

Facebook Really Is Bad For You, Researchers Say

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Apparently, [Chamath Palihapitiya](#) was on to something when he revealed earlier this week that he felt “tremendous guilt” for the role that he played in Facebook’s success as a social-media company.

To wit, Facebook's director of research David Ginsberg and research scientist Moira Burke published a [blog post](#) this week explaining that, in some instances, the social network can have a deleterious impact on an individual’s overall mood and health.

"University of Michigan students randomly assigned to read Facebook for 10 minutes were in a worse mood at the end of the day than students assigned to post or talk to friends on Facebook," the blog post said. "A study from UC San Diego and Yale found that people who clicked on about four times as many links as the average person, or who liked twice as many posts, reported worse mental health than average in a survey."

In other words, using Facebook to mindlessly browse through your feed or click posts can leave you in a foul mood after.

However, the research wasn’t exclusively negative. Facebook also worked with Carnegie Mellon University and

found that "people who sent or received more messages, comments and timeline posts reported improvements in social support, depression and loneliness." Likewise, Facebook said students at Cornell who used Facebook for 5 minutes while viewing their own profiles saw "boosts in self-affirmation," while folks who looked at other profiles did not.



Chamath Palihapitiya

In other words, using Facebook to interact with people - as opposed to just "browsing" as the University of Michigan study analyzed - seemed to have a positive effect on people

Facebook says it's going to take this data and work to encourage more social interaction among users to try and cut down on those who spend it to waste time and, ultimately, feel worse after.

Meanwhile, Facebook's research showed that social support can help prevent suicide.

Facebook is in a unique position to connect people in distress with resources that can help. We work with people and organizations around the world to develop support options for people posting about

suicide on Facebook, including reaching out to a friend, contacting help lines and reading tips about things they can do in that moment.

Toward the end of its post, Facebook acknowledged that it hadn't yet had time to discover "all the answers" – though the company recently pledged \$1 million toward research to better understand the relationship between media technologies, youth development and well-being to determine how Facebook has affected the attention spans of its users.

While Palihapitiya later walked back his assertion that Facebook is "ripping apart the fabric of how society works" after being brutally [flamed on Twitter for his purported hypocrisy](#), the notion that Facebook is making its users sick and miserable is certainly nothing new.

As we pointed out in August, even though post-Millennials are safer, physically, than adolescents have ever been. [Social media has pushed them to the brink of a mental health crisis.](#)