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Smart Socials & Digital Youth

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Mindworks Surrey

Living in the online world

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21/10/2024

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Smart Socials & Digital Youth Series Events

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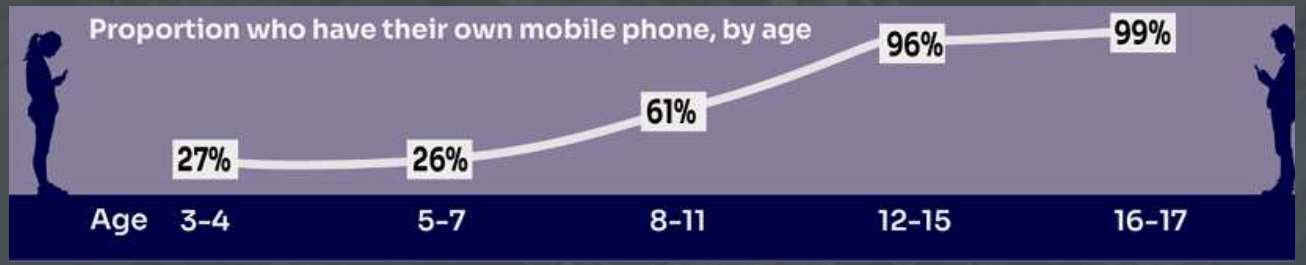
Adolescent motives for engaging with social media

Why do we need to pay attention?

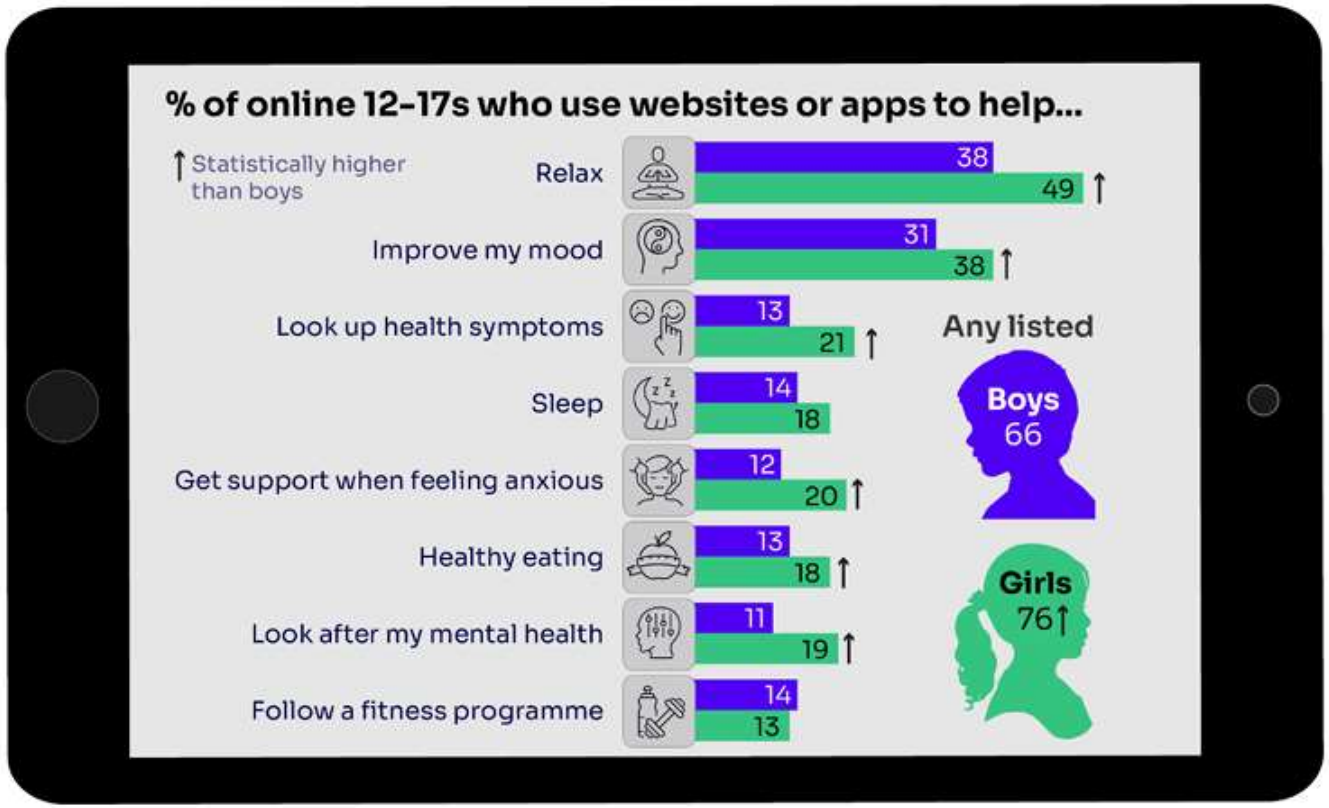
Children and Parents: Media use and attitudes report (Ofcom, 2024)



- Girls (12-17 years) are more likely than boys to "send supportive messages to friends having a hard time; search out share or discuss news stories"
- Of 8- to 17-year-olds:
  - 6 in 10 have multiple profiles on at least on social media account.
  - 67% report that using social media makes them happy all or most of the time.

32% have seen something worrying or nasty online in last 12 months.

What were the benefits reported? (Ofcom, 2024)



- 7 in 10 use to benefit their health and wellbeing
- An Ofcom (2023) report found that 71% of 11-18s feel more confident interacting online than in person (53%); in particular, LGBTQ+ youth (69% vs 38%).

What do we (think) we know?

INDEPENDENT News Wo

Children facing 'sig risk' on social med

Failure to act risks leaving generation of you anxious due to constant demands of social

May Bulman Social Affairs Correspondent | @maybulman | Thu

The Children's Commissioner has issued a stark warning in a re about their online image (Rex)

Is social media causing childhood depression?

By Jane Wakefield
Technology reporter

10 February 2018

Rangan Chatterjee is a GP and says he has seen pler link between mental ill-health in youngsters and their

BBC NEWS

ROYAL HOLLOWAY

Social media triggers children to dislike their own bodies, says study

Exclusive: Study shows social media a 'significant risk' to young people's view of themselves and can provoke mental health distress

Four in 10 young people questioned in the stem4 survey said they were in mental health distress. Photograph: Catherine Falls Commercial/Getty Images

Three out of four children as young as 12 dislike their bodies and are embarrassed by the way they look, increasing to eight in 10 young people aged 18 to 21.

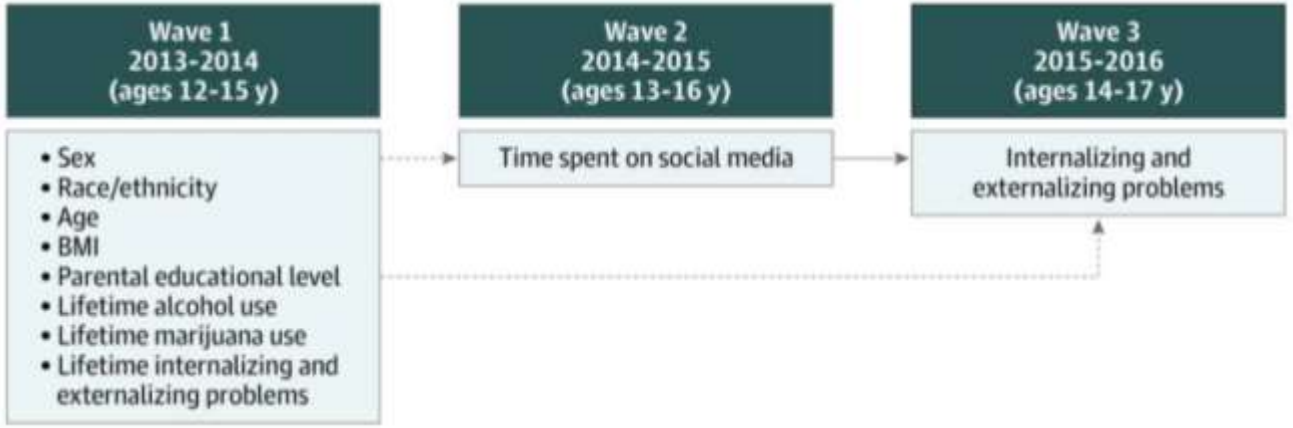
CNN Health Life, But Better Fitness Food Sleep Mindfulness Relationships Wa

Social media presents ‘profound risk of harm’ for kids, surgeon general says, calling attention to lack of research

By Meg Tirrell, CNN

5 minute read · Updated 3:01 PM EDT, Wed May 24, 2023

” One study of 6,595 US adolescents between ages 12 and 15 found that those who spent more than three hours a day on social media had twice the risk of symptoms of depression and anxiety as non-users, the report notes.” (Riehm et al., 2019)



Variable	Total Sample (N = 6595)	Internalizing Problems Alone During Wave 3 (n = 611)	Externalizing Problems Alone During Wave 3 (n = 885)	Internalizing and Externalizing Problems During Wave 3 (n = 1169)
Time spent on social media per day during wave 2				
None	1125 (16.8)	73 (6.6)	122 (12.4)	122 (10.7)
≤30 min	2082 (31.8)	172 (7.8)	287 (14.4)	283 (13.6)
>30 min to ≤3 h	2000 (30.7)	198 (9.8)	310 (15.5)	390 (19.6)
>3 to ≤6 h	817 (12.3)	98 (11.9)	97 (12.2)	202 (24.6)
>6 h	571 (8.4)	70 (12.1)	69 (12.7)	172 (29.7)

SECTION ONE

What does the evidence show us?

Effects are smaller than represented in in the news…

- Effects found in more recent longitudinal work are small to moderate (Beeres et al., 2021; Riehm et al., 2019; Thorisdottir et al., 2020).
- A review of 25 reviews published between 2019-2021 showed most find weak and inconsistent evidence of an association between social media use and mental health in adolescence, but 3 of the 25 found large effects (Valkenburg et al., 2022).
- Many findings reported are cross-sectional.

- Kelly et al., 2018 (assessed 10,904at 14 years using UK Millennium Cohort study): It is important to look beyond relationship, to

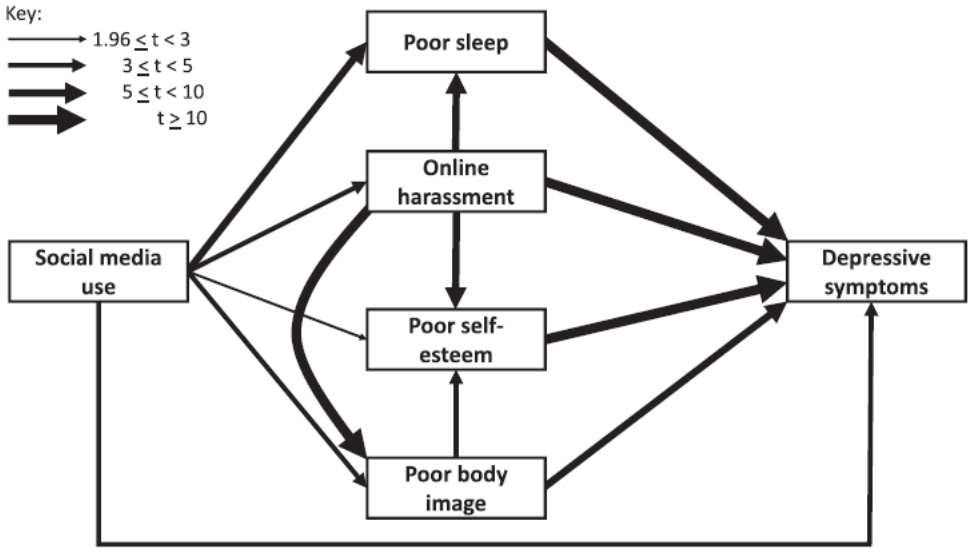


Fig. 2. Social media use and depressive symptoms – summary of path analysis.

Considering where the focus should be

The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health
Volume 3, Issue 10, October 2019, Pages 685-696

Articles

Roles of cyberbullying, sleep, and physical activity in mediating the effects of social media use on mental health and wellbeing among young people in England: a secondary analysis of longitudinal data

Prof Russell M Viner PhD [a], Aswathikutty Gireesh MSc [a], Neza Stiglic MSc [a], Lee D Hudson PhD [a], Anne-Lise Goddings PhD [a], Joseph L Ward MBBS [a], Dasha E Nicholls MD [b]

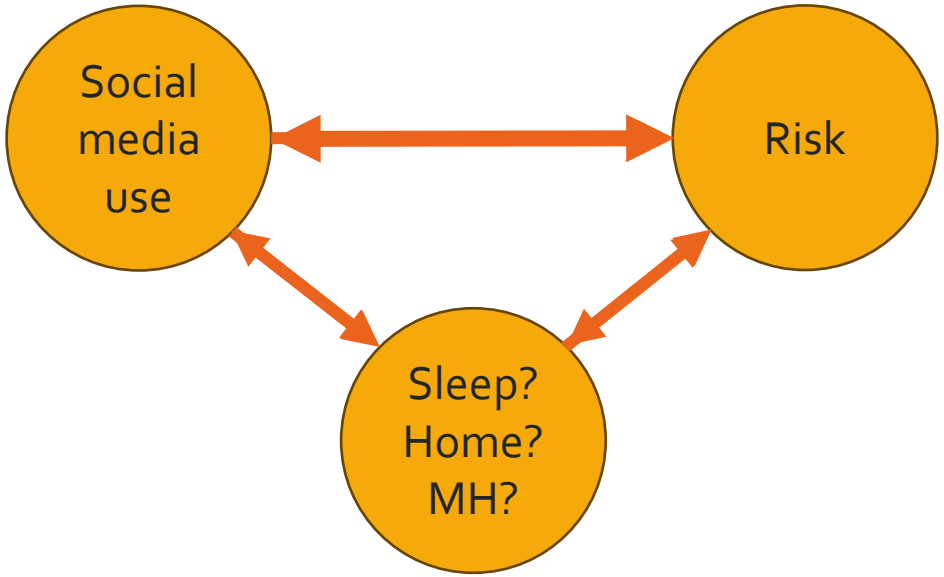
Viner et al. (2019) show that the relationship between social media use and wellbeing is reduced when account for cyberbullying, sleep, and physical activity for girls (but not for boys).

To have the greatest impact, we need to know more about other factors that may impact the relation between social media and mental health and wellbeing, such as supporting young people who may be experiences cyberbullying, and displacement of sleep and physical health.

Note recent work suggests small effects for social media use frustration and sleep deprivation, BUT ALSO for sleep deprivation and social media frustration with greater use

Importance to look more at predictors

- In recent years much work is cross-sectional (explores associations/differences between one or two timepoints).
  - Cannot determine what causes what.



Orben & Przybylski (2019) Exploring risk for wellbeing in comparison to technology use in a sample of 355,358 observations.

Table 3 | Comparison specification results

Comparison specifications		YRBS	MTF	MCS
Negative	Binge-drinking	×2.95	×8.10	×1.02
Factors	Marijuana	×2.70	×10.09	×1.14
	Bullying	×4.33	-	×4.92
	Getting into fights	×3.65	×15.58	-
	Cigarettes	-	×18.47	-
	Being arrested	-	-	×0.96
Neutral	Perceived weight	×1.02	-	-
Factors	Potatoes	×0.86	-	-
	Asthma	×1.34	-	-
	Milk	×0.28*	-	-
	Going to movies	-	×11.51*	-
	Religion	-	×16.29*	-
	Music	-	×32.68	-
	Homework	-	×3.57*	-
	Cycling	-	-	×1.88*
	Height	-	-	×1.53*
	Glasses	-	-	×1.45
	Handedness	-	-	×0.10
Positive	Fruit	×0.11	×9.49*	×1.32*
Factors	Vegetables	×0.27	×20.63*	×1.52*
	Sleep	×3.06*	×44.23*	×1.65*
	Breakfast	×2.37*	30.55*	×3.32*

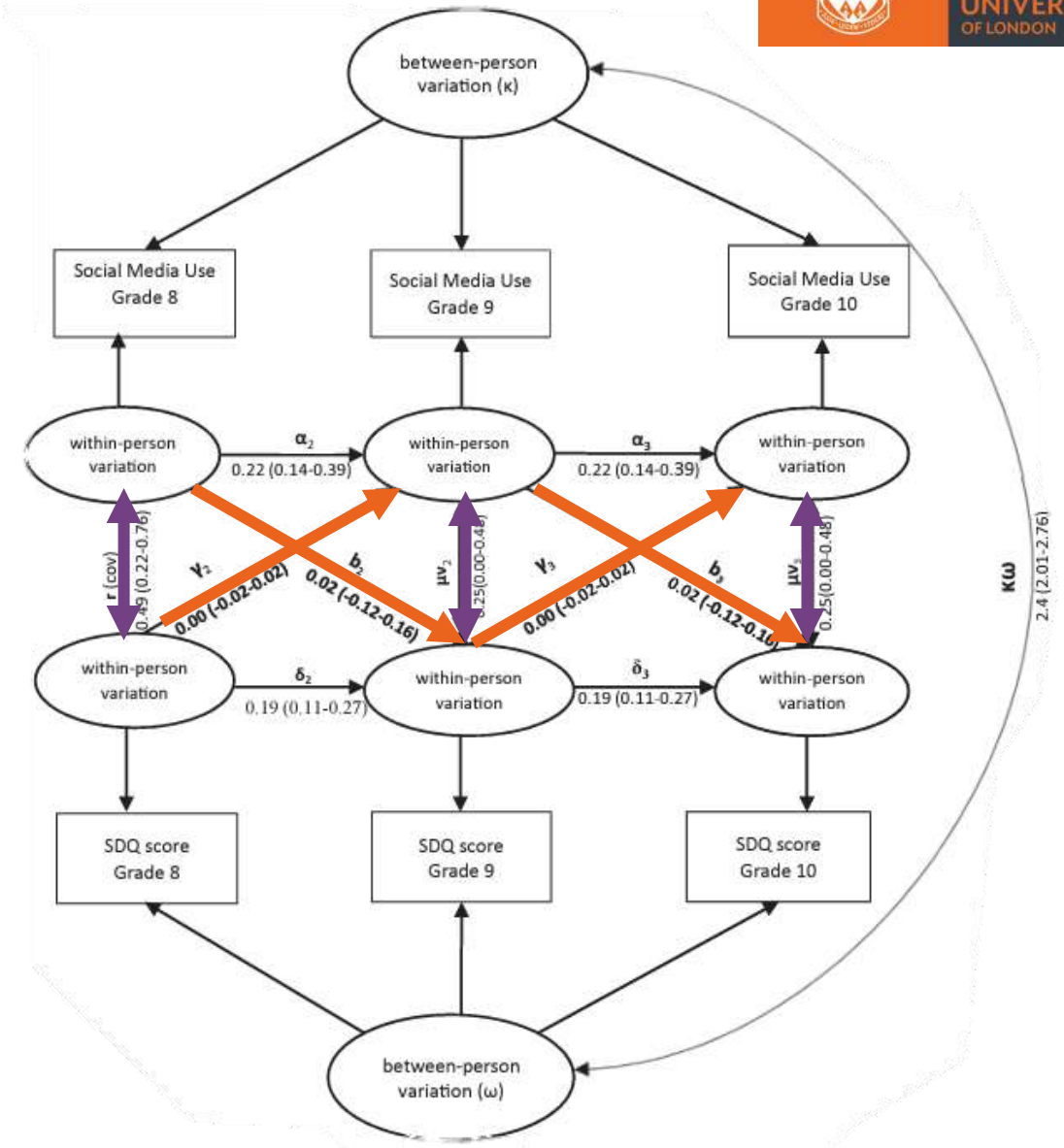
The table shows the size of the effect of comparison variables on adolescent well-being when compared to the size of the effect of technology use (measured using the mean of technology use questions) on adolescent well-being. The values indicate how many times larger the effects of the comparison variables are in comparison to technology use when examining the Youth Risk and Behaviour Survey (YRBS), Monitoring the Future (MTF) and Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) datasets. * Denotes when the effect of the comparison variable on well-being is positive, and therefore in the opposite direction to the effect of technology use. Note: For the YRBS the average effect linking technology to well-being was $\beta = -0.049$; for the MTF the average effect linking technology to well-being was $\beta = -0.006$; for the MCS the average effect linking technology to well-being was $\beta = -0.042$. Please note that these figures may be different from those found in Table 2, because the mean of technology use measures was used in these analyses.

Longitudinal data shows small effects

Beeres et al (2021) completed 2-year longitudinal study with 3,501 14- to 15-year-olds.

- Higher social media use = higher Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores
- BUT, no evidence of causal relationship.
  - There were no significant associations between changes in social media use to predict change in SDQ.
  - There was a weak association between changes in use with SDQ at each timepoint

Consider if we should be looking out for changes in social media use that may indicate challenges with mental health.



Takeaways

- Use in excess is likely to have detrimental consequences
- Need more nuanced understanding and focus
- Negative experiences online may co-occur with negative experiences offline
- We need to work with young people

Break out rooms

Break out room discussions

1. How do we know what evidence to trust?
2. If you were to devise a policy for social media use what would it include?
3. What responsibility should we place on App and social media developers to keep young people safe online?

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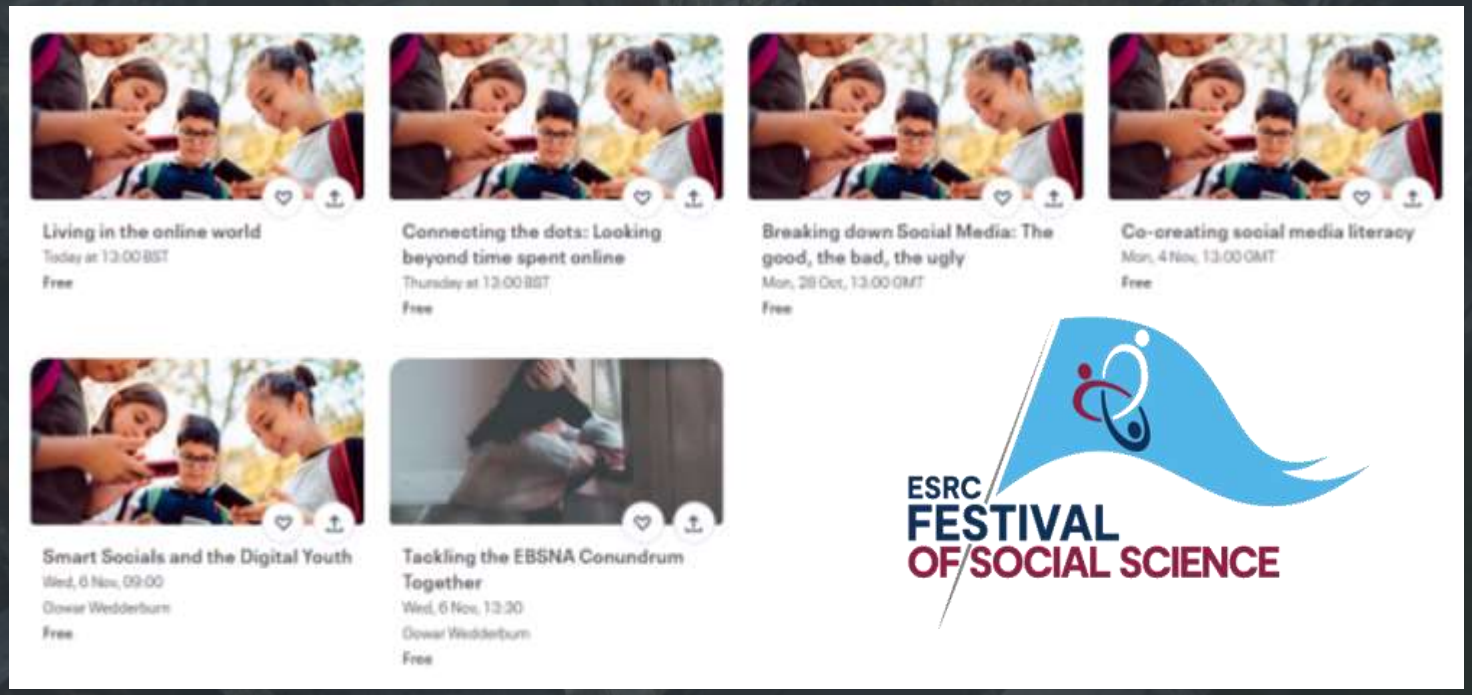
THANK YOU



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