



## **SOCIAL NETWORKING USAGE AND SLEEP AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS**

A Study to Determine the Correlation  
Of Social Media Usage to Hours of Sleep

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### **The Study**

This study was conducted by student-researchers at The Whittemore School of Business and Economics at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) to determine whether there was a correlation between heavy usage of social media and hours of sleep per night. The study also was undertaken to determine how much time students actively use social media, which media they use, and how much sleep they get on an average weekday.

### **Background**

Whittemore School of Business and Economics student researchers recently completed a study to determine if there was a relationship between social media network usage and the amount of sleep by college students. The survey was administered by a Marketing Research class, led by Adjunct Professor Chuck Martin. A total of 1,247 students from all colleges at the University (College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, College of Liberal Arts, College of Life Sciences and Agriculture, College of Health and Human Services, Thompson School of Applied Sciences, and the Whittemore School of Business and Economics) were surveyed. (A separate previous study at the university examined the correlation between social media usage and grades.)

### **Executive Summary**

Heavy users of social media at the University of New Hampshire are equally as likely to sleep the same amount per night as light users of social media. No correlation was found between the amount of usage of social networks and the hours of sleep on a typical weekday.

The majority of students use Facebook as their social media platform. The reasons for using social media include social, entertainment, education, and professional purposes. Of students who use social networks, the majority access them via computer. Nearly half of students say they have increased their social media usage since a year ago. The

majority of students say they sleep seven hours or fewer on weeknights, while one tenth of students sleep nine hours or more.

### **University Findings**

Researchers defined light users of social media as those who use social media for 31 or fewer minutes. Heavy usage was defined as usage exceeding 60 minutes.

Light sleepers were defined as those who sleep seven hours or fewer. Students who were heavy sleepers were defined as those sleeping nine or more hours.

Social Networks were defined as Facebook, YouTube, Blogs, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn

### **Overall Usage**

The study found that the most popular online network was Facebook, with 97 percent of all university students actively using the social media platform. LinkedIn was the least used, with ten percent of students actively using it.

Facebook	97%
YouTube	82%
Blogs	20%
Twitter	17%
MySpace	11%
LinkedIn	10%

### **Usage by Social Media Platform**

Thirty-one percent of students who use Facebook are heavy users. One percent of students who use Twitter are heavy users. Students do not heavily use Blogs, MySpace or LinkedIn. Sixty-four percent of students who use YouTube are light users, the most for any social network. Only nine percent of students who use LinkedIn are light users, the least of any social network

#### **Heavy Usage**

Facebook	31%
YouTube	7%
Twitter	1%
Blogs	0%
LinkedIn	0%
MySpace	0%

#### **Light Usage**

YouTube	64%
Facebook	39%
Blogs	17%

Twitter	15%
MySpace	10%
LinkedIn	9%

### **Change in Usage**

Forty percent of students say they have increased their usage of social media from a year ago. Of that 40 percent, six percent significantly increased usage. Seventeen percent of students say they decreased their usage of social media from a year ago. Of that 17 percent, three percent significantly decreased usage.

Increased	40%
Decreased	17%

### **Social Media Usage by Purpose**

Ninety percent of students use social networks for social reasons and 82 percent for entertainment. Almost a third (29%) use them for educational purposes.

Social	90%
Entertainment	82%
Educational	29%
Professional	16%

### **Social Media Usage by Method**

Seventy percent of students use the computer as their method of social media access. Twenty-nine percent of students use both the computer and mobile devices for access to social media. Only one percent of students use mobile devices exclusively.

Computer	70%
Phone/Mobile Device	1%
Both	29%

### **Social Media Usage In Relation To Sleep**

The study found that there is no correlation between online network usage and hours of sleep per night. Of heavy users of social media, 60 percent get a light amount of sleep per night. Of light users of social media, 60 percent also get a light amount of sleep per night. The study found that those who use social networks for 61 or more minutes a day are equally as likely as those who use social networks for 31 or fewer minutes per day to sleep seven or fewer hours per night. Slightly more than one out of 10 (12%) of both heavy and light users of social media sleep nine or more hours per night.

### **Heavy Users of Social Media**

Light Sleep	60%
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Heavy Sleep 13%

### **Light Users of Social Media**

Light Sleep 60%

Heavy Sleep 12%

### **Typical Weekday Sleep**

Twenty-nine percent of students said they sleep eight hours on a typical weekday. Approximately double that amount (61%) said that on a typical weekday they sleep seven or fewer hours. The remaining 10 percent of students are heavy sleepers, sleeping nine or more hours on a typical weekday.

6 Hours or Fewer 21%

7 Hours 40%

8 Hours 29%

9 Hours 8%

10 Hours or More 2%

## **Social Media Usage by College**

### **Facebook**

Health Science students have the highest proportion of heavy users. Engineering students have the lowest proportion of heavy users and have the highest proportion of light users of Facebook. Liberal Arts students have the lowest proportion of light users.

### **Heavy Users of Facebook**

Health Science 39%

Liberal Arts 35%

Life Science 35%

Business 31%

Engineering 15%

### **Light Users of Facebook**

Engineering 60%

Life Science 39%

Business 36%

Health Science 30%

Liberal Arts 28%

### **YouTube**

Liberal Arts students have the highest proportion of heavy users of YouTube. Engineering students have the lowest proportion of heavy users of YouTube. Business

students have the highest proportion of light users of YouTube. Life Science students have the lowest proportion of light users of YouTube.

### **Heavy Users of YouTube**

Liberal Arts	11%
Business	8%
Life Science	7%
Health Science	5%
Engineering	4%

### **Light Users of YouTube**

Business	71%
Health Science	67%
Liberal Arts	64%
Engineering	62%
Life Science	57%

### **Blogs**

Health Science students have the highest proportion of light users among the colleges. Engineering students have the lowest proportion of light users.

There were no measurable results of heavy usage of Blogs.

### **Light Users of Blogs**

Health Science	21%
Life Science	17%
Business	17%
Liberal Arts	16%
Engineering	14%

### **Twitter**

Business students have the highest proportion of light users of Twitter. Engineering students have the lowest proportion of light users of Twitter.

There were no measurable results of heavy users of Twitter.

### **Light Users of Twitter**

Business	24%
Liberal Arts	17%
Health Science	17%
Life Science	13%
Engineering	6%

### **LinkedIn**

Business students have the highest proportion of light users for LinkedIn

across the university. Engineering students have the lowest proportion of light users of LinkedIn. Business students have the highest proportion of users as a whole, since no students are heavy users of LinkedIn.

There were no measurable results of heavy users of LinkedIn.

### **Light Usage**

Business	17%
Health Science	12%
Liberal Arts	7%
Life Science	5%
Engineering	3%

### **Typical Weekday Sleep**

Health Science students have the highest proportion of students who sleep nine or more hours a night across the University at 14 percent. Engineering students have the lowest proportion of students who sleep nine or more hours per night at four percent.

Engineering students have the highest proportion of students who sleep seven or fewer hours per night across the University at 69 percent. Business students have the lowest proportion of students who sleep seven or fewer hours per night sleepers at 52 percent.

### **Heavy Sleepers**

Health Science	14%
Liberal Arts	13%
Business	13%
Life Science	9%
Engineering	4%

### **Light Sleepers**

Engineering	69%
Liberal Arts	63%
Life Science	61%
Health Science	57%
Business	52%

### **Class Standing and Sleep**

Freshmen had the highest proportion of heavy sleepers and the lowest proportion of light sleepers (numbers weighted.) Seniors had the lowest proportion of heavy sleepers. As class standing increased, the percentage of heavy sleepers decreased. There was no correlation between light sleepers and class standing. Juniors had the highest percentage of light sleepers across the University.

### **Heavy Sleepers**

Freshmen	32%
Sophomore	26%
Junior	24%
Senior	18%

**Light Sleepers**

Junior	26%
Sophomore	26%
Senior	25%
Freshmen	23%

**Appendix**  
**University of New Hampshire Research Team**  
**That Conducted Study of Social Networking and Sleep**

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