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English 400

25 June 2018

Proposal: The Removal of Likes

It seems as if every person has social media these days. Daily conversations consist of what he or she is going to post next and how he or she thinks followers will react. Is likes really all that matters these days? Over the past few years it appears as if you are only thriving if you have over a certain amount of likes, which certainly cannot be true. Many people come from different backgrounds where they simply may not know as many people. Is it morally correct to judge someone for not having a lot of likes on social media because of where they come from? Social media developers should remove likes from social media networks because it creates false social status, discouragement, and loneliness (Tait).

These likes hit the younger generations the hardest usually. “Likes are always an indicator of social standing, at my age,” says an anonymous 17-year-old survey respondent (Tait). Students and young adults should not have to feel as if they are constantly having to worry about their social status based on what they are posting on social media networks. According to a study held by NewStatesman, 67.4 percent of respondents wanted more when asked whether they would like more, the same, or less likes on social media networks. If a solution is not created, then this problem will continue to spiral out of control. My proposed solution is to completely erase all likes from all social media platforms and only leave a comment section. Leaving a comment section will allow for more personal reactions and will allow users to interact more than just simply hitting a like button.

The first step I would take in this process would be to reach out to developers and show them these statistics from major news articles showing how likes are discouraging and causing divides. My next step would be to conduct my own study by having some of my friends stop liking posts on social media to see how the people not receiving the likes would react. My main goal with this proposal is for developers and marketers to see the impact that these likes are creating beyond the social media world. Likes are impacting what people believe is success and failure and I strongly believe that that is impacting our culture in a negative way. I believe these are minor steps that I can work on to help contribute to the success of likes eventually becoming extinct on all social media sites.

Many users believe that social media likes are everything and would never agree with dismissing them at once. There are benefits to social media likes, but I strongly believe there is more bad than good when it comes to this issue. Articles argue that social media likes keep the community fresh by bringing in new users and followers into social media every day (Neumann). While bringing in new followers is important, there are other ways to keep the community fresh other than likes on a Facebook post. Another benefit to social media likes is social standings. While likes can be strongly beneficial if you are on the high end of the like spectrum, likes can also cause discouragement and loneliness if you are not receiving as many. People come from different schools and backgrounds with different amounts of people. How many people you know contributes to how many likes you have, but it should not mean that someone that does not come from a background with a lot of people is posting things that are not equally important. From a business point of view, it is easy to get caught up in the idea of social media linking to marketing which links to success. Your posts should really be about getting people to your website and converting them into customers (Bolton). If likes were not a part of getting users to visit certain pages, posts would be more honest and more straight to the point because companies would not be trying to impress other companies by how many likes they are receiving on a post (Bolton). While I can see how likes can help make businesses successful, I believe that the extra “fluff” that companies are putting into advertisements and posts on social media are taking away from the actual product itself. Without likes, this would not be an issue in the social media world. If only comments were available, potential customers could discuss questions and concerns about the product without having to see how many likes a post have.

My first step of solving the problem of having likes on social media networks is to reach out to developers with the hard facts of what likes are doing to our society every day. My next step of conducting my own research will also prove that social media likes can cause low self-esteem and loneliness. Recently, researchers found that those with low self-esteem tend to feel bad if their post receives a low amount of likes on Facebook (Seidman). Going online is proven to be more important to teens than it is adults. 92 percent of teens are online daily and 24% of teens reported that they are “constantly” online (Seidman). 71 percent of teens use Facebook, 52% use Instagram, 41% use Snapchat, 33% use Twitter, and 14% use Tumblr (Newport Academy). These numbers are alarming, and makes these teens especially prone to taking likes and other forms of acceptance online to heart. These also lead to mental disorders such as depression and anxiety due to the fact that teens are worrying about how many likes they are or not receiving and the reaction they often have if their post did not live up to expectations that social media networks have set to judge success and failure (Newport Academy). If developers like you decide to decide to get rid of social media likes on teens won’t have to worry about having acceptance online because of what they are posting.

My second step of solving the problem of having likes on social media networks was to reach out to my own friends and family and receive their input on how likes affect their moods and daily routines. 13 out of the 15 friends and family members that I asked told me that they are very discouraged when their posts receive under 100 likes. Isn’t it crazy to think that people really allow 100 likes or less to ruin their day? The obsession over likes is what our social media society has taught the younger generations. The small research that I’ve done can hopefully lead to larger research studies by developers like you to understand the strong correlation between social media likes and teens and adults having depression and anxiety if not an appropriate amount of likes is received on a photo or post. There have been [1.13 trillion likes](http://blog.wishpond.com/post/115675435109/40-up-to-date-facebook-facts-and-stats) on Facebook since it launched in 2004, 4.5 billion every day and 3,125,000 new likes a minute (Squier). That’s an insane amount of likes when you really think about it. People all over the world are glued to their phone after they post a picture or update because they are watching the amount of likes they receive. Obsessing over likes is unhealthy and can lead to serious mental health issues (Squier). These numbers do not lie, and developers like you can stand up and make a change to eliminate this type of pressure that comes with having social media networks.

Likes are simply unnecessary on social media sites. All of the information I’ve proposed above support the idea of eliminating social media likes as a whole and encouraging the commenting section. The commenting section would leave room for more interaction among family and friends and would potentially lead to more personal interactions and relationships. The opposing argument of the fact that social media likes leads to a fresh and modern community can be looked at as correct in some perspectives, but the overall idea of a person’s wellbeing being attacked by social media likes over shines a fresh and modern community, which is not even proven to be true. The two steps of eliminating social media likes are very small, but can hopefully get the message and information about social media likes causing harm out to more developers and can lead to some changes being made regarding social media likes on their respective networks. The removal of social media likes on social media can lead to higher self-esteem and improved mental health conditions for all internet users, especially teens and young adults. Minor changes by one social media platform can lead to minor changes by other social media networks. If one developer were to make a change then I believe many other developers would be open to following in the footsteps, which would be a huge sign of progress for the removal of these likes that seem to cause so many issues in real life. If you want to make a change in the way social media is being used today, the removal of social media likes would be in your best interest.

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