



Student Grades Not Affected By Social Networking, New Research Finds

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Editors and Reporters: The study "Social Networking Usage and Grades Among College Students" is available for download at <http://www.unh.edu/news/docs/UNHsocialmedia.pdf>.

DURHAM, N.H. – Parents worried that their college students are spending too much time on Facebook and other social networking sites and not enough time hitting the books can breathe a sigh of relief. New research from the University of New Hampshire finds that students who heavily engage in social networking do just as well academically as students who are less interested in keeping in touch with the medium.

"The study indicates that social media is being integrated with rather than interfering with students' academic lives," said UNH adjunct professor Chuck Martin, whose marketing research class conducted the study. "College students have grown up with social networks, and the study shows they are now simply part of how students interact with each other with no apparent impact on grades."

Students at the UNH Whittemore School of Business surveyed 1,127 UNH students from a range of majors. The research shows that there is no correlation between the amount of time students spend using social media and their grades. Grades followed similar distributions for all colleges, with the majority of students having A's and B's.

Researchers defined light users of social media as usage fewer than 31 minutes per day. Heavy usage was defined as usage exceeding 61 minutes per day. Researchers defined high grades as A's and A's and B's, and lower grades as B's and lower. For the purpose of the study, social media was defined as Facebook, YouTube, blogs, Twitter, MySpace or LinkedIn.

Sixty-three percent of heavy users received high grades, compared to 65 percent of light users. Researchers found similar results with lower grades. While 37 percent of heavy users of social media received what were defined as lower grades, 35 percent of light users received fell into that same category.

The study also showed that Facebook and YouTube are the most popular social media platforms with college students, with 96 percent of students saying they use Facebook and 84 percent saying they use YouTube. Only 20 percent said they use blogs, 14 percent use Twitter, 12 percent use MySpace and 10 percent use LinkedIn.

"With more than 300 million active users of Facebook and with hundreds of millions of YouTube videos watched daily, it was no surprise that student usage mirrored those volumes," Martin said.

In addition, 43 percent of those surveyed said they have increased their usage of social media from a year ago, eight percent of them significantly. Thirty-nine percent of students said they have not changed their use of social media, while 18 percent said their use has decreased, including three percent who said it had significantly decreased.

The majority of students said they use social networks for social reasons (89 percent) and entertainment (79 percent). About a quarter of students said they use social media for educational reasons (26 percent), and 16 percent for professional reasons.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.