



Social Media: How Does It Affect Students?

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THE POSITIVES

Statistics say that almost 99% of 16 to 25 year olds use social media and 64% of children aged up to 17 use a social media app.

But how far is social media affecting students?

Online communication through social media is helpful to students because it is a new and faster way to catch up with friends. Using their own mobile device, students can easily stay connected with the people around them.

Social media has also become a vital tool to build online communities and businesses, helping companies with their brand building and community engagement. Students who learn how to use social media appropriately and effectively now will help them in the future if they were to ever build their own organisation.

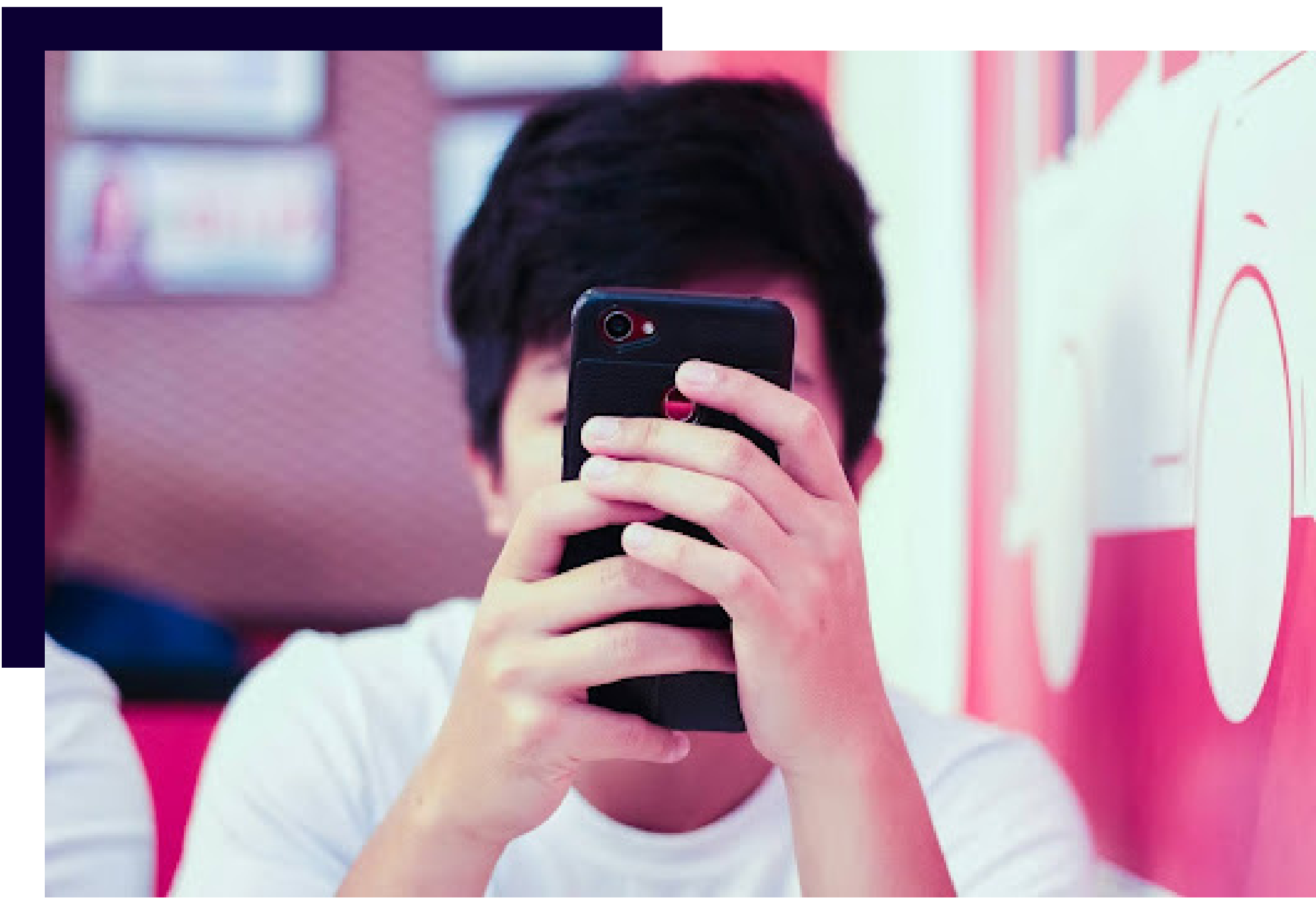


It is also an essential platform to learn because there are many useful educational websites available at the click of a button. On social media apps, there is also tons of information readily available for young people to easily absorb, such as the news and other learning resources.

Many people use social media to post content to educate other people about important topics such as climate change. As there are around 5.24 billion people who use social media across the world (almost 64% of the global population!) educational content can reach many people around the globe.

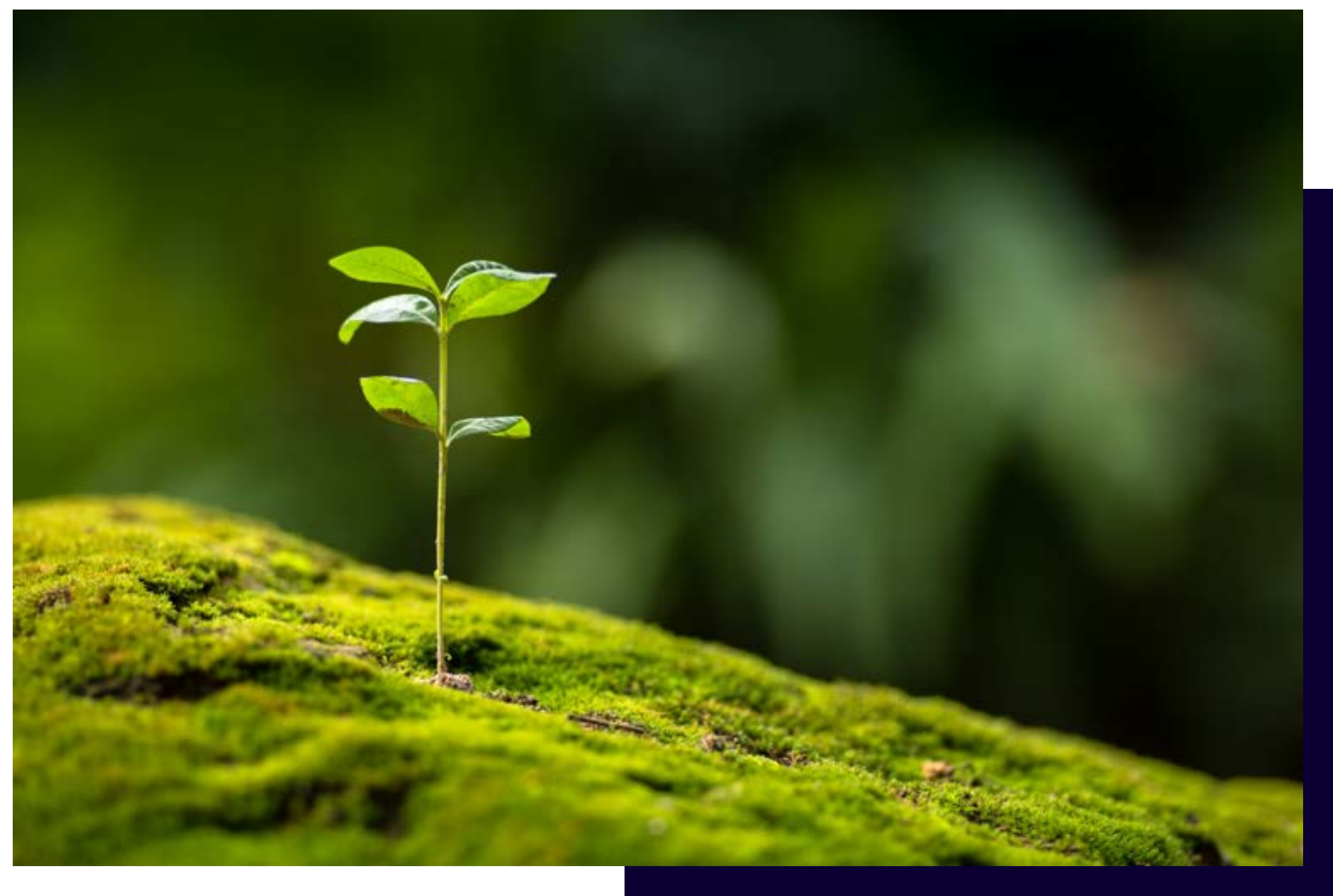
THE NEGATIVES

Firstly, cyberbullying is a big issue on social media. Around 19% of children aged 10 - 15 experienced some form of cyberbullying between 2022 and 2023. What starts online can also escalate in-person too, and can make a negative impact on a person's mental health and wellbeing. In turn, this can affect their behaviour, focus and even attendance in school.



People, especially teenagers and young adults, can also become addicted to social media, which affects learning and attention spans. Teenagers spend almost six hours a day on social media and 31% of surveyed teens admitted that they lost focus in class because they were checking their mobile phones. Spending so many hours scrolling through social media has been known to cause anxiety, body image issues, bad sleeping habits and poor mental health.

The digital footprint and the carbon costs of using social media can also be a negative side. Research by Greenspector suggests that the average person's use of social media generates 60kgCO₂e per year - that's almost the equivalent of driving from London to Edinburgh in a small car! Although one person cutting down on social media isn't going to make a huge difference to the planet, if many people did, the carbon footprint would reduce massively.



WEIGHING IT UP

Overall, social media has its positives and negatives.

On one hand, it can be extremely helpful for learning, communication, and keeping up to date with news and trends.

On the other hand, the overconsumption of social media can have damaging effects on school and personal lives.

