

Social Media Use Linked to Stress and Feeling Disconnected from Family

According to the American Psychological Association's (APA) 2017 Stress in America survey, only 7 percent of American adults used social media in 2005. By 2015 that had grown to 65 percent. Among 18- to 29-year-olds, usage grew from 12 to 90 percent in that same timeframe.

A constant checker is someone who checks their email, text messages and social media accounts "constantly" throughout the day; 43 percent of Americans fit this bill, according to the APA, but they may be sacrificing their health as a result.

While non-checkers reported a stress level of 4.4 on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being "a great deal of stress"), constant checkers' average stress level was 5.3. This climbed to 6 among those who constantly checked their work email even during their days off.

The use of technology is in itself a source of stress for some Americans, especially when it's not working properly, and especially for constant checkers (23 percent compared to 14 percent of non-constant checkers). Meanwhile, constant checkers faced increased stress from social media, compared to non-checkers, namely due to political and cultural discussions.

Constant checkers were also more likely to report feeling disconnected from family due to technology, including when they're together, while 35 percent of this group also admitted social media made in-person meetings with family and friends less likely.