

Instagrams Evolution in Software and Society

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Introduction

The evolution of social media alters society in turn. Social media has existed for the past twenty-seven years. Social media, a concept to connect society, started as a site called *Six Degrees*; designed to connect ages fifteen to twenty in regards to email, voice mail, voice chat, message boards, and instant messaging (Zuckerberg, 2022). The idea of being able to connect past email and phone took a spike in technology. While it has benefited us as a society, it has also had long-lasting effects with the constant evolution. This can be specifically seen in the social network, Instagram. I will go through the evolution of the app and society in terms of major software updates, the evolution of trends, and the evolution of the apps use. These three ways of using technology, in turn, affect society. The evolution of the software simultaneously evolves society.

Content

When I first downloaded Instagram, I was 12 years old, in 2017. At the time, Instagram's style was to post frequently of singular photos. I would post images such as selfies and images in correlation to my life. Images consisting of new bedroom decor and art projects. As time progressed, the media began to update and change as it does to keep users interested. One major update that occurred during 2017 was the introduction of carousel posts. An Instagram carousel is a post containing more than one photo or video, which users can view by swiping left on a post through the phone app (Zote, 2022). This update really changed Instagram. By adding this feature, users could now post once while sharing multiple photos in relation. For me this was exciting. The idea of being able to post even more without per say “spamming” introduced a new audience and use of the platform. The more updates like this boosted users’ relationship with the

social network and in turn, changed us as a society. It quickly went from casual posting to being a more serious and pressured app.

While trends were seen on a larger scale of current influencers and celebrities, teenagers also had their own trends. Reflecting back to 2018, it was popular to post two selfies from the same take but slightly different. This was the case because of the main content being selfies. Selfies have always had mixed feelings from the public. The idea of posting a photo of yourself for public gratification is a difficult thing to dissect. Instagram took on the role of being the social network for pictures like that since then to now. This is one aspect of the app that has never evolved. The past seven years of being a user I still see and post selfies. Thinking about this a little deeper it shows the culture of the technology. As much evolution and change of culture and software to the app, users will still always crave public gratification, myself included. The app can evolve as much as it can and society will simultaneously go along with it until that means diminishing public gratification.

As years went by, Instagram started to evolve as social media did overall. Social media went from being a way of sharing and connecting with friends online, to being a source of income and a way to gain popularity, status, and fame. In turn, the word *influencer* became a phenomenon. The app started to evolve into a social networking platform to market and promote oneself and advertising deals. Looking at this transition from personal to public seemed small as it progressed in time but truly it had effects on myself and fellow peers. It went from being reality to a highlight reel. Users went from posting unfiltered to posting what followers would like to see. The evolution of the app in the sense of target use, then evolved society negativity. I say this in the way of us now having more “influencers” or people with higher status that put pressure on groups such as youth.

Conclusion

As I write this essay, I reflect on to my own use of Instagram and how its evolution evolved myself. The app has always been a comfort to post and connect. Although, thinking about it below surface level, it gets to the point where it shows itself to be toxic. The way we as society have put pressure on the app to constantly be better and pressure on ourselves to post perfect, it has altered society negatively. The more we crave the media to be better the more we put pressure on ourselves to live up to the bar we have made. In class the question was raised, ‘Do we control and shape technology or are we controlled by it?’. While we have created media and are who evolve the tech, in turn, and maybe unconsciously, we are really shaping ourselves. While we constantly progress through trends and alter the app to cater for users, we are truly progressing and altering ourselves. The evolution of Instagrams software has ultimately altered society as well.

References

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