal and woe of social media.



Jeanet Bathoorn (1966) is known as a social media expert, author, (inter)national speaker, and she is also partner/founder of social media agency ZUS. JE. Jeanet provides training and courses in LinkedIn and Twitter, and she guides lots of people through all the possibilities that social media offers. Also, her book 'Get Social, online netwerken voor beginners' was published last year. It contains much information about social media, online networking, user's guides on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn as well as extensive overview of all possible social media sites.

Arend Landman (1963) is a speaker, 'enterbrainer' and fervent blogger about several themes including social social media. As a graduated physical chemist, he worked as an editor for an engineers newspaper for several years. Later he worked as independent writer for technology, innovation and management magazines. Since 2004 he organizes presentations on among others, conferences, networking conferences and annual meetings. His goal is to discuss, as an 'enterbrainer', the great possibilities of the human brain on a surprising and inspiring way.



1. Our society has become more individualistic through social media.

Arend Landman:

“I would like to reverse this statement. I don't believe that society has become more individualistic through social media, Social media developed because the society has become more individualistic. I see individualisation as a necessary phase in development of humanity. Once people had the same idea as their families and the community in which they lived. Because people are more individualistic now, they don't just copy everything and they develop their own opinion and view”.

Jeanet Bathoorn:

“I disagree. Has the advent of the telephone and television make us more individualistic? No. Eversince the 60s, more people are on their own two feet. Us becoming more independent is a cultural trend. Internet, specifically social media, are an effect of this development”.

2. Multitasking through the use of social media causes production loss.

Arend Landman:

“Companies and organizations ignoring social media will in many cases lead to something you could call 'production loss'. People can not find you on the internet, you are not participating, and this also makes you invisible for clients. There is another way to look at it. Production loss can also occur when employees or entrepreneurs excessively pay attention to new media. If you surf the internet a lot and when you are very active in social media, your brain changes. Research shows that the brain get more and more hungry for new information. The attention is being fragmented and thus it is hard to establish something valuable. A strong focus is essential for people and organizations who want to accomplish something”.

Jeanet Bathoorn:

“It is said that it is not in a human's nature to multitask. As a user of social media it is necessary to develop a skill to filter and sort infor-

mation. If you can judge information on its relevance, separate the wheat from the chaff, social media does not have to lead to production loss. Besides this it is convenient to surround yourself with a diverse network of people who provide you from information which is relevant to you. It is nonsense that people are being distracted during working hours and are less productive through the advent of social media. Even before the advent of social media people were being distracted, for instance by newspapers, puzzles and colleges”.

3. It is necessary for businesses and entrepreneurs to profile themselves on social media like Twitter and Facebook.

Arend Landman:

“It is important for businesses and entrepreneurs to profile themselves on the internet, provided that they know the ropes. There are numerous entrepreneurs who tweet all day long, assuming that it will lead to a job. Profiling yourself on Facebook and Twitter make little sense if you cannot relate to specific content in the form of websites, blogs, videos, podcasts, PDF documents etc. Social Media should not be underestimated, but they

should not be overestimated either. I don't think that social media are the marketing method of the future. The target group of businesses and entrepreneurs is not completely visible through channels like Twitter and Facebook. You need more than this if you want to build a (digital) relationship with customers or clients. Social media are a gateway: good content can cause people to visit your website, subscribe to newsletters or request references”.

Jeanet Bathoorn:

“In this context, profiling isn't the right word. Many businesses consider Twitter and Facebook as a channel: you put something down and you're done. But it doesn't work that way. Businesses and entrepreneurs should consider social media as a grown up communication channel. It is very powerful to keep in dialogue with customers and clients through this channel. (De kracht is juist om ook via deze weg de dialoog met klanten en opdrachtgevers aan te gaan.) Answer the questions which come in through Facebook and consider social media as a full channel (een volwaardig kanaal) where people can complain, for instance. You would answer the phone if it rang, too, right?”

4. Infobesitas, the constant use of social media, causes fatigue, sleep deprivation and concentration problems to more and more people.

Arend Landman:

“I agree. We live in a time in which everything is speeding up and it’s quite noticeable. Social media are also an expression of this. If we want to stay abreast of everything in this chaos, that will damage our peace and wellbeing. Social media often takes too much time and some put social media far above all other things. You don’t have to be aware of everything at every time, and checking your smartphone constantly when you’re in company of others, won’t do any good. Multitasking is ‘bad’ for humans anyway. That is, if you want things to get done. The constant switching and dividing your energy, takes lots of energy”.

Jeanet Bathoorn:

“People can always lose themselves in things: in watching tv shows, in games, but also in social media. When it comes to social media it’s important to keep in mind the higher goal: what do you want to achieve? What is it you want to know the ins and outs of? Keep track of this you find interesting and gather people around you

who have relevant knowledge or are important to you. A timekeeper could also help not to spend too much time on social media”.

5. As an employee and an entrepreneur you have a bigger change at a job when you’re active at social media.

Arend Landman:

“This cannot be generalized. A lot of this depends on the industry, the function and of course the way in which you’re active on social media. In most cases a good LinkedIn profile can be helpful: people then know who you are, what your skills are, and it also shows your references”.

Jeanet Bathoorn:

“Social media can offer chances for employees and entrepreneurs if you use them in the right way. A picture in which you’re drinking beer in your bikini, won’t help you find a job. A business, professional and social profile offers opportunities. A profile on LinkedIn, on which it is instantly clear what your capacities are, is a profile you should definitely have as an entrepreneur, freelancer or starter. If you don’t have a profile on LinkedIn, you won’t be taken seriously”.

6. Social media will definitely keep on existing in the future, but it might not be like the loose channels we know now.

Arend Landman:

“Big social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter will continue to exist because these have already obtained an significant market position and they clearly differ from each other. I expect that the newest platform, Google +, will grow rapidly in the future. Google is a major player and Google+ allows you to separately approach and message different groups - business and private. In addition, Google+ copied and adopted the positive, functional sides of other social media”.

Jeanet Bathoorn:

“I agree. Sure, it is hard to say, but I really think that there will be less. There are much more social networking sites than people think. Plus the audiences of the various websites are different. Thus the target group shifts from for instance Hyves to Facebook”.

7. The existence of journalistic media, like news sites and newspapers, are endangered by social media.

Arend Landman:

“I agree. Newspapers and magazines are losing ground and revenue through the arrival of new media. News gathering by bloggers and tweeters forces newspapers and magazines to work cross-media. I don't think that social media will decline the quality of journalism. Far from it. Thanks to social media, journalists have a multidimensional view of a particular topic, because it is viewed from all sides. However, there is a need for good investigative journalism. Unfortunately, most media don't have the budget to make it happen”.

Jeanet Bathoorn:

“Not entirely true. There are all kinds of factors which make it hard for journalism and the new media is just one of them. Besides, social media stands apart from journalism. If someone tweets something, than it's an opinion, not the norm. People still attach value to the opinion of professors with knowledge about a particular topic. I find that the quality of today's journalism isn't very good. Media are searching for ways to attract attention, but by rudely shouting and screaming they won't get back their readers and viewers. I think journalists shouldn't focus on the pursuit of scoops, but on research, exploring and backgrounds”.

8. Due to social media, contacts get more hasty and superficial.

Arend Landman:

“Possible, but it doesn’t have to be. Social media can also help people to get more involved with each other or that like-minded can find each other and meet in real life. Only when social media becomes a substitute for human contacts, it will be an impoverishment and contacts will get more superficial.”

Jeanet Bathoorn:

“Social media are used to exchange knowledge and inspiration, but also to keep abreast of activities of friends. Social media are an easy way to maintain contacts, to see how it’s going, but it’s no substitute for friendship. No one on Twitter will bring you a fruit basket when you’re sick”.

9. Due to social media privacy will become less and less important in the future.

Arend Landman:

“Nobody forces you to publish data. Where one person attaches lots of value to privacy, another doesn’t. I think some things shouldn’t be divulged, because they belong within a family or relationship. When lots of personal data is made pub-

lic, business-, friendship- or love relationships no longer have added value. Keep work and private life separated, but also make sure that you keep social media on a proper distance of your private life.

Jeanet Bathoorn:

“I disagree. Privacy is important and it will remain that way. However, it is important that young people are aware of the fact that everything they write will be forever findable. A 14-year-old shouts different things than a 40-year-old and just like negative reviews, these foolish excesses will remain findable. It would be great if high schools offered classes like ‘media awareness’.