

Oversharing on social media has now become the norm online. I'm a 90s baby, so I grew up watching the internet take over the world and have observed how the evolution of different devices and social media platforms has affected myself and the people around me.

It started with Facebook, where the first status prompt on your homepage was: "What's on your mind?" This question encouraged people to engage with the platform automatically by just reading that question and reflecting on it. Despite its somewhat status of irrelevancy now, Facebook laid the groundwork for all social media today. Until Facebook arrived, nobody used the word "friend" as a verb. Everyone wants to feel popular. That is why some Facebook users, especially in the early days, hoarded friends like poker chips, even if they were simply an acquaintance you met once at a party. Realistically, nobody really has 1200 "friends." Facebook's "friend" also was the forerunner to Twitter and Instagram's "follower," which makes a user's social contacts sound like members of a cult.

Facebook introduced "like" and "dislike," buttons, as well as "sharing," and "tagging." Instagram shortly followed suit, with the focus being on original images people took and were sharing rather than the text. Statuses now became "captions," and social media "influencers" suddenly took the internet by storm. "Caption this," was a popular caption on Instagram for a time. The aim for popularity on Instagram was bred from a place of having your Instagram page look aesthetically pleasing, easy to read, and have professional looking photos paired with clever captions. People who were able to achieve these categories have a higher likelihood of gaining followers, which leads to the

term “social media influencer.” Suddenly, people were making money on the internet – not just on Instagram.

The term “trauma dumping” appeared following the emergence of Tik Tok. Instead of the focus being on a trendy caption and an unattainable photo, this platform focuses on videos – the more “authentic,” the better. Since people’s personal definition of “authentic” varies, Tik Tok benefits from this, since one way of being “authentic” has turned into oversharing in videos people are posting on this platform. On my “for you” page (the main page where you scroll through videos that Tik Tok’s algorithm has recommended for you), I have seen some crazy content. “ASMR” has become hugely popular on Tik Tok, along with people sharing videos of their father with dementia, people sharing their experiences with disorders and mental health, drug addicts and homeless people asking for help. Sometimes I will also see videos of what’s happening in the news. Mainly, Tik Tok is now trending because it is the “closest” way of connecting with someone. Some Tik Tok influencers are making well over six figures a year.

However, any kind of fame always comes at a precious price. While trauma dumping isn’t a psychological term, it has become an established phrase online for the last few years, referring to the sharing of a traumatic experience “without asking permission” for the receiver’s “capacity to hear or interact with that type of information,” according to the adolescent psychotherapist and YouTuber Mallory Grimste. There are still “trigger warnings” on some content that I see, however, it is extremely worrisome how accessible some of this traumatic content is, especially for young children.

<https://www.insider.com/trauma-dumping-tiktok-mental-health-experts-creators-2021-9>

Navigating visibility on social media is a complex task for emerging artists. While public accounts on platforms like Instagram and TikTok can increase reach and engagement, they also carry risks. Public-facing profiles are more susceptible to unwanted attention, harassment, and privacy breaches. In some cases, the consequences can be serious enough to require intervention. For many artists, these experiences inform a shift in how they manage online presence, opting to keep accounts private or limit access to trusted connections. Striking a balance between personal safety and artistic exposure is not easy, but for some, prioritizing well-being and maintaining boundaries outweighs the potential reach of a wider digital audience.