

Social Media, You and A.I.

Grade Level: **6-12** | Duration: **70 minutes** | Subject Area: **Tech Applications**

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This lesson was designed under the WeTeach_AI **Advancing AI Literacy Project**. The project supports the development of standards-aligned AI literacy lessons designed for teachers by teachers. Additional lesson plan material, such as rubrics, answer keys, activity guides, and instructional considerations can be found here on our website.

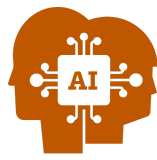
The contents of this digital lesson were developed by the Texas Advanced Computing Center ([TACC](#)) with the support of [Google.org](#). However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policies of Google.

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“As a Dallas-based entrepreneur and educator with a background in CTE since 2012, I founded Smith Media Company in May 2015. This AI literacy lesson aims to empower students and educators to confidently adopt emerging technologies.”

Lesson Description

This lesson guides students to critically examine the role of Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) in shaping their daily social media experiences. Through a reflective hook, collaborative group work, and structured class discussion, students will explore how algorithms and engagement metrics influence the content they see, the choices they make, and the perspectives they encounter online. By analyzing both the benefits and drawbacks of A.I.-driven content curation, students will develop media literacy skills and evaluate their own digital habits. The goal of the lesson is to empower students to become more conscious, critical, and responsible digital citizens who understand the hidden mechanisms behind the platforms they use every day.



Lesson Objectives

(formatted as “Students will be able to...” statements)

- Define key terms related to social media and A.I., including algorithm, content curation, and engagement, to establish a foundational understanding of how digital platforms operate.
- Compare and contrast the positive and negative effects of A.I. on social media, focusing on personalization, community building, data privacy, and the creation of echo chambers.
- Analyze personal social media habits to identify patterns of A.I.-driven influence on content exposure, behavior, and perception.
- Evaluate the ethical implications of A.I. in social media, considering issues such as bias, misinformation, and user autonomy.
- Reflect on individual digital citizenship and propose strategies for more intentional and responsible engagement with A.I.-curated content.

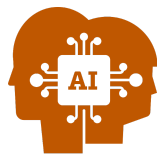
Essential Questions

1. *In what ways does A.I. influence the content we see and the choices we make on social media platforms?*
2. *How can users critically evaluate the role of algorithms in shaping their digital experiences?*
3. *What responsibilities do individuals have when engaging with A.I.-curated content online?*
4. *How might A.I.-driven personalization both support and limit diverse perspectives in social media spaces?*
5. *What strategies can help users become more intentional and informed digital citizens in A.I.-shaped environments?*

TEKS Alignment (Texas Standards Alignment)

TEKS §130.385.(2): The student knows the nature and scope of social media marketing. This includes defining social media marketing, differentiating between inbound and outbound marketing, and identifying various social media platforms and their purposes.

TEKS §130.385.(4): The student knows how to critically evaluate social media and digital marketing tools. This includes evaluating how social media has influenced both marketing and how people communicate.



TEKS §130.385.(3): The student knows the legalities, ethical implications, and risks associated with social media marketing. This involves analyzing ethical guidelines, applying legal boundaries, and identifying risk factors.

TEKS §130.385.(6): The student demonstrates how to use social media as a marketing tool. This involves analyzing and communicating information effectively using various social media platforms (e.g., social networking, publishing, entertainment, and commerce platforms) as marketing tools.

CSTA/ISTE Alignment (National Standards Alignment)

CSTA

2-IC-20. Compare tradeoffs associated with computing technologies that affect people's everyday activities.

2-IC-21. Discuss issues of bias and accessibility in the design of existing technologies.

3A-IC-24. Discuss the social, economic, and ethical impact of computing technologies, including issues of privacy, security, and intellectual property.

ISTE

2a. Students cultivate and manage their digital identity and reputation and are aware of the permanence of their actions in the digital world.

2b. Students engage in positive, safe, legal, and ethical behavior when using technology.

2d. Students manage their personal data to maintain digital privacy and security and are aware of data-collection technology used to track their navigation online.

Inclusive Computing Considerations

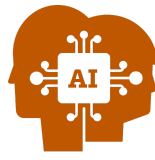
(based on Guiding Principles for Inclusive CS Teaching)

1.3: The instructor deliberately cultivates an inclusive and accessible classroom community that recognizes, respects, and includes the voices, ideas, needs, and perspectives of all students.

2.2: Opportunities for students to contribute their knowledge and perspectives about a curricular topic and share information about their life experiences - including parts of their culture - are provided.

3.4: Curricular activities fit together cohesively with a clear storyline or logical flow.

4.5: Real-world applications and problems allow students to explore structures of power, assess for bias and marginalization, and provide thoughtful responses that examine those structures and biases.

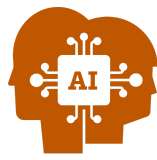


AI Literacy Competencies

(based on TeachAI Framework)

Engaging with AI: 1. Recognize AI's role and influence in different contexts. Engaging with AI: 3. Examine how predictive AI systems provide recommendations that can inform and limit perspectives.	Engaging with AI: 7. Connect AI's social and ethical impacts to its technical capabilities and limitations. Designing AI Competencies: 5. Describe an AI model's purpose, intended users, and its limitations.
Engaging with AI: 4. Explain how AI could be used to amplify societal biases. Engaging with AI: 6. Analyze how well the use of an AI system aligns with ethical principles and human values.	Managing AI Competencies: 1. Decide whether to use AI systems based on the nature of the task. Managing AI Competencies: 5. Develop and communicate guidelines for using AI systems that align with human values, promote fairness, and prioritize transparency.

Key Terms	
Term	Definition
Algorithm	A set of rules used by social media platforms to determine which content appears in a user's feed.
Call to Action (CTA)	A prompt or instruction designed to encourage an immediate response from the audience, such as "Shop Now," "Learn More," or "Sign Up."
Content Curation	The process of finding, selecting, and sharing relevant content from other sources with your audience.
Evergreen Content	Content that remains relevant and valuable to your audience for an extended period of time.
Hashtag (#)	A word or phrase preceded by a pound sign (#) used to categorize content and make it discoverable in searches.



Launch

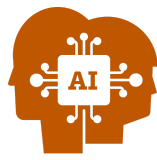
Engaging activity or prompt to introduce the lesson. **Estimated time: 5-10 minutes**

Objective: Introduce the concepts of social media evolution and the relationship between social media and artificial intelligence, preparing students for the upcoming assignment.

Teacher Instructions	Sample Teacher Remarks
Ask students to open their favorite social media app (or imagine one if devices aren't allowed). Without scrolling, they observe the first post that appears in their feed. In pairs, students discuss: - What type of content is it (e.g., ad, friend post, influencer video)? - Why do they think that specific post was shown to them first?	<i>"Good morning, everyone. Let's start with a quick experiment. I want you to take out your phones, open your favorite social media app—but don't scroll. Just look at the very first thing it's showing you.</i> (Pause for 15–20 seconds) <i>Now, turn to a partner and share what you see. Is it a video? A post from a friend? An ad?</i> <i>The big question I want you to discuss is: 'Why do you think the app chose to show you that specific thing first?'</i> <i>You've got two minutes. Go!"</i>

Anticipated Student Outcomes

- Students will observe and document the types of content appearing in their social media feeds.
- Students will identify patterns in the content they see, such as repeated themes, sources, or formats.
- Students will hypothesize reasons why certain content appears in their feed, considering possible algorithmic influence.
- Students will engage in peer discussion to compare feed experiences and reflect on personalization.
- Students will begin to question the neutrality of their digital environments and recognize that their feeds are shaped by unseen systems.



Exploration

Step-by-step student tasks, experiments, or investigations. **Estimated time: 20-25 minutes**

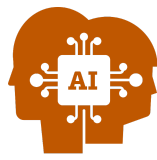
Objective: Examine how algorithms, engagement metrics, and content curation influence social media feeds, encouraging students to think critically about A.I.'s role in shaping their digital experiences.

Materials Needed [Links to be added]:

- “Social Media, You, and A.I.” PowerPoint
- “Social Media, You, and A.I.” Student Worksheet
- Student devices (optional, for real-time examples)
- Chart paper or whiteboard (optional, for group sharing)

! Note: Teachers should use the provided slides to guide instruction and reference the presenter notes for pacing, prompting, and classroom engagement suggestions.

Teacher Instructions	Sample Teacher Remarks
<u>Slides 1–5: The Evolution of Social Media</u> Guide students through the timeline of social media’s evolution using the provided slides. Encourage students to make connections between early communication tools (e.g., Morse code, ARPANET) and today’s platforms. Pause for discussion at key points (e.g., Slide 2 and Slide 3) to activate prior knowledge and curiosity.	<i>“Let’s explore how social media evolved—from Morse code to Myspace. Think about how each step changed the way people connect.</i> <i>As we move through these slides, notice how each platform added something new—messaging, blogging, music sharing, and more.”</i>
<u>Slides 6–10: The Rise of Social Platforms</u> Present the launch and growth of platforms like Friendster, Myspace, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Use visuals and timelines to help students track the rapid development of social media. Encourage students to reflect on which platforms they’ve used or heard about.	<i>“These platforms laid the groundwork for the apps you use today.</i> <i>Think about how each one changed the way people interact online—whether through music, networking, or sharing updates.”</i>



Whole Class Discussion

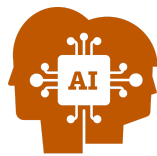
Discussion questions, teacher prompts, and expected student responses. **Estimated time: 10-15 minutes**

Objective: Facilitate a class-wide conversation that helps students connect their personal experiences with social media and A.I. to broader issues of digital influence, personalization, and media impact. Use student reflections and group insights to explore how A.I. shapes online experiences, both positively and negatively.

Note: Teachers should use the provided slides to guide instruction and reference the presenter notes for pacing, prompting, and classroom engagement suggestions.

Teacher Instructions	Sample Teacher Remarks
<u>Slides 11-14: Modern Social Media Landscape</u> Introduce major platforms like YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Reddit. Emphasize how A.I. influences content recommendations, engagement, and personalization. Ask students to consider how their own feeds are curated.	<i>"Today's platforms are powered by A.I. that learns what you like and shows you more of it."</i> <i>As we go through these slides, think about how your favorite app seems to 'know' what you want to see."</i>

Sample Discussion Questions	Sample Student Responses
1. Which social media platforms do you use most, and why?	<i>"I use TikTok the most because it's quick and always shows me stuff I like."</i>
2. Have you ever stopped using a platform? What led to that decision?	<i>"I stopped using Facebook because it felt like it was just ads and older people."</i>
3. What types of media do you expect to see on TikTok vs. YouTube vs. television? Why?	<i>"TikTok is for short, funny videos. YouTube has longer stuff like tutorials. TV is more serious and scripted."</i>
4. What are some positive effects of A.I. in social media?	<i>"It helps me find new music and creators I wouldn't know about otherwise."</i>
5. What are some negative effects of A.I. in social media?	<i>"It keeps showing me the same kind of content, so I don't see new ideas."</i>
6. How does A.I. decide what shows up in your feed?	<i>"It looks at what I watch, my location, and other personal identifiers and makes a decision on what to show me."</i>



7. Do you think A.I. helps or hurts your ability to discover new ideas or perspectives?	<i>"It's helpful sometimes, but I think it can trap you in a bubble."</i>
8. Would you change how you use social media after today's discussion? Why or why not?	<i>"Now that I'm more aware of filter bubbles, I want to also follow different people now so I can see more than just what I already like."</i>

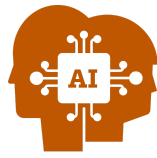
Assessment

Formative or summative assessment tasks and criteria. **Estimated time: 15-20 minutes**

Objectives:

1. Assess students' ability to reflect on their personal use of social media and A.I. platforms.
2. Evaluate students' understanding of how A.I. influences digital content and user experience.
3. Measure students' ability to identify and analyze the positive and negative effects of A.I. in social media.

Assessment Opportunities	Facilitation Tips
Social Media, You and A.I. Teachers may choose to use any or all of the following as assessment opportunities: • Student responses to reflection questions (Slides 15-17) • Group brainstorming and discussion of positive/negative effects (Slides 18-23) • Completion of the Social Media, You and A.I. worksheet • Final reflection prompt (Slide 24) <u>Reflection Prompts</u> 1. "Which platforms do you use most, and why?" 2. "Have you ever stopped using a platform? What led to that decision?" 3. "What are some ways A.I. influences what you see online?" 4. "Do you see yourself changing how you use social media after today's discussion?"	Group Discussion & Debrief (Slides 15-18): • Use reflection questions to prompt personal connections and peer sharing. • Encourage students to compare their experiences and challenge assumptions about A.I. and media. • Refer students to the worksheet for structured analysis and discussion. Evaluation & Closing (Slides 19-24): • Guide students through examples of social media's impact on mental health, relationships, and self-perception. • Facilitate a share-out of group brainstorms on positive and negative effects. • Use the final reflection question to prompt students to consider changes in their digital habits.



☒ Use [this rubric](#) to assess student reflections based on: clarity of thought; depth of reflection; awareness of A.I.'s influence and impact; and engagement with group discussion and worksheet content.

Sentence Starters / Scaffolds

- “One thing I learned about A.I. and social media today is...”
- “I used to think social media was just for fun, but now I realize...”
- “A.I. affects my feed by...”
- “After today’s activity, I want to change how I...”