



**TEN ARGUMENTS FOR DELETING
YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT RIGHT NOW**



THE BOOK


Ten Arguments for deleting your social media account right now

by Jaron Lanier



INTRODUCTION

Have you ever been tempted to delete your social media accounts? You're not alone and you will by no means be the first to do so.

The book *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now* is a call to the modern world to step back and look at what social media is doing on an individual and global level.

Through a selection of well-reasoned and researched points, Computer Scientist Jaron Lanier explains precisely how social media (in particular the platforms that mine your information) is impacting the world.

Parents, teachers and teens; don't make up your mind about social media until you have checked out Lanier's discussion points. Whether they confirm your beliefs or open your eyes, it will be hard to look at social media the same way. If this book doesn't have you deleting your accounts, you will at least be more mindful in your approach to this ubiquitous distraction.

Lanier's book is especially helpful for teens who will benefit from understanding the bigger picture behind their social platforms.



5 BEST QUOTES

"The damage to society comes because addiction makes people crazy. The addict gradually loses touch with the real world and real people."

"The inability to carve out a space in which to invent oneself without constant judgment; that is what makes me unhappy."

"To free yourself, to be more authentic, to be less addicted, to be less manipulated, to be less paranoid ... for all these marvellous reasons, delete your accounts."

"Here's a non-geeky framing of the same idea: What if listening to an inner voice or heeding a passion for ethics or beauty were to lead to more important work in the long term, even if it was measured as less successful in the moment? What if deeply reaching a small number of people matters more than reaching everybody with nothing?"

"What might once have been called advertising must now be understood as continuous behavior modification on a titanic scale."



10 BIG IDEAS

1. THE CONTROL OF MENTAL REWARDS

The phenomenon known as Operant Conditioning, pioneered by psychologist B. F. Skinner, is key to the success of social media. In a nutshell, when you are consistently presented with a reward, you will repeat a behaviour. When you are sporadically rewarded, you will also repeat the behaviour. In fact, sporadic rewards are more powerful because they could come at any time or not at all. Think of a pokie machine; at some point, you feel you have to win; that's why you keep going.

Social media gets you hooked. It's a subtle manipulation that you don't realise is happening. The designers do it deliberately to keep you scrolling.

2. RESIST THE 'INSANITY'

Lanier coined the term BUMMER to describe the big players in the social media game. BUMMER stands for; Behaviors of Users Modified, and Made into an Empire for Rent. The system manipulates you and sells your information to the highest bidders.

Online platforms do this by constantly monitoring your activity across their platforms. Lanier is very clear that the main culprits are Facebook and Google. The majority of the internet is still valuable and free of BUMMER activity.

BUMMER companies feed all your information into algorithms and then surface the information that will most likely keep you glued to your screen and spending money. The problem is that these algorithms favour negativity. In between the positive 'rewards', they seem to be what is fuelling a lot of the crazy societal drama that is smothering everyone these days. The solution? Quit your BUMMER-based platforms.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA IS MAKING YOU AN A*****

If you have ever given in to the temptation to troll online or to start an argument for no good reason, you can understand how social media can make you an a*****.

You will often act in ways online that you would never dream of doing in person.

On the flip side, if you aren't being an a*****, you are walking around on eggshells, being overly nice in the hope that you won't offend anyone. Either way, your personality on social media is not your authentic self.



10 BIG IDEAS

4. SOCIAL MEDIA AND TRUTH

You may have heard that you live in a post-truth world. Lanier places a heavy load of responsibility for the death of truth squarely on the shoulders of social media.

Social media tends to push people into groups. The truth becomes less important when you are heavily involved in a group and not thinking for yourself. You become more obsessed with what the majority of your group wants to believe and reality fades away.

Individuals are more likely to think clearly and rationally. The loss of truth to groupthink has the power to be catastrophic. The future looks bleak in a world where climate change can be dismissed because truth doesn't matter as much as towing the group line.

5. LOSING MEANING

Social media has a tendency to strip what you have to say of context. Without context, it is hard to infer meaning. Even worse, it lets others strip your context entirely and replace it with their own. Think of all the people who post online, only to be inundated with negative feedback. Meaning gets replaced with vitriol and perspective is lost.

6. EMPATHY

The algorithms that drive social media feeds are explicitly tailored to the individual. This is the 'echo chamber' that you hear about. While it is handy to be fed the information that appeals to you, you are missing out on opposing opinions. This has made it harder and harder to understand how others think.

If your social media feeds you nothing but like-minded thoughts and reinforcement of your own ideas, you have less chance to think differently. Lanier speculates that this is more than a significant player in the political spectrum's growing divide between left and right. The problem is, as Lanier says, "Social media is biased, not to the Left or the Right, but downward".

7. SOCIAL MEDIA AND UNHAPPINESS

Studies show that social media can make you sad without you knowing why.

The problem is that constant connectivity leads to unachievable goals. Other people's 'perfect' lives are always on view, and it is impossible to keep up. Along with the drive to 'keep up with the Jones' is the endless bombardment of product and service advertising. The result is a persistent feeling of longing and emptiness, and a never-ending sensation that you need to own more, be more and show it off to others.



10 BIG IDEAS

8. ECONOMIC DIGNITY

According to Lanier, the strong correlation between the rise of social media and the rise of the gig economy is no coincidence. Social media propagates the myth of the single entrepreneur turned millionaire. Social media users, especially teens, dream of being influencers or making millions from a simple idea or video.

While it can be done, the fact is that only a tiny percentage can ever attain these goals. Everyone can't be an influencer; who would be left to consume? What's more, you never really know what's going on behind the scenes.

Even worse, digital start-ups like Uber may seem to share the wealth, but that is an illusion. An Uber driver earns a pittance compared to the people running the company. Don't fall for it.

9. POLITICS

Politics has always been a circus, but social media is making it worse. Social media has amplified the ability of insidious parties to manipulate the population in subtle ways. It has been well documented that Donald Trump's 2016 campaign used highly successful Facebook advertising.

The BUMMER system takes fresh-faced and enthusiastic activism on social media and steers it in its own direction. And remember, social media is not left or right; it points down. Almost all positive online activism performed through social media is eventually manipulated by the algorithms to create conflict and unrest.

10. SOCIAL MEDIA HATES YOUR SOUL

Lanier writes that BUMMER wants everyone glued to a screen and consuming, regurgitating the same information and fighting amongst each other. According to the author of this book, BUMMER is stripping spirituality.

That's right, Lanier's final argument for our very souls. Guess what the solution is, though? That's right; get rid of your social media right now.

You don't have to delete it forever. Just take a break. Let it go for a while and see what a difference it makes to your time, perspective and self-esteem.

**3 ACTION STEPS****1. DELETE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS RIGHT NOW**

The first action step of *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now* is to delete your social media accounts. The freedom of stepping away from social media will help you to find the true you, free from the influence of a careful algorithm.

2. USE ALTERNATIVES

Use alternative methods to achieve what you are used to doing on social media. Talk to people in person, visit the library and use Youtube; but do it without your account activated.

The internet is still there and has its benefits. You only have to steer clear of social media that tracks your habits and preferences. Use the internet to find local activities and events and get out there in the world!

3. MAKE YOUR DECISION

You don't have to stay away forever. The purpose of the first two action steps is to break your addiction and demonstrate what life can be like without social media.

After six months without social media, you will better understand your relationship with BUMMER platforms. You can then decide on the role social media will play in your future.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

The key takeaway of *Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now* is right there in the title; delete your social media accounts right now.

You don't have to keep things that way, but try stepping away from them so you can discover how different life can be without social media in control.

Take a hiatus from your accounts! Enjoy the freedom of choice and control and stop the endless manipulation by social media that is making you a worse person.



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