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Quitting social media

Are you deleting yourself..or are you deceiving yourself?



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Are you really ready to fully quit social media? (Fotolia)

You've had enough. You resolve never to set finger to it again. You make the click.

"It's a waste of time." "I'm gonna stick it to the Zuckerberg." "I don't need to see what everyone's eating anymore."

Are you deleting yourself? Or are you deceiving yourself?

Many people are proudly announcing that they're quitting Facebook or Twitter. You know it's especially trendy when celebs such as Alec Baldwin, Miley Cyrus, and Nicki Minaj attempt it – and fail. Even Chris Brown quit Twitter – more than once – but like a scar on a badly beaten face he just wouldn't go away.

Still, most proclaimers don't go through with it, or can't stay away. For instance, back in May 2010, a Sophos study found 60% of Facebookers planned to abandon the site over privacy concerns, but between February and July of that year, the country of Facebook grew from 400 million to 500 million citizens. Today, at 1 billion, it's nearing the population of China.

Jonathan Minton calls Facebook mental junk food. He twice de-activated and re-activated his account. "It became a mind-numbing and addictive distraction," says the 31-year-old.

So why did Minton return? “Because it’s a mind numbing and addictive distraction.”

Giovanni Sardo also unFacebooked himself twice when the “drama” became too much, but reneged to re-connect with friends and family. “It was hard to keep up on what was happening in their lives without Facebook.”

Then there are those who you may not want to keep up with you.

A quitter, Aria Winston subtracted herself from the 500 million Twitter users. She didn’t like to be followed by colleagues and feared blocking them, as it’s “not the greatest for developing relationships when you shun them.” Now she’s fully committed to her Facebook relationship.

Dr. Greg Dubord, the director of the Toronto Center for Cognitive Therapy, says grand declarations of departure are usually made in an effort to increase the odds of behaviour change, but the inability to commit is usually because the void wasn’t filled with something else. “Often it’s an avoidance behaviour,” notes Dubord. He explains avoidance is a way of life for much of society. “Many people find it very difficult to set meaningful daily goals and to consistently follow through on the behaviours that enable them to make effective progress towards those goals. “It’s not easy doing a life.”

Perhaps social media isn’t just something we do to waste our lives; it’s also become a part of our lives. I’ve been married over four years and the only wedding album I have is on Facebook: my virtual storage box. And while TV was once our biggest time-waster, that idiot box became our major source of information. Now the Internet isn’t just our virtual storage box, but it’s our virtual idiot box too. More and more social media is becoming our main source of information, interconnection, and duck faces.

It’s all part of our evolution – or e-volution, as it were.

So, for whatever reason you may want to quit social media, know social media just won’t quit. And there will always be another way to waste your time.

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POLL

Have you ever considered quitting social media?

- Yes, but I couldn't go through with it**
- Sometimes I think about it**
- I did, but went back**
- I've quit for good**
- No, but I might in the future**

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