

## **Identity in the Digital Age**

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### Abstract

Originating in the changes the digital age is bringing forth, the discussion on identity is being revitalized. Technological progress, fostering the Web 2.0, has created an online environment in which digital media is no longer passively consumed, but allows users to actively engage by creating content themselves and communicating with others, enabling social interaction independent of space, time and the physical body. The allowance for constant connectivity and social interaction can ultimately be found in online social networks by providing platforms to interconnect with other users. As social beings, humans are naturally drawn to these novel spheres, as they provide an unprecedented networking opportunity to satisfy the need of social interaction and recognition.

At the example of Instagram and within a framework of established identity theories, I will address questions surrounding identity formation and self-presentation in a digital world, as well as potential detriments on the offline self's wellbeing that may arise from the active engagement in online social networks, including issues concerning privacy and mental health. These questions are of contemporary urgency, as those holding an online presence may face consequences they are currently unaware of. Undoubtedly, the analysis of issues that arise from maintaining an online presence renders evident, that guidelines have yet to be established that provide users with the media literacy necessary to secure a responsible use of online social networks.