

# Narcissistic individuals use social media to self-promote

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Keith Campbell studies Narcissism at the University of Georgia. He is co-author of the best-selling "The Narcissism Epidemic." Credit: UGA

A new statistical review of 62 studies with over 13,000 individuals found that narcissism has a modest but reliable positive relationship with a

range of social media behaviors. The largest effects were with the number of friends/followers narcissists had and frequency of status updates, followed by selfie postings, according to University of Georgia psychology researchers.

The two strains of narcissistic behavior—grandiose [narcissism](#) and vulnerable narcissism—showed different relationships to [social media](#) use. Grandiose narcissism, the more extroverted, callous form, positively related to time spent on social media, the frequency of updates, number of friends/followers, and the frequency of posting selfies. Vulnerable narcissism, the more insecure form, did not show any relationship to social media, but there was relatively little research on this form of narcissism.

"The stories you have heard about grandiose narcissism on social media are probably true," said the study's senior author, Keith Campbell, a professor of psychology in the UGA Franklin College of Arts and Sciences.

Campbell, co-author of the best-selling "The Narcissism Epidemic," notes that "when you engage with social media, you will be engaging with more narcissism than might really exist in the world. This might distort your view of the world as being more narcissistic than it is."

"It is important to remember that these are only correlations, however," said the study's lead author, Jessica McCain, a graduate student in the Behavioral and Brain Sciences Program in the UGA Franklin College of Arts and Sciences department of psychology. "This is not evidence that social media causes narcissism or vice versa. Theoretically, we suspect that individuals with pre-existing narcissism are drawn to social media, but the present evidence only establishes that the two are related."

"Networks on social media aren't designed by people in Silicon Valley,"

Campbell said. "They are built one link at a time by users. And narcissists seem to be central to this build-out."

The study, "Narcissism and Social Media Use: A Meta-Analytic Review," was published in the early online edition of *Psychology of Popular Media Culture*.

**More information:** Jessica L. McCain et al. Narcissism and Social Media Use: A Meta-Analytic Review., *Psychology of Popular Media Culture* (2016). [DOI: 10.1037/ppm0000137](https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000137)

Provided by University of Georgia

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