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Life on the e-list

Social media – where the online and offline worlds meet

Who knew a serious car accident could literally throw you off-course and figuratively put you back on it.

It was about two years ago. I remember thinking "I'm too young to die" as a woman in an SUV ran a red light and barrelled into my compact, totalling it. My car flung about 50 metres — and into the intersection of offline and online.

Once the trauma waned, things became clear: This was more than an important enough reason to live life big. While recovering, an innocent Google search of blog platforms led me to accidentally create my website. I started writing again and the rest is Web history.



✉ dahlia@dahlia-kurtz.com

🐦 [@DahliaKurtz](https://twitter.com/DahliaKurtz)

📘 [facebook.com/DahliaKurtz](https://www.facebook.com/DahliaKurtz)

No stranger to the e-list, like millions of others now — but millions fewer back then — it began with online dating, where I met my husband. Now all the cool kids are doing it (well, not meeting

my husband).

Internet dating was the gateway social medium.

It has been dubbed Generation C: Constantly connected, communicating and clicking. But forget Gen-X and the Me Generation; let's call this the iGeneration.

Last year, eMarketer found Canada had the most social networking users in the world per capita, while Ipsos.ca reports 50% of Canadians have a social network profile. With a third logging in daily, the frequency of use keeps increasing dramatically.

Do you ever find yourself saying, that's a status? Or that's a tweet? Do you ever find your lady or your guy saying, Hello, I'm right here, you don't have

to tweet me. (But how much funnier are you when you say it in cyberspace? Jokes weigh more there.)

Over time, social networks have become more than distractions; they've become attractions. Unexpectedly, my Facebook profile created on a boring Saturday night and a once feigned interest in tweeting have become integral parts of my everyday, every-minute life.

A Nielsen study says Americans spend triple the time on social media than on e-mail and about a quarter of the time online at social networking sites — Facebook, Blogger, Tumblr, Twitter, LinkedIn being the most popular. And with one of five minutes

spent online, Nielsen notes the rapid adoption and measurable reach of social media is staggering.

Offline is online. Online is offline. They intersect all the time.

Pop culture is not even pop culture anymore if it's not online first. #Winning case in point.

Not only the planet's 411, social media is its 911. Chris Strouth tweeted, "Sh*t I need a kidney" then got one. And no longer is it just "stop bullying," now it's trending a #StopBullying campaign with millions more engaged in the subject just last week. Society has become more active, interactive and proactive.

Without a mainstream

media company, social media has amplified my voice, giving me a way to write loud. As I got more connected, more people connected with my stories. I helped raise awareness for a friend who was dying of cancer and later, helped to keep his legacy alive, I can find stories, network, stay in touch with friends and family, resolve my consumer issues, shop, and yes, waste time too.

Nothing has made life more unproductive than social media, but nothing has made life more productive than social media.

So here I am, really because of a car accident. Crazy enough this is one accident I really don't seem to mind.