

'How Many 'Likes' Is My Life Worth'

A Radio Documentary Exploring the Psychological Effects of Social Media

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in [Journalism and Public Relations], is my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

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Abstract

The development of social media has been one of the biggest changes in society over the last 20 years. When it was first established, the premise was entangled with aiding people to communicate and form connections. Today, social media is widely utilised by account holders to present a 'perfect' version of themselves and project the best version of their lives to those who follow them.

Mental health and well-being are an increasingly acknowledged aspect of an individual's overall health, in society today. Over the last number of years, there has been an increase in young people suffering from mental health issues. Could there be a correlation between the development of social media and this growth in the number of young people struggling with their mental health?

This documentary explores the world of social media and the way in which it is utilised, to discover whether the way we interact with it is affecting people psychologically. The listener is brought on a journey, hearing from a range of mental health professionals, a tech expert and social media users. The voices throughout give an insight into how we use social media, how it can negatively affect us and how frequent users feel it may be negatively impacting their lives. The unearthed facts and opinions explain how social media is changing our brains and affecting the development of one's sense of self, and how the facilitation of comparisons on social media is causing general anxiety, depression and has links with eating disorders.

This accompanying document outlines the research journey of the subject of this documentary by referring to relevant literature and studies conducted in this area. This document also explains the creative and technical process that led to the final edit of the documentary 'How Many 'Likes' is My Life Worth'.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation conducted by the practice of producing a radio documentary explores the way in which we utilise social media in society today and whether this could be contributing to the increase in young people suffering from mental health issues.

Social media use has grown exponentially over the past twenty years. Since the launch of the first platform *Six degrees* in 1997, there have been major developments. Today, the most popular platforms include *Facebook*, *Instagram* and *Snapchat*. In 2013, a survey conducted by the *Royal College of Surgeons* found that one in five young adults in Ireland aged between 19-24 experience mental health issues (*RCSI*, 2013) while the 2016 census report found an increase of 28.7% in people reporting a psychological or emotional condition. This dissertation seeks to find out whether there is a correlation between the two.

The research focuses on *Facebook* and *Instagram* and the increasing levels of mental health issues in young people aged 18-24. This dissertation analyses the psychological effects that have been associated with aspects of social media use, these include anxiety, depression, loneliness and self-deprecation. In order to thoroughly investigate the issue of social media use and its potential psychological effects to ensure this dissertation arrives at a comprehensive conclusion, the documentary will interview a range of people including mental health experts, technical experts and social media users.

There are a number of aspects of social media that have been identified in the research conducted thus far as potentially damaging to one's mental health and well-being. These include the constant comparisons that come from the millions of profiles that can be viewed in which people curate their lives to present the best version of themselves to their followers.

"Many of our feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction have their roots in how we compare ourselves to others. When we compare ourselves to those who have more, we feel bad. " (Niven, 2000: 9).

Social media applications present several other psychological stresses to users (Parnell, 2017), these include the highlight reel of social media in which each profile contains the highlights of one's life portraying perfection whilst concealing any shortcomings "the highlight reel is a social media résumé, usually posted to *Facebook*, which chronicles a person's best moments" (Freitas, 2017). The currency of 'likes' and 'comments' that users aim to receive when they post photos, status updates or videos is described as another stress. The Fear of missing out, abbreviated as FOMO which is defined as "pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent" (Przybyski et al., 2013). Social media use has allowed users to witness the adventures and experiences others are having daily, thus exasperating the overall feelings of FOMO.

Radio is a mass medium that is widely used in our society. It relies solely on the use of sound to transmit messages to the public (McLeish and Link, 2015). Radio enables listeners to visualise and imagine, " unlike television, where the pictures are limited by the size of the screen, radio's pictures are any size you care to make them" (McLeish and Link, 2015: 2), this characteristic of radio ensures it is an ideal medium to create a documentary such as this. Listeners can focus on the facts and opinions being presented and create their own image of the characters portrayed throughout, enhancing the overall experience. This dissertation speaks about the medium of radio and its value, the importance of documentary making, and the theory that enabled the successful creation of this documentary from research through to fruition including the best practice for interviews, editing, narration, sound effects and music.

The chapters included in this dissertation present in-depth detail of each process that was conducted to create the final documentary. Chapter two outlines the research that was undertaken to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the world of social media, mental health and of documentary making. The research detailed will demonstrate that this is a subject that has begun to be explored by scholars, social science academics and psychologists. This chapter will also outline the research conducted in documentary making and the range of programmes that enabled decisions to be made regarding format, music and narration.

The design and construction are outlined in chapter three, the decisions that are made through the planning stage, the recording of the documentary and the final editing process are explained.

Chapter four includes a detailed discussion regarding the interesting facts and discussions that are had during the interviews with both the social media users and the expert contributors. The direction of the editing process and the lessons learned throughout the process are also detailed.

To conclude, chapter five presents closing remarks on the subject. Comments will also be made on the final edit of the documentary. This chapter will sum up the dissertation, refer to any developments or changes that could be made and explain the suitability of the final documentary for broadcast.

Chapter 2: Evidence of Research

The research conducted in advance of the creation of this documentary is presented below, providing a basis upon which the investigation of the dissertation is conducted. The research is sourced from several entities including books, peer-reviewed journals, radio documentaries and podcasts.

Firstly, the psychological effects of social media will be analysed under the headings of anxiety, depression, loneliness and self-image and comparisons, the statistics related to social media usage will also be outlined.

Part two outlines radio documentary theory and highlights the radio documentaries that aided the decision-making process in terms of the structure that would best suit this documentary.

Part 1: The Psychological effects of Social media

2.1 Social Media

Social media has become an increasingly significant part of many people's everyday lives in today's society and thus has undoubtedly revolutionised the way in which people communicate with friends, family and strangers across the world (StatusofMind, 2017). Social media is defined as "websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking" (Tella, 2014).

Facebook was founded in 2004 while *Instagram* launched in 2010. According to March 2018 statistics, *Facebook* has 1.45 billion daily active users and 2.20 billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2018). *Instagram* has 800million monthly active users, 40 billion photos have been shared to date with 95million average daily posts, the number of average *Instagram* likes administered per day is 4.2 billion. Statistics also show there is a gender difference in *Instagram* use with 68% of users being female (Aslam, 2018). Today, in Ireland there is extensive use of the applications in question.

According to a 2017 survey conducted by *IPSOS* 1.695million Irish people use *Facebook* daily. 28% of the entire Irish population have an *Instagram* account, this makes it the second most popular application after *Facebook* (*IPSOS*, 2017).

2.2 Dopamine

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that controls the brains reward and subjective pleasure signal whilst aiding the regulation of emotional responses (Iversen, Iversen and Dunnett, 2010). It is activated and released at any point in which an individual acknowledges something they deem important or pleasurable. This cycle is often referred to as the 'reward circle' that explains the human brain is wired to link specific activities with pleasure. Owens (2018) explains that *Facebook*, *Instagram* and other social networking sites provide a social stimulus for those who crave approval, with a dopamine release following the receiving of that approval. Homayoun (2017) explains that "because social media 'likes', and approval have been shown to result in an addictive dopamine release, checking your phone to see who has liked or commented on a photo or posting can become addictive".

2.3 Loneliness, Depression and Anxiety

Kraut et al., (1998) researched the use of the internet and the effects of this on social interaction and psychological wellbeing. The study examined 169 people in 73 households. Over the first one to two years of their internet use, it was discovered that the greater the internet use the greater the decrease in interaction with family, decrease in the size of their social circle and an increase in their level of loneliness and depression.

A study conducted in the United Kingdom over a 3-month period carried out six focus groups with 54 social media users aged 11-18. Throughout the investigation, three themes were identified by the users, including mood and anxiety disorders, bullying and addiction. A number of inherent aspects of social media were identified as causing these negative effects included the use of photo-shop that lowered self-esteem (O'Reilly et al., 2018).

Kim, LaRose and Peng (2009) also analysed general internet use and its link with psychological issues such as loneliness and depression. The research explores the effects of the internet on those who are socially uncomfortable and the link with their inability to control their internet usage as it becomes an easier way for them to interact with others, rather than forming real-life relationships. In addition, Twenge (2017) examines the link between social media use and loneliness with reference to young people and discusses the feelings of loneliness and depression among young people who spend a significant amount of time on social media "with teens spending less time on activities that assuage loneliness and more time on those that don't it is not surprising that loneliness has increased" (Twenge, 2017: 98). Mahajan (2013) examined by means of a survey distributed to *Facebook* users to analyse whether *Facebook* is associated with narcissism and loneliness. It was established that features on the site such as profile pictures, number of photos and status updates evoked narcissism while status updates, number of friends and the amount of time spent on the sites predicted loneliness.

A report commissioned by the *Royal Society for Public Health* analysed a number of the negative psychological effects of social media on young people. The research suggested that those spending more than two hours a day on social media are more likely to suffer from symptoms of anxiety and depression. It is suggested this is an effect of a number of aspects of social media including the perpetual imagery of friends and acquaintances enjoying themselves on holidays or nights out. This promotes a 'compare and despair' attitude among users. Photoshopped, edited and staged photos are also acknowledged as aspects of social media that feed into user's negative comparisons. The report suggests young women spending a significant amount of time on sites such as *Instagram* were likely to have heightened body issue concerns than those that didn't (RSPH, 2017). A survey carried out on 1,500 social media users between the ages of 15-24 cited *Instagram* as the most negative site for psychological effects on users. The survey concluded this is because of rankings related to fourteen themes that include anxiety, loneliness, depression, self-identity, body image and fear of missing out (FOMO) (RSPH, 2017). Studies have been researching whether one's social media behaviour can detect their psychological state and it has been found that

high levels of self-disclosure on social media can be linked to those experiencing loneliness in the real world (Maddux, 2017).

2.4 Self Image and Comparison

The internet and social media are currently used as a platform to project the most perfect aspects of our lives. The perpetual output of perfection through images is perceived as reality, causing negative thoughts of oneself if unable to obtain the highest levels of perfection. Freitas (2017) conducted a study by visiting thirteen Universities across America and interviewing students on social media. Freitas argues against the opinions that the young people of today's use of social media presents an egotistical generation and rather explains that the pressures of social media cause copious amounts of anxiety and forces young people to appear egotistical across their social media platforms as they desperately try to keep up with their peers and appear perfect " comparing ourselves to others, coupled with the pressure "to keep up a happy appearance" on social media to prove to everyone that you matter, that you are having a blast " (Freitas, 2017, p. 258).

Wang et al., (2017) investigate the impact of passive social networking sites on user's psychological well-being. The investigations recognised an extreme correlation between the use of social networking sites and psychological issues. They conclude that this correlation is due to the ethos of social comparisons on the sites. They found this culture led to feelings of low self-worth and esteem. Appel, Crusius and Gerlach (2015) conducted a similar study focusing solely on social network site *Facebook*. The research acknowledges the link between *Facebook* and feelings of envy which in turn was leading to depression. Lup et al., (2015) carried out research regarding *Instagram* use and mental health. The research used 117 18-29-year-olds who completed online questionnaires on a number of aspects of their use on *Instagram*. The research concluded that the more frequent use of the site and the more strangers followed the more negatives feelings of self that occurred.

Hawi and Samaha (2016) study analysed the relationship between social media addiction, life satisfaction and self-esteem. Their analysis found that technological addictions, including social media sites, have a positive correlation with stress, anxiety

and depression. The research into university students found that those who scored high on a scale of social media addiction reported lower levels of self-esteem.

Social comparison theory explains that human beings have a natural, inherent need to evaluate their progress and standing on various aspects of themselves and their lives. In the absence of objective standards, human beings compare themselves to others in order to know where they stand (Festinger, 1954). A study examining the effects of *Facebook* on women's mood and self-image concluded that women were recorded as being in a more negative mood following *Facebook* usage and were more likely to make appearance comparisons and to want to change aspects of their appearance including hair, facial and skin features (Fardouly et al., 2015). Social comparisons can also be encouraged by hashtags to generate specific content. The use of hashtags such as #thinspiration, #bonespiration and #fitspiration all focus on aspiring to a specific body type and creates a community of people who have that body type or aspire to achieve it. A study analysing the effects of #fitspiration images carried out on 130 females found that following acute exposure to fitspiration images, the women experienced an increased negative mood, increased body dissatisfaction and decreased self-esteem (Tiggemann and Zaccardo, 2015). There are many suggestions that social media can be used more by the vulnerable in an effort to satisfy needs. The theory of uses and gratifications acknowledge that those with low self-esteem and body image are more likely to seek social media-based gratification compared to their less vulnerable counterparts, thus if gratification does not occur further damage can result " Once they are on social media, they will encounter a host of actual and perceived pressures that may aggravate body disturbances." (Perloff, 2014).

This research has established the popularity and global use of social media platforms. It has also ensured there is a growing interest in the field of social media and its psychological effects and demonstrated there is a basis for further research.

Part 2: The Radio documentary

2.5 Radio in Ireland and Documentary Making

This radio documentary will be produced as a 20-minute piece. At the core of this dissertation, radio documentary making is investigated thus ensuring the best approach is taken for production. The process of documentary making is defined as that which uses "pictures or interviews with people involved in real events to provide a factual report on a particular subject." (Oxford Dictionary, 2018). The medium of radio is widely used by the Irish public to be informed, educated and entertained. According to 2017/ 2018 figures, 82% of Irish adults listen to the radio on an average day with 57% tuning into their local station and 45% listening to a national station (IPSOS, 2018).

Hendy (2004: 167) explains that documentary "claims a special relationship with reality, observing and collating the 'raw' sounds, images and objects of the world". Radio documentaries are "factual accounts of 'reality' often based on interviews, observation and actuality" (Chignell, 2009). The medium of radio is right for this documentary as it is seen as "intimate, personal, trustworthy, exploratory, live and immediate" (Edmond, 2015: 1569). Edmond also describes radio as conversational, private, intimate and domestic. These aspects of radio ensure it is the correct medium to bring the listener on the journey of learning about social media and the psychological effects it may be having on users. These characteristics will enable listeners to trust and create personal connections with contributors they may enjoy engaging with and relate to.

An important aspect of many documentaries are the interviews with experts and people with personal experience of the subject. The individual contributors taking part in this documentary are integral to convey the main points. The range of contributors ensures both expert and personal opinions and experiences are communicated. The interviews conducted are qualitative. Qualitative research is defined as "conducting an enquiry that is aimed at discovering how human beings understand, experience, interpret and produce the social world" (Sandelowski, 2004: 893). Interviewing

requires a number of techniques to be applied to ensure the best outcome, Adams and Hicks (2001) explains that journalists must listen and encourage, use silence and use statements that require confirmation.

Documentary Radio has a range of advantages over live talk radio. McLeish and Link (2015) explain that documentary enables both producer and listener to focus solely on the subject at the core of the documentary. This gives the subject extensive thought and enables the producer to add colour and effects thus simultaneously educating and entertaining listeners "It's brought alive by involving more people, more voices and a greater range of treatment. It should entertain and tell a story while it informs and provokes further thought and concern" (McLeish and Link, 2015: 320). The sensory aspect of documentary is vital for its overall presentation and the reaction it evokes in the listener, Mortley in Madsen (2010) explains that it is "a type of radio where the real glides towards something else... where the aim is less to instruct or inform and is more about creating a universe woven from real sounds." This aspect of documentary applies to the documentary that will be created for this dissertation as music, sound effects and the different characters will evoke the listener's imagination.

Documentaries produced for radio can take several formats and structural styles. The decision of whether to utilise the voice of a narrator is described by Mc Leish and Link (2015) as the main structural decision in the production process. A narrator can bring various aspects of structure to a documentary including providing a link between interviews, themes throughout and provide background information and statistics on the subject, they also provide a voice to introduce contributors. McLeish and Link (2015 explain that it is important that a narrator plays a role in the documentary but should "link and not interrupt" the documentary.

2.6 Documentary Examples

When researching existing documentaries with similar subject matter and documentary style, there was a wide range of relevant examples. Each documentary presented an interesting angle that could be taken when dealing with specific issues as well as a range of styles in which radio documentaries can be produced.

A documentary that proved an interesting listen with both a correlating topic and style was *Bursting the Social Media Bubble* (2017) by Bobby Friction and produced by Perminder Khatkar at *BBC4*. A number of contributors spoke about the use of social media and its effects on society. Social media users spoke about their point of view and likes/dislikes of the most popular sites *Twitter*, *Facebook* and *Instagram*. The style of the documentary includes interviews with both psychiatrists and social media users. This inspired me to ensure that the final edit of my documentary would contain the voices of experts in both the field of mental health and social media as well as every day, casual social media users. The documentary also brought an interesting aspect of social media to light. It explains how our social media feeds are filtered towards our likes and opinions and whether this is filtering people's opinions of the world. The documentary presented a biographical element as the narrator Bobby Friction spoke about his own social media usage. The documentary journey is, from the outset from the standpoint of him finding out what effects his extensive usage may be having on him psychologically. Although this documentary will not be about my use of social media it will have me as the narrator throughout and will document the social media use of the users I speak with. This documentary also used a range of music and sound effects which solidified their importance in a documentary to me, I felt they added to the overall atmosphere of the documentary and my enjoyment and engagement as a listener.

How to Not Lose Yourself or Humanity with Social Media (2013) documents the 'toxic' effects of social media use. The documentary sets out with the focus on the negative effects both social media and digital device use is having on human relationships, creativity, productivity and health. The narrator, from the outset, explains his standpoint that social media has several effects on these aspects of humanity. The positive sides of social media are touched on, outlining its benefits for users to connect with people and for businesses to communicate with their customers. This podcast enlightened me to a study conducted in the UK regarding the 'selfie' phenomenon driven by social media that showed that selfies had the potential to damage real-world relationships as they make people less likeable, it also found there was an increased frequency of 'selfie' sharing related to a decreased intimacy with people. The narrator explores the ideas that social media is preventing people from experiencing the

moment as they are constantly focused on social media "we actually miss the opportunity to legitimately connect with other people" (Gibson, 2013). Gibson also speaks about the idea that who we follow on social media is important, is it just friends and family or are we following celebrities, influencers, and other strangers? The podcast explains that this also is impacting social media users psychologically, we are absorbing their content thus it is impacting who we are and our opinions. Although the podcast was a very different style to the one I will produce, as the narrator was the only voice throughout. This documentary presented several interesting issues that aid in the formation of my interview questions and adds to the specific themes I wish to explore.

Another documentary identified was, *When it comes to Our Lives on Social Media, 'There's Always Another Story'* (2017). The documentary presented the idea that users of *Facebook* present a fictional reality of the life they live by curating it and presenting its most positive attributes. It does this by using the personal story of one woman, Rachel who depicts the way in which she presented her 'perfect' life on *Facebook* while in fact, she was in a very unhappy place. The podcast combines science and personal storytelling to explain and analyse unconscious patterns that drive human behaviours. This format of the documentary is similar to that which will be employed in the making of this dissertation, as it ensures that a range of opinions and facts are unearthed. The premise of the podcast significantly analysed the way in which users of social media compare themselves to other users. The central contributor recalling her personal use of *Facebook* explained: "I would just scour people's lives to compare their happiness against mine" (Vedantem, 2017). The documentary follows a journey from the introduction to show that there is always another story behind the one that is presented on *Facebook* profiles. This is acknowledged as true by the contributors who explain anxieties and unhappiness that can be activated as a result of *Facebook* use. This documentary gave me an idea of the range of subjects that should be discussed to ensure a well-rounded discussion on the topic is presented, including why we are using social media, what exactly we are using it for and obtaining honesty from users about their content curation process and why they put up all the positive aspects of their life as well as whether they acknowledge that what they see of other people's lives may now be the whole truth.

Louise Rumball -3 Months Clean from Social Media (2018) was presented as an episode of the *Sanctus Podcast on Mental Health*. The podcast presented an interview with social media influencer Louise Rumball, who has 40 thousand *Instagram* followers and took the decision to stop her use of *social media* 3 months prior to the podcast. Rumball explains that this enabled her to nurture her real offline friendships and relationships. Louise started out with the plan to delete social media for a week but seeing the benefits she kept going for over three months. Louise speaks about the constant need to keep up appearances and how it was unnatural and although everything in her life was stressful, her online persona presented perfection and happiness she wasn't really feeling. Although the podcast was a straight interview rather than a documentary style programme, the subject matter showcased how social media was taking over this woman's life and she was able to turn her obsessive need for validation around and is happier without using social media. This documentary showed the importance of including questions regarding social media 'detoxes' when speaking to social media users.

Is Childhood Shrinking (2014) produced by Sheena Horgan and aired on *Newstalk* in 2014 was produced to understand whether childhood is shrinking in today's society and if so, why. The documentary uses a number of relevant contributors that engage with a range of themes including technology, advertising and social media. This documentary was extremely influential to my work, the construction and the way in which sound effects and music are used throughout demonstrated the most effective way to utilise these tools including to change the atmosphere, tone, as a bridge between contributors or to liven up a piece. This worked extremely well in this documentary and ensured I, as a listener was fully engaged throughout. I believe this piece of radio has enriched my knowledge of documentary making and the range of styles and techniques that may be applied throughout the editing process. This documentary, in particular, has inspired me to use my own voice throughout to introduce the topic, give the listeners statistics regarding social media use and its psychological effects and to introduce the experts and social media users that feature on the documentary. This was a big decision regarding the way in which my documentary is structured. I am confident that the use of my voice for narration will enrich the listener's experience as my passion for the subject will come through while

the narration will link ideas and contributors, making the documentary easy to follow. This documentary also influenced and inspired my decision to eliminate my voice from the interview process in the final edit of this documentary. Following listening to this documentary, I felt this was an effective tool that held my interest more than a question and answers session with each interviewee. This structure also provided me with more time to include more opinions, facts, music and sound effects that I believe will be more enjoyable and impactful for listeners. This structure enables the experts and social media user's facts and opinions to be distributed throughout the documentary and grouped into themes.

The existing documentaries and podcasts cited enable the research of an array of formats and styles of documentary making. Each documentary identified also dealt with a similar subject matter that inspired the way in which my documentary deals with these issues and enlightened the different aspects of the psychological effects of social media.

Chapter 3: Construction and Design

Each stage of this process was important in ensuring the final documentary achieved the desired objective of presenting a well-rounded view on the topic. This chapter explains the planning, contributor selection, interview and editing processes.

Planning the Documentary

3.1 Research and Decision Making

This thesis began with the idea of exploring mental health and social media and whether there is a correlation between the increase in young people suffering from mental health issues and the ever-increasing usage of social media platforms. I am passionate about the exploration of psychological issues and mental health, I believe passion is the driving force behind the making of this documentary which is essential in producing a successful piece of radio, "Australian radio documentary maker Jane Ulmann said, "To make a good radio feature you need passion, commitment, skill from the programme maker and the desire to communicate" (Crook, 1999: 213).

Following the research, I identified that there was a number of psychological effects of social media thus I decided to explore these. The research demonstrated that this was an area that needed further investigation. Following my engagement with the subject, I decided that it was necessary to focus my research in several ways, these included narrowing the age bracket of social media users that would be interviewed, focusing on specific social media platforms and containing my research and analysis to specific psychological effects of social media. Narrowing of a dissertation topic is necessary to ensure the research is kept within reasonable limits (Kibbe, 2016).

I decided to choose the most popular social media applications among young adults in Ireland, my research showed that Facebook and Instagram were the most popular social media outlets, with the highest level of daily use by account holders. 74% of Irish Facebook users use their account daily while 56% of Instagram account owners log on to the site daily (McGarrity, 2017). My research also enabled me to focus the exploration of social media users and their views on 18-24-year olds. This decision

was made as being in that age category myself, I knew social media was a big part of a considerable number of people in this age groups daily life. As they have grown up, simultaneously the power and prevalence of social media use has grown. This age group is also one that has rarely been the focus of the literature on this topic. Throughout the planning stages, I also decided to interview a higher number of females than males regarding their social media use. This decision was made as research shows that more women use social media, for longer periods of time than men, a survey carried out in 2016 found that a quarter of Irish women spend at least 1-3 hours on social media every day compared to one-fifth of men (Ring, 2016). Hormes et al (2014) also found that college-going women crave the use of social media sites more than men of the same age.

Having gained a greater understanding of the issues through research and discussion with my supervisors, I decided the documentary would include a number of speakers, along with my own voice as narration. A narrator is the ideal structural tool in "driving the programme forward in a logical, informative way" (Mc Leish, 2005: 268). The narration would be developed from the standpoint that the prevalence of social media in today's society must be having a psychological impact on users. From this standpoint, the interviews would seek an understanding of whether this was a fair analysis. In my first meeting with my technical supervisor Francesca Lalor, the idea of asking open questions and presenting interviewees with scenarios was discussed as this method encourages interviewees to open up. Open-ended questions often set the interviewee "off on a train of thought and will produce some revealing material" (Beaman, 2011: 251). My meetings with both of my supervisors as well as listening to a number of radio documentaries enlightened me to a number of ways in which the documentary could be put together. I concluded that creating montages based on the themes that arose would be the most effective method although I knew this approach would depend on the content garnered in the interview stage.

3.2 Selection of Contributors

Interviewees are a central aspect of any radio documentary. As included in Beaman's definition of radio documentary as "An in-depth look at a subject within a crafted long-form recorded programme format. It will include numerous interviewees and

illustrative material." (Beaman, 2011: 19). I went about seeking a range of suitable contributors by searching the internet to investigate whether there were specific people from the psychiatry sector who had been particularly vocal about social media or young people's mental health in Ireland. I also wanted to ensure the contributors were coming from a range of backgrounds, thus, ensuring a variety of expertise and opinions.

Joanna Fortune

Joanna Fortune is a clinical psychotherapist. Through research, I discovered that Joanna regularly contributes to media interviews on the subject of social media and technology and teenagers. Although this documentary focuses on those over 18, the effects I am exploring may often begin during social media usage as a teenager, thus these effects have the potential to persist as a result of social media usage through late teens and early twenties. Joanna has spoken a number of times in the media and also given a number of talks on the effects of social media and technology. I contacted Joanna after reading an article in *The Independent* and watching her *TEDx* talk on the 'shame society' and how social media is the ultimate shame game. In her article Joanna discussed the effects to adolescent and young adult development of constant social media and how the constant focus on one's image that social media platforms such as Instagram can present are emotionally damaging " This high emotional charge on the physical body comes at a significant cost for the inner emotional world" (Fortune, 2016). Joanna's *TEDx* talk explained this idea, she also acknowledged that "It can also be a lonely, scary, cruel, devastating place with at time ruinous consequences for anyone who dares not follow the social, moral script of the group " (Fortune, 2017).

Barry Murphy- *Bodywhys*

From the outset of the planning stages for this documentary, I decided that body image and appearance must be a central focal point. Past research has shown that time spent on social media can affect users body image "Variables have also been shown to correlate with greater body dissatisfaction and disordered eating behaviours, including time spent on social media " (Reel, 2018: 530). *Instagram* is solely focused on the images circulated by users while a significant feature of Facebook is that users

upload their photographs and create both a profile picture and cover picture on the profile. To investigate the effects image-based social media platforms may be having on the user's body image and whether there was any correlation between the use of social media and the increasing incidences of eating disorders as according to 2012 statistics, incidents of hospitalisations for anorexia and bulimia have almost doubled in the last 10 years (Pollak, 2017). I decided that I must contact the organisation at the forefront of providing services to people affected by image and eating disorders in Ireland. *BodyWhys* is the Eating Disorders Association of Ireland, I contacted the communications officer Barry Murphy who agreed to do an interview. I was keen to talk about the many social media phenomena regarding body image and weight, such as #Thinspiration, #Fitspiration and #Bonespiration. I was also keen to interview Barry regarding the comparisons people make online of themselves and the people that they follow as past research has shown constant upper social comparisons can lead to a negative self-image and body concerns and greater internalisation of beauty ideals (Reel, 2018: 531).

Jess Kelly

Jess Kelly is a tech expert working at national radio station, Newstalk, where she provides updates on the latest gadgets and online phenomenon's, as well as working on her own show, *Tech Talk*. I was, from the outset, interested in ensuring this documentary did not solely focus on the negatives of social media and had a light-hearted, educational aspect to it. I wanted the documentary to explain the premise of social media, the purpose it serves in society, the different apps and the future. I was also interested in her opinion and her personal experience of social media and whether she believes it has any negative effects on her.

DR. Brendan Kelly

Brendan Kelly is a Professor of Psychiatry at Trinity College Dublin and a Consultant Psychiatrist at Tallaght Hospital. I was struck by a number of interviews I have seen with him throughout my research and was immediately engaged with his passion regarding mental health and his work in the sector. I decided to contact him as I felt his level of knowledge and passion would make for a great interview and piece of radio for listeners to engage with. I conducted research into Brendan's work by watching a range of interviews with him and talks he has given including *The Tommy*

Tiernan Talk Show and his talk at the DotMD Conference (2017) in which he discussed suicide and self-harm.

Social media users

Speaking with 10-12 social media users was vital for this documentary to understand the effects it may, or may not be having on the average, everyday user. My aim was to speak to a range of social media users, both male and female, under the age of 24. This age group captures the people who grew up as social media rapidly grew. I wanted to capture the feelings, the emotions, and the habits of the everyday social media user, who they are following, what they are posting, how they feel it is affecting them and if it is why they continue to use it. I felt social media was the best way to go about searching for contributors that would be willing to speak about their use. I found contributors through friends and on social media. The social media users interviewed have a range of followings and a range of usage levels from people who didn't have an *Instagram* account and rarely checked their *Facebook* to those with upward of 3,000 followers who post daily.

3.3 Ethics

Another important aspect of planning was ensuring I was secure with my own ethics and morals. Ethics are defined as "a form of inquiry concerned with the processes of finding rational justifications for our actions when the values that we hold come into conflict" (Plaisance, 2013: 8). This issue of social media and mental health can, at times be sensitive as people are opening up about aspects of their social media use they may not usually be as open about such as photoshopping and editing, the research of certain hashtags and the way social media can make them feel, whether positive or negative. Nichols explains that "ethics exist to govern the conduct of groups regarding matters for which hard and fast rules or laws will not suffice". (Nichols, 2010: 50) I also analysed the NUJ code of conduct, that provides a number of principles for journalists to follow to ensure moral and ethical practice. Throughout the process, I ensured each contributor was aware of what their interview would be used for and that they are aware of the editing that will be done and where the documentary would be aired. Each contributor also signed a release form.

Recording the Documentary

3.4 Technical aspects and Environment

This documentary was solely recorded using the H1 zoom recorder. It was edited using cool edit pro 2.0. The environment for each documentary was different thus on arrival at each location, the levels were checked and adjusted to ensure the best sound quality. Each expert interview was recorded in the place of work of the interviewee while each social media user interview was conducted in my own home. This ensured the environment for the interview was casual and relaxed, it also allowed me to control the sound and test, in advance, where and at what level the best quality recording would be taken.

Before I began the interviewing process I looked back at previous interviews I had conducted for a previous documentary and acknowledged the skills I needed to improve regarding my interview and recording technique. I also conducted research in the area of journalism interview skills, ensuring I was well prepared. Adams and Hicks (2001) explain the important guidelines for interviewers that will ensure successful eliciting of information and quotes, these include to listen and encourage, use silence and make statements requiring confirmation. Before interviewing each expert, I conducted research in their field and comprised a list of relevant, precise, open questions to ensure I would get the best out of each interview. Each expert was used to speaking to the media on behalf of their organisation or themselves as a means of spreading awareness and education, thus each was comfortable being recorded.

3.5 Narration

The narration is one of the five elements of documentary established by Hedemann (2006: 61), these also include music and sound effects. Following my decision to include my own voice as narration throughout the documentary, I began to create a narrator's script by listening to radio documentaries and researching the main purpose and advantages of narration. The final narration combines a personal opening and

links with facts and contributor introductions, ensuring the script would hold attention and interest. I constructed the narration after deciding the structure of the documentary and editing the content, this enabled me to see exactly how the narration would work and what narration was required to provide structure. The narration is used consistently throughout the documentary as I believe this creates a sense that I am on a journey of exploration with the listener.

Editing the Documentary

3.6 Creating the Final Documentary

"There are always two considerations when editing namely the editorial and the technical" (Mc Leish, 2005: 31)

The editing of this documentary was the most daunting task whilst also being the most exciting aspect. McLeish (2005) explains the intended purposes of the practice of editing as reorganising recorded material in a logical sequence, discarding uninteresting, repetitive and unacceptable material, to reduce the running time of the documentary and for creative effects "to produce new juxtapositions of speech, music, sound and silence" (31). I was sure to consult the literature on the subject of documentary editing and found the words of Chantler and Stewart (2013) particularly stuck with me throughout the process. They explicitly explain that the editing process must be a ruthless process to achieve the desired final edit and to "keep the pace moving and use shorter rather than longer clips of audio" (2013: 227). The editing process for this documentary took place immediately following the interview process, following each interview, I omitted any false starts, coughs or unusable audio.

Following the completion of each interview, I had almost three hours of material to edit into a 20-minute documentary. I began by analysing each interview and ensuring I was decisive about what content would be interesting, informative and entertaining for listeners interest and enjoyment. I knew the themes that were important to me to highlight and following repeated listening to each interview it became clear the themes I had expected to be dominant were the main aspects that came up across each

interview. These included the image aspect of social media, feelings of anxiety regarding the constant comparisons one makes about themselves on social media and the image they feel a pressure to uphold of their lives. Another theme of interest was the feeling of loneliness people experience as a result of their social media use, which is caused by two aspects of social media, one, the lack of physical interaction that social media provides, and two, the perpetual bombardments of images and videos of people surrounded by friends and family.

In the interview process, I was sure to ask open questions as I knew I would be omitting my voice from the interview process, each interviewee, thus gave comprehensive answers that made sense without listeners requiring the question, this aided the editing process. The thematic element enabled a clear structure to emerge quite early on in the editing process, with clear links from one interview to the next. I decided to edit the documentary into an arc narrative, beginning with the basics of the subject and continuing into the more serious themes whilst finishing with comments on the future of social media and a conclusion from the narrator. I was keen for this documentary, although serious at times, to contain humour and a light-hearted, upbeat atmosphere, following in-depth research and listening to a range of radio documentaries this desire rapidly led me to the conclusion to use a range of music and sound effects in the final edit.

Music and Sound Effects

From the beginning of the planning process for this documentary, I knew sound effects would be an integral part in breaking up speech and holding the listener's attention as they "add enormously to what otherwise might be a succession of speech items."(McLeish and Link, 2015: 219). I was keen to use a range of sounds and pieces of music to add rhythm, atmosphere and emotion. Listening to a range of documentaries was integral to my understanding of what a professional radio documentary sounded like. The documentary that had the most influence on my choice was *Newstalk's* 'Is childhood shrinking' (2014). This documentary used a range of music and sound effects which, as a listener, I found extremely pleasing and attention-grabbing.

I thought about the sound effects and music throughout the editing process and found it was very much a trial and error process to discover what worked best for this documentary. I was conscious of ensuring I struck the right balance by not overpowering the documentary. There were a number of sound effects including social media notifications, texting and footsteps that I felt were necessary to include. Music was always set to be an important aspect of this documentary as it aids in presenting a specific atmosphere. As with sound effects, I was conscious of striking the right balance and ensuring that the use of music did not take away from the audio clips. I made the decision to use music throughout both my own narration and the montages made up of social media users. I chose not to use music throughout each audio clip in which an expert is speaking as the content was quite serious and following trial and error, I felt it was more effective and poignant to have these audio clips with no music. In the documentary opening the listener will hear a number of media clips from various news broadcasts outlining the seriousness of the mental health issues in Ireland, one extremely relevant clip already had music playing under the news reporter, I decided to include this regardless as I felt it increased the depth and introduced the topic.

3.8 Structure

The interview process unearthed a number of interesting opinions, some which were expected, others were not. The use of open questions allowed experts and users alike to open up about their opinions and feelings towards social media. It became clear that there was a mutual feeling that it has its uses but the way in which we as human are utilising it has made it a possibly dangerous place for young people. The way in which the interviewees opened up enabled the identification of a clear narrative structure that developed throughout.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

"Documentary features are the radiophonic landmarks of our existence and human heritage. They regard and inform the world of how we live and think. Their strength as a storytelling form in being rooted in the reality of life and human existence and exploring with great depth the beauty of human feeling" (Crook, 2002:231).

The production process and findings

4.1 The interviews

The journey began when I submitted my dissertation proposal on March 7th, 2018. From then I began researching the psychological effects of social media. Following extensive research, I concluded that this was a viable, important area to investigate.

The final documentary is similar to what I had envisioned at the time of proposal submission. One of the main differences was in the language I used around mental health and the decisions I made that focused exactly what I was investigating. Following my research, I made the decision that rather than solely analysing the possible correlation between social media and serious mental illnesses such as depression and eating disorders, I would also investigate the impact on one's mental well-being social media could be having such as loneliness, self-deprecation and comparisons that in some cases may lead to more serious mental illness.

Following the decision to pursue this as my topic I began researching the way in which I would structure the documentary and who it would be important to speak with in order to create an educational and opinion-based narrative. I researched people who spoke about the topic of both mental health and social media in the Irish media and quickly found the four expert contributors, Joanna Fortune, Barry Murphy, Brendan Kelly and Jess Kelly. I was extremely fortunate that each expert I contacted was willing to speak with me.

My first interview took place with Barry Murphy from *Bodywhys*, the Eating Disorders Association of Ireland. Barry explained that unfortunately thus far there is insufficient

evidence to explicitly assert that social media is contributing to the increase in incidences of eating disorders. However, Barry spoke about a number of study's that referred to the way in which people make comparisons about themselves on social media and how this can link to the causes of eating disorders. Barry referenced the *Daíl Na Nóg* (O' Connell and Martin, 2012) study that explains comparison and that media and celebrities are the most negative influences on body image. Throughout the interview, I also spoke to Barry about the hashtags on *Instagram* including Fitspiration and thinspiration, he explained that these are similar to pro-anorexia sites that have been present since the beginning of the internet. Barry also referenced a 2016 study in relation to this and explained that posting fitspiration content is a culturally sanctioned way to justify concerning behaviour such as undereating or over-exercising. This interview was an interesting, open discussion, I was happy with the content garnered for the final documentary, I was also satisfied that the quality of the recording of this interview was reasonable considering the echoed nature of the room in which it was recorded.

The second interview I conducted took place in Tallaght hospital with Dr Brendan Kelly. Following the first interview, I ensured my questioning was again, open and non-biased allowing Brendan to give a range of opinions and communicate on a range of aspects of the topic that he felt were both important and relevant. I spoke to Brendan about a number of ways in which social media is affecting people's mental health and well-being. We also spoke about the positives of social media in creating awareness about important mental health issues, this was not used in the final edit of the documentary due to the thematic structure and time restriction. The interview was extremely enlightening regarding the way the human mind works and why social media could be causing anxiety, loneliness and general unhappiness among users. I believe Brendan's expertise and passion bring the documentary to a new level. If I were to conduct this interview again, the only change I would make would be to be more attentive in ensuring the sound quality was perfect as at times it is slightly distorted, as the interview was on location there is also the noise of both cars and the Luas.

To meet Joanna Fortune, I ventured to her clinic in Bray to speak about how social media and technology use, in general, is damaging human ability to form a sense of self and decreasing our levels of empathy. Joanna is a regular contributor on radio and therefore was extremely interesting to listen to and gave extremely thought-provoking answers. It was very interesting to hear Joanna explain how social media is causing a decreased level of empathy in human beings and hear the increased level of young people presenting with anxiety, body image issues and loneliness in her own clinic. Joanna brought a number of issues to the table that I had not considered. The sense of self and its lack of development as a result of social media and internet use is extremely interesting, Joanna explained how the gratification and emphasis on seeking validation from others are skewing a sense of who we are. Joanna also spoke about the entitlement that can come from the vast amount of comparisons made on social media. This interview was very enjoyable and informative, and I am extremely happy with how the recording came out.

My final expert interview was recorded in *Newstalk* radio station with Jess Kelly. Jess explained how social media has grown so much over the last number of years, it's impact and the future changes that are set to be made. Jess explained how the future of social media and the internet is difficult to predict as any day an app could be launched that would take over from existing apps. The interview with Jess was informative and ensures there is a balance of expert opinions in the final documentary. Jess also opened up about her own social media use and how she feels it impacts on her own psyche. If I were to conduct this interview again I would have analysed the acoustics in the room more closely to ensure a higher quality of the recording. Unfortunately, there was building in progress outside the office, thus that can be heard in the recording.

The interviews with social media users were eye-opening. I asked the users a range of questions related to their usage, who they follow, the editing process they apply to images they put up, whether they feel anxious or lonely following social media usage, what their favourite platform was, and why ultimately, they use social media. Overall, I interviewed eleven social media users (2 male & 9 female), ten of whom used both *Facebook* and *Instagram*. Ten of the eleven users interviewed explained that they

found the image basis of *Instagram* the most damaging application, with extreme pressure to look perfect. They explained how filters and editing were frequently used in their pictures to make sure they met the criteria for *Instagram*. All users interviewed explained that their *Facebook* usage was decreasing. A number of the users explained how comparing themselves to others on social media was particularly hard, they elaborated that these comparisons are not solely image-based but were also derived from seeing how well people may be doing in life, seeing them enjoying holidays or events and constantly seeing how well-off people are. Although each social media user felt it negatively impacted their lives and the mental well-being they enjoyed the communication aspect and how easy social media makes it keep in touch with friends and family and see how they are getting on. Each social media user was open and honest and provides the documentary with real opinion and feelings from those who are using social media every day and feeling the effects. In the final edit, ten different users are presented, one voice, unfortunately, was omitted due to time restrictions and the thematic structure.

The process taught me a great deal about the best practice for interviewing in order to make the best of the interview. I think it is important to be open and friendly in order to make them feel comfortable, be confident reassuring them you know exactly what you are doing, be professional and prepared and always allow time for the interviewee to answer. I found using silence also very effective, giving the interviewee time to think about the question and give the answer they were most comfortable with.

4.2 The Editing Process

As explained in chapter three, the editing process was extremely daunting. I was exceptionally fortunate that each of my interviewees were passionate and interested in the subject and therefore there was an abundance of interesting, usable material. The way in which I began to work through the material was to note what each interviewee had spoken about and omit repetition, this was especially important when it came to editing the experts. Throughout the expert interviews, I omitted any material that was specifically regarding mental illness with no relation to social media

use. This ensured the documentary was focused on the specific subject matter. The use of themes was also very useful in identifying what content was relevant and thus should make the final cut.

When editing material from the interviews with social media users, I decided to create the montages based on five questions. This ensured the final material from the users was also focused and in keeping with the central themes of loneliness, anxiety, comparisons and image. As I was extremely happy with the interviews I conducted, ruthlessness was required throughout the lengthy editing process to make some very tough decisions about what material would make the final edit. In the end, material regarding who users followed, why they used social media, the effort they put into their accounts and whether they often take social media breaks was omitted. I am highly satisfied with my final decisions regarding the material that made the final edit.

4.3 Lessons learned

My decision to create a radio documentary as my dissertation in order to complete this master's programme was a highly conflicting decision. I had little experience in the field and was nervous that I would not be able to create a final product that would be deemed of high enough quality. I decided to accept the challenge as I knew it gave me the best opportunity to learn, grow and increase my skills in this area. As predicted, I learned a lot throughout this process about seeking out contributors, researching, the interview process, how to ask the best questions in the right ways to make the most out of each interview and editing. If I were to do anything differently it would be to be more confident in asking interviewees for a different space or to repeat certain things as the sound quality was compromised in certain interviews. I would also keep the interviews slightly more concise to aid the editing process. Overall this process was a learning curve and I am happy with my decision to pursue the making of a radio documentary.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The work of this dissertation that created the documentary 'How many 'likes' is my life worth?' The psychological effects of social media ' has explored the world of social media and the way in which it is used by young people in Ireland today. The listener is taken on a journey throughout the documentary that unearths the way we use social media and the effects this has. A range of people aged 24 and under explain their use and their opinion on the effects they feel it may be having on their mental health and well-being. This is conveyed using audio of individuals speaking about the lengths they go to, in order to achieve the perfect picture, the daily comparisons they make about themselves and those they follow online and the anxiety and loneliness they often feel as a result.

There is a wide range of educated, comprehensive facts, opinions and past research from experts in the field of mental health and the tech world. The experts each explain that there is no hard evidence due to the fact that social media is a relatively new phenomenon, to say that social media is causing an increased level of mental illness. However, they were able to explain that there is certainly a correlation and how aspects of social media such as comparisons can be linked to research related to eating disorders and depression. The experts each explained how social media has enabled an increased awareness of mental health issues, which is a positive attribute, but that the negatives often outweigh the positives for the majority of users.

This supporting document aspect of this dissertation showcases in-depth research into the theory behind the documentary making. Throughout the process, the theory was consulted to ensure this documentary would meet professional standards and provide the listener with a well-rounded, comprehensive media product. The supporting document demonstrates the range of research that was conducted prior to the construction of this documentary in the field of social media and mental health consulting previous studies in academic journals, books and articles. The design and construction of the final documentary has been outlined to explain the way in which I went about creating the documentary from the planning stages through to the final

documentary that will be enjoyed by listeners. Finally, the written document has commented on the final edit of the documentary, covering what could have been done differently in the creative process, the interview stage and the editing.

Due to the importance of this topic and the relevance to the current society we live in, I am hopeful there are a number of developments and possibilities for this documentary in the future. I am sure that the possibilities for this documentary include both online mediums and radio. Streaming channels such as *sound cloud* would be ideal for this documentary to be heard by a greater audience while it could also be sent to a range of radio stations including documentary on *Newstalk* and the doc-on-one series on *RTE radio*. This is an issue, I firmly believe, that requires an investigation, it is important that people are aware of the range of effects social media can have on their mental well-being.

This documentary also has the potential to educate a range of people including mental health experts regarding the way users feel about social media, parents about exactly what goes on, on social media, colleges and schools as well as the corporations that run the social media platforms on ways they can change and improve their sights to make them increasingly positive platforms for users ongoing mental well-being. From this research, it is clear that the image aspect of social media is a very poignant issue and one that requires awareness. I am hopeful that the discussion around image and filters will educate young users that the images they are looking at on social media are not real, thus, it is not something they must feel the need to live up to.

I am satisfied that the documentary I have created is extremely timely as this is a discussion that is being had more and more in society. This piece can add to the narrative. Finally, I am hopeful that this documentary is enjoyed by a range of listeners and provides them with an education on the way social media is used and what needs to change to secure it as a wholly positive entity for all that choose to avail of it.

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Appendix A- Documentary Structure

Audio Clip	Audio Description	Length
1. Opening	Media clips and social media users montage regarding the applications they use. Music accompanies.	54 Seconds
2. Narration	Introduction to the documentary, outlining the subject and explaining what the listener will hear.	1 Min 13 Seconds
3. Social media users montage	Social media users will explain how often they use social media.	49 Seconds
4. Jess Kelly	<p>Jess will explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the beginning of social media • how it has evolved. 	1 Min, 19 Seconds
5. Narration	Mental Health Facts	18 Seconds
6. Brendan Kelly	<p>Brendan explains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why there is an increase in young people suffering from their mental health • The changing nature of society 	20 Seconds
7. Joanna Fortune	<p>In Joanna's first clip, she acknowledges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increase in young people suffering from mental health issues • The main issues including anxiety, body issues and loneliness • How young people today rate themselves depending on the online gratification they receive 	1 Min 5 Seconds
8. Social media users montage	In this montage, users will speak about the editing process they apply to the images they upload to their social media accounts, including filters, photoshop and <i>Facetune</i> .	1 Min 50 Seconds
9. Barry Murphy (Bodywhys)	<p><i>Bodywhys</i> communications officer explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The image focused world we live in • The study behind comparisons and their links with eating disorders 	1 Min 40 Seconds

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitspiration content 	
10. Joanna Fortune	<p>Joanna refers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The entitlement that can result from social media use • Young people are facing challenges we have never seen before • Social media and technology inhibiting the development of the sense of self • The feelings of never being good enough that can arise from social media use 	1 Min 46 Seconds
11. Social Media users montage	The montage collated here presents the feelings of social media users regarding the comparisons they make about themselves and others while using social media and how this can damage their self-worth and overall happiness.	2 Min 3 Seconds
12. Brendan Kelly	<p>Brendan explains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The danger of comparisons. • How social media and the way in which we utilise it can cause feelings of loneliness • 	28 Seconds 36 Seconds
13. Joanna Fortune	<p>Joanna Fortune clip regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decline of empathy and the societal issues that can result from this decline 	50 Seconds
14. Social Media Users	This montage outlines the ways in which social media can make users feel anxious, insecure and down about themselves.	1 Min 33 Seconds
15. Jess Kelly	<p>Jess Kelly explains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The internet climate of the last 10 years • The future of social media • The regulation we can expect to come in the next few years 	50 Seconds
16. Concluding narration	The narrator sums up the documentary and provides the solution that we must learn to use	30 Seconds

	social media is a healthy, positive was as it is here to stay.	
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Appendix B- Interview Questions

Interview Questions

***Bodywhys*: The Eating Disorders Association of Ireland**

Interviewee: Barry Murphy- Communications Officer, Communications, Research and Policy

Time: 11:00

Date: 13/06/18

Location: St. John of Gods Hospital

Good morning Barry, thank you for speaking with me today.

Questions

1. Firstly, can you tell me a bit about the *Bodywhys* organisation?

1. What is your role here at *Bodywhys*?

2. According to 2017 statistics from the HSE, incidents of hospitalisations for anorexia and bulimia have almost doubled in the last 10 years, do you think the rise of social media and establishment of sites such as *Facebook* in 2004 and *Instagram* in 2010 has contributed to this rise?

3. According to a study carried out by the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine people who use social media for long periods of time in a day were more than twice as likely to develop an eating disorder. Is this something *Bodywhys* have begun researching?

4. Do you think social media has more power to impact on people's mental health and body image/ perception than traditional media outlets such as television or fashion magazines?
5. Do you think the environment of comparisons that social media presents are dangerous in terms of causing low self-esteem that could in-turn cause the onset of an eating disorder such as bulimia or anorexia?
6. Do you think image-based sites such as Instagram are potentially damaging for those who may have a predisposition to an eating disorder, are suffering from an eating disorder or are in recovery as they are centred on image and appearance?
7. Would social media ever come up as a cause or contributor when speaking with sufferers of eating disorders that use the services of the *Bodywhys* organisation?
8. Do you feel social media is providing a platform where eating disorders are encouraged with phenomena and hashtags such as #thinspiration and #Bonespiration that encourage people to share photos of low body weights and protruding bones and share tips on how to achieve this?
9. Would these posts be something that *Bodywhys* are concerned about in terms of causing an increase in the incidence of eating disorders in Ireland as these posts are often accompanied with the words starving and perfection?
10. Are other phenomenon's such as #fitspiration and #thighgap causing a rise in other eating disorders such as muscle dysmorphia and exercise bulimia?
11. Can you explain for us what muscle dysmorphia and exercise bulimia?

12. Do you think social media is causing an increase in eating disorders such as exercise bulimia and muscle dysmorphia in men that would have been seen before the establishment of social media?
13. Can you explain body dysmorphia?
14. Are *Bodywhys* concerned about the usage of apps such as Photoshop and face tune by social media users on their photos increasing or contributing to the incidents of body dysmorphic disorder?
15. What is orthorexia?
16. Do you think the social media phenomenon of sharing pictures of daily meals is causing an increase in incidences of orthorexia?
17. Do *Bodywhys* as an organisation recommend anything in relation to social media to people who are worried about a loved one's eating habits or obsession with exercise/ food or their appearance?
18. Is there anything else you would like to add/ or think may be relevant?

Thank you very much for speaking with me today.

Interview Questions

Interviewee: Dr Brendan Kelly

Time: 11:30 am

Date: 21/06/18

Location: Tallaght Hospital

Good morning Brendan, thank you for speaking with me today

Questions

1. Firstly, can you tell me about your work at Trinity College and here at Tallaght Hospital?
2. Census 2016 figures showed a 29% increase from 2011 in people reporting psychological or emotional condition. Do you think this rise has anything to do with our use of social media apps such as Instagram and Facebook?
3. According to 2017 statistics from the HSE, incidents of hospitalisations for anorexia and bulimia have almost doubled in the last 10 years, do you think the rise of social media and establishment of sites such as *Facebook* in 2004 and *Instagram* in 2010 has contributed to this rise?
4. A number of studies have shown that considerable use of social media can be linked to loneliness, anxiety, depression and a decrease in positive self-image. Can you see how social media users would be affected by this?
5. Can you explain how social media may cause loneliness?
6. Can you explain how anxiety and depression may be caused by social media users?
7. Do you think social media is providing a platform where eating disorders are encouraged with phenomena and hashtags such as #thinspiration and

#Bonespiration that encourage people to share photos of low body weights and protruding bones and share tips on how to achieve this?

8. Do you think the fitspiration hashtag is causing stress and anxiety as it puts people under pressure to have a particular body type?
9. Do you think hashtags such as \ sue that pays homage to people who have died by suicide and encourage people to talk about suicide and self-harm are dangerous?
10. Would mental health professionals be worried about the effects social media is having on young adults?
11. With your college students, would you see any effects of social media e.g. socialising, interaction, addiction?
12. Would social media ever come up as an issue with your patients?
13. Could the effects of social media such as loneliness and negative self-image be contributing factors to more serious mental health issues such as depression, bipolar or anorexia?
14. Do you think social media has addictive properties? Is this something of concern?
15. Do you think the comparisons/ jealousy that social media can present issues for young adults in friendships and relationships?
16. Do you think social media is more damaging for self-image than more traditional media outlets in the past such as television or fashion magazines?

17. Do you think social media could be creating a generation that will never be truly happy as their life may never live up to what they see on social media?
18. Are some people/personality types more likely to suffer the negative psychological effects of social media use?
19. A lot of people use their social media profiles to express how they are feeling and talk about the mental health issues they are experiencing; do you think this is a positive aspect of social media?
20. What do you think will be the effects on the young generation of Ireland of the ever-increasing social media use?
21. What aspects of social media do you think has the most potential to negatively impact users?
22. Do you think image-based social media such as *Instagram* has more potential to cause psychological effects such as depleting self-confidence and image and loneliness?
23. Do you think social media plays any role in the suicide rates among young people in Ireland?
24. Do you think there are any positives to social media for people's mental health?
25. What are the current statistics regarding suicide among 18-24-year olds in Ireland?
26. Has this increased in the last 5-10 years?
27. Do you think social media is contributing to this?

28. Do you recommend anything in relation to social media to people who are worried about a loved one's mood, anxiety or dissatisfaction with their appearance?

29. Is there anything else you would like to add/ or think may be relevant?

Interview Questions

Interviewee: Joanna Fortune

Time: 3:30

Date: 25/06/18

Location: *Solamh* Clinic, Bray, Co. Wicklow

Good Afternoon Joanna, thank you for speaking with me this afternoon.

Questions

1. Firstly, can you tell me about your work as a clinical psychotherapist?
2. What is the state of young people's (18-24) mental health? is it declining?
3. Census 2016 figures showed a 29% increase from 2011 in people reporting psychological or emotional condition. Do you think this rise has anything to do with our use of social media apps such as Instagram and Facebook?
4. According to 2017 statistics from the HSE, incidents of hospitalisations for anorexia and bulimia have almost doubled in the last 10 years, do you think the rise of social media and establishment of sites such as *Facebook* in 2004 and *Instagram* in 2010 has contributed to this rise?
5. How do you think social media may be contributing to these figures?
6. Can you explain a bit about the shame society we seem to live in today?
7. What effect can this have on a young person's mental health?
8. Is this perpetuated by social media?

9. A number of studies have shown that considerable use of social media can be linked to loneliness, anxiety, depression and a decrease in positive self-image. Can you see how social media users would be affected by this?
10. Can you explain how social media may cause loneliness?
11. Can you explain how anxiety and depression may be caused by social media users?
12. Do you think social media is providing a platform where eating disorders are encouraged with phenomena and hashtags such as #thinspiration and #Bonespiration that encourage people to share photos of low body weights and protruding bones and share tips on how to achieve this?
13. Do you think the fitspiration hashtag is causing stress and anxiety as it puts people under pressure to have a specific body type?
14. Do you think hashtags such as \ sue that pays homage to people who have died by suicide and encourage people to talk about suicide and self-harm are dangerous?
15. Is social media something that you would encounter as an issue for clients?
16. Would social media be something that those working in the mental health sector would be concerned about?
17. Could the effects of social media such as loneliness and negative self-image be
18. contributing factors to more serious mental health issues such as depression, bipolar or anorexia?
19. Do you think social media has addictive properties? Is this something of concern?

20. Do you think the comparisons/ jealousy that social media can present issues for young adults in friendships and relationships?
21. Do you think social media is more damaging for self-image than more traditional media outlets in the past such as television or fashion magazines?
22. Do you think social media could be creating a generation that will never be truly happy as their life may never live up to what they see on social media?
23. Are some people/personality types more likely to suffer the negative psychological effects of social media use?
24. Many people use their social media profiles to express how they are feeling and talk about the mental health issues they are experiencing; do you think this is a positive aspect of social media?
25. What do you think will be the effects on the young generation of Ireland of the ever-increasing social media use?
26. What aspects of social media do you think has the most potential to negatively impact users?
27. Do you think image-based social media such as Instagram has more potential to cause psychological effects such as depleting self-confidence and image and loneliness?
28. Do you think social media plays any role in the suicide rates among young people in Ireland?

Interview Questions

Interviewee: Jess Kelly, *Newstalk* Tech Expert

Time: 11:00

Date: 2/7/18

Location: Marconi House

Good morning Jess, thank you for speaking with me.

Questions

1. Firstly, can you tell me about your work here *Newstalk* and your programme *Tech Talk*?
2. When social media first launched what ultimately was the premise behind it?
3. Do you think people use it for the purpose that was intended when it was established?
4. There seem to be new social media apps constantly, what are the main ones among young adults, at the moment, do you think?
5. What are the new in-app tools in the popular social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram? Are there any new ones (Live, Instagram tv etc)?
6. What, do you think has been the biggest changes in society as a result of social media?
7. What do you think is the future of social media?
8. Do you think social media can present issues for people's mental health and well-being?
9. Do you think social media could be creating a generation that will never be truly happy as their life may never live up to what they see on social media?
10. Are you a social media user yourself?
11. What apps would you use?
12. Would you use it a lot throughout the day or would it be the first thing you look at in the morning?
13. What are the benefits of social media in your opinion?

14. A lot of research has explained how social media can cause anxiety and loneliness, do you see how this can happen, have you ever experienced this from social media usage?
15. Do you think any particular social media such as image-based sites have the platform to cause more damage than a site like Facebook?
16. Do you think social media provides a platform for constant comparison with other, ultimately making people unhappy?
17. Do you think you suffer any negative side effects of social media usage?
18. Do you think it's important to have a social media detox everyone in a while, would you ever feel the need to delete your accounts?
19. Finally, do you think the negatives of social media outweigh the positives or vice versa?

Social Media Users Interview Questions

Users of both *Instagram* and *Facebook* ages 18-24

Questions

1. Do you use social media?
2. What social media applications do you use?
3. When did you get your first social media platform? what was it?
4. What is your favourite social media application?
5. Do you have a considerable number of followers?
6. What do you use social media for?
7. Who do you follow on social media?
8. How often do you use social media?
9. How often do you post status updates or photos?
10. Do you ever feel anxious following social media usage?
11. Do you ever feel anxious about the amounts of likes/ comments you will get on a social media post?
12. Have you ever looked at the #fitspiration, #thinspiration or #bonespiration on social media?
13. Do you ever feel lonely following the use of social media? e.g. after looking at what other people are doing?
14. Does social media ever give you FOMO?
15. Do you ever find yourself comparing your life with others on social media?
16. Do you ever feel down about your appearance following the use of social media?
17. Do ever find yourself comparing your appearance to others on social media?
18. Do you feel pressure to have your social media a particular way or [present your life in a particular way on social media?
19. Do you think there is a pressure to always look perfect on social media?
20. When you are at events for you find yourself taking pictures and videos a lot to post on social media
21. Do you think this impacts your experiences at all?

22. Do you alter the photos you post on social media with Photoshop, filters and face tune? Why?
23. Even if you do not suffer any psychological effects of social media do you see how it may have effects such as causing loneliness, depression, anxiety or self-deprecation?
24. Do you feel social media negatively impacts your mental health in any way?
25. Do you ever feel that you need to turn your phone off and take time away from social media?
26. Is social media the first thing you look at in the morning? Is there anyone you follow that you think negatively affects your mood or feelings about your appearance or your life?
27. If you are having a bad day, do you think social media can make it worse?
28. Do you think social media negatively affects how you interact with others/ your relationships?
29. If you don't get enough like on a photo would you ever be tempted to take it down?
30. Is there a time/day that you would put up a picture as it is deemed a good time to get likes?
31. Have you ever felt you would be better off with no social media?
32. Do you feel like you would be missing out if you weren't on social media?
33. Why do you think people feel the need to post everything they are doing on social media?

Appendix C- E-mail Correspondence

Barry Murphy

Dear Barry,

my name is Gillian Chapman. I am a Journalism masters student at Griffith College in Dublin. I am in the process of beginning the research for my thesis which I will complete throughout the summer. The thesis will take the form of a radio documentary with an academic written thesis to accompany the documentary. I am conducting my research on the psychological effects of social media. I wish to focus on Facebook and Instagram and feelings of loneliness, self-deprecation and self-esteem. The age group that will primarily be investigated is 18-24 -year-olds.

I would be very interested in speaking with somebody from the *Bodywhys* organisation on the perpetual imagery of 'perfection' on social media and whether this may be causing an increase in a range of eating disorders. An interview would be arranged that would be used in the 20-minute documentary to analyse the image aspect of social media and the effect it may be having on users.

The interviews will take place in June and July, anytime within these months that would suit the contributor would be facilitated.

I look forward to hearing from you should this be something that *Bodywhys* would be interested in taking part in,

Yours faithfully,
Gillian Chapman.

Hi Gillian,

That's no problem re the interview. Please see attached some research which may be of interest.

I work part-time, Mon-Weds. I am away from the following dates: June 11th after 12 pm, June 13th after 1 pm. I'm back in the office on June 25th - morning only until 12 pm.

We are based in (but operate independently of) St John of God Hospital, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin. You can get the 46A or 145 buses here or there is parking on site.

Kind regards,

Barry

Jess Kelly

Dear Jess,

my name is Gillian Chapman. I am a masters student at Griffith College Dublin studying Journalism and Public Relations. I am in the process of producing a documentary on the psychological effects of social media, particularly analysing Facebook and Instagram and the potential effects they have on users.

I was wondering if you would be interested in taking part, by doing an interview on the future of social media, new applications and your own opinions on whether social media has negative psychological effects. I would really appreciate if you would consider this as I believe your knowledge and expertise in technology would add an interesting dimension.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this e-mail. I look forward to hearing from you should this be something that you are interested in.

Yours faithfully,
Gillian Chapman.

Yes, definitely. Could you let me know what exactly is required and what timeline you're aiming towards?

Brendan Kelly

Dear Brendan,

my name is Gillian Chapman. I am a masters student at Griffith College Dublin. I am currently in the process of producing my dissertation in the form of a radio documentary. The documentary is entitled: The psychological effects of social media use. The documentary aims to discover what psychological effects social media is having on its frequent user's mental health.

I have heard you speak passionately a number of times on mental health in the media and I was wondering if you would be interested in doing an interview with me for my documentary. I would be keen to ask you questions regarding why social media may be negatively affecting people psychologically thus damaging their mental health and the specific aspects of it that make it more damaging such as the perpetual images of perfection it presents.

I would really appreciate if you would think about this as I would be extremely grateful for any input you may be interested in giving my work. The interviews will

be taking place over the coming weeks, any time that suited you, if interested would be facilitated.

Thank you sincerely for taking the time to read this email.

Yours faithfully,
Gillian Chapman.

Hi Gillian,
Many thanks for your email.
I'm away next week but might Thursday, June 21 suit?
BK

Joanna Fortune

Dear Joanna,

my name is Gillian Chapman. I am a masters student at Griffith College in Dublin. I am in the process of beginning the research for my thesis which I will complete throughout the summer. The thesis will take the form of a radio documentary with an academic written thesis to accompany the documentary. I am conducting my research on the psychological effects of social media. I wish to focus on Facebook and Instagram and feelings of loneliness and self-deprecation.

I have heard you speak a number of times on the radio and also in your TEDx talk regarding the subject of social media and its impact on young people. I am writing this email to ask if you would be interested in partaking in the documentary by doing an interview with me on the subject. I would be delighted if you would speak with me regarding the psychological effects of social media, your work in this area and any effects of social media you have seen in your work as a psychotherapist. The interviews will take place in June and July, anytime within these months that would suit you would be facilitated.

I look forward to hearing from you should this be something that you would be interested in,

Yours faithfully,
Gillian Chapman.

Hello Gillian

Yes, I would be happy to help you with this. It sounds a very interesting piece of work

You can let me know what and when suits you and I'll do my best to work around that for you

Regards

Joanna

Appendix D- Narrators Script

Introduction

Social media

The phenomenon of today's society. We swipe and tag and hashtag, we like, comment and share our days away. Social media give us an insight into people's lives no generation before ever knew.

I'm a 23-year-old student and social media consumes my day and that of those around me. Over the last number of years, I've seen an increasing level of people my age suffering with their mental health. The internet and social media has been one of the biggest changes to our society in recent history, is our incessant use changing the way we communicate, interact and the way we see the world? What affects is this having on people psychologically?

In this documentary I will speak to a number of mental health professionals, a tech expert and a range of social media users under the age of 24 to explore the world of social media and find out whether it could be increasing mental health issues among young people and create a generation that may never truly be happy.

Jess Kelly Introduction 1

Social media is a constant in our lives, but what was the premise behind its establishment and how has this changed over time? I went to the busy radio station, *Newstalk*, to speak with tech correspondent and presenter of tech talk, Jess Kelly to find out.

Brendan Kelly Introduction 1

Brendan Kelly is a professor of psychiatry at Trinity College Dublin and a consultant psychiatrist in Tallaght Hospital. I went to meet him to discuss why the nature of social media could be contributing to our overall mental health issues.

Joanna Fortune Introduction 1 (After "are increasing")

Joanna Fortune is a clinical psychotherapist specialising in child and adolescent psychotherapy, and founder of Solamh parent-child relationship clinic.

***Bodywhys* Introduction**

Barry Murphy is the communications officer at *Bodywhys*- the eating disorders association of Ireland, I went to meet him to speak about the negative impact the image basis of social media can have on young people

***Bodywhys* (half way through- after comparison with peers)**

According to 2017 statistics from the HSE, incidents of hospitalisations for anorexia and bulimia have almost doubled in the last 10 years. I was keen to ask Barry whether social media hashtags such as thinspiration and fitspiration that encourage images of extremely low weights or muscular physiques could be contributing to this increase.

Filters

Social media has seen the launch of a number of photo altering tools including filters, photoshop and apps such as *Facetune*, I was keen to find out what lengths users go to for the perfect picture and how widely used these tools are for the regular user.

Joanna Introduction 2

Joanna spoke to me about the sense of entitlement that can come from social media use

Brendan Kelly Introduction 2

As we've heard, social media facilitates vast comparisons to be made on a constant basis, Brendan Kelly explained spoke about the effects of this and how social media is causing increased levels of loneliness

Joanna Introduction 3

Research shows that our empathy levels are decreasing while anxiety is on the increase, I spoke to Joanna about the reason for this and the worrying effects it can have on society

Jess Kelly Introduction 2

The internet and social media have seen so many changes over the past 20 years, from wireless internet to smartphones, but what big changes can we expect to see in the future, I asked *Newstalk's* Jess Kelly for some expert predictions

Conclusion

So, there you have it

Having spoken to both experts and social media users, I think it's safe to say that the way we use social media is really the problem, and as it isn't going away anytime soon we have a responsibility to look at the way we use it to protect our own mental wellbeing. Social media certainly has its positives, but it would seem there is a way to go before we can ensure those positives outweigh the negatives for all users.

Facts

In Ireland, over 1.6 million Irish people use *Facebook* daily while 28% of us own an *Instagram* account.

In 2013, a survey conducted by the *Royal College of Surgeons* found that one in five young adults in Ireland aged between 19-24 experience mental health issues while the 2016 census report found an increase of 28.7% in people reporting a psychological or emotional condition from 2011.

Appendix E- Consent Form

PERSONAL APPEARANCE RELEASE form template

Production Date(s): _____

Program Title (working title): _____(the "Program")

Participant's Name: _____

Producer/Production Entity: _____("Producer")

Production Location: _____

I hereby authorize Producer to record and edit into the Program and related materials my name, likeness, image, voice and participation in and performance on film, tape or otherwise for use in the above Program or parts thereof (the "Recordings"). I agree that the Program may be edited and otherwise altered at the sole discretion of the Producer and used in whole or in part for any and all broadcasting, non-broadcasting, audio/visual, and/or exhibition purposes in any manner or media, in perpetuity, throughout the world.

The producer may use and authorize others to use all or parts of the Recordings. Producer, its successors and assigns shall own all right, title and interest, including copyright, in and to the Program, including the Recordings, to be used and disposed of without limitation as Producer shall in its sole discretion determine.

Signature of Person Appearing: _____

Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Date: _____ Phone: _____

Appendix F- NUJ Code of Conduct

A journalist:

1. At all times upholds and defends the principle of media freedom, the right of freedom of expression and the right of the public to be informed.
2. Strives to ensure that information disseminated is honestly conveyed, accurate and fair.
3. Does her/his utmost to correct harmful inaccuracies.
4. Differentiates between fact and opinion.
5. Obtains material by honest, straightforward and open means, with the exception of investigations that are both overwhelmingly in the public interest and which involve evidence that cannot be obtained by straightforward means.
6. Does nothing to intrude into anybody's private life, grief or distress unless justified by overriding consideration of the public interest.
7. Protects the identity of sources who supply information in confidence and material gathered in the course of her/his work.
8. Resists threats or any other inducements to influence, distort or suppress information and takes no unfair personal advantage of information gained in the course of her/his duties before the information is public knowledge.
9. Produces no material likely to lead to hatred or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age, gender, race, colour, creed, legal status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation.
10. Does not by way of statement, voice or appearance endorse by advertisement any commercial product or service save for the promotion of her/his own work or of the medium by which she/he is employed.
11. A journalist shall normally seek the consent of an appropriate adult when interviewing or photographing a child for a story about her/his welfare.
12. Avoids plagiarism.

