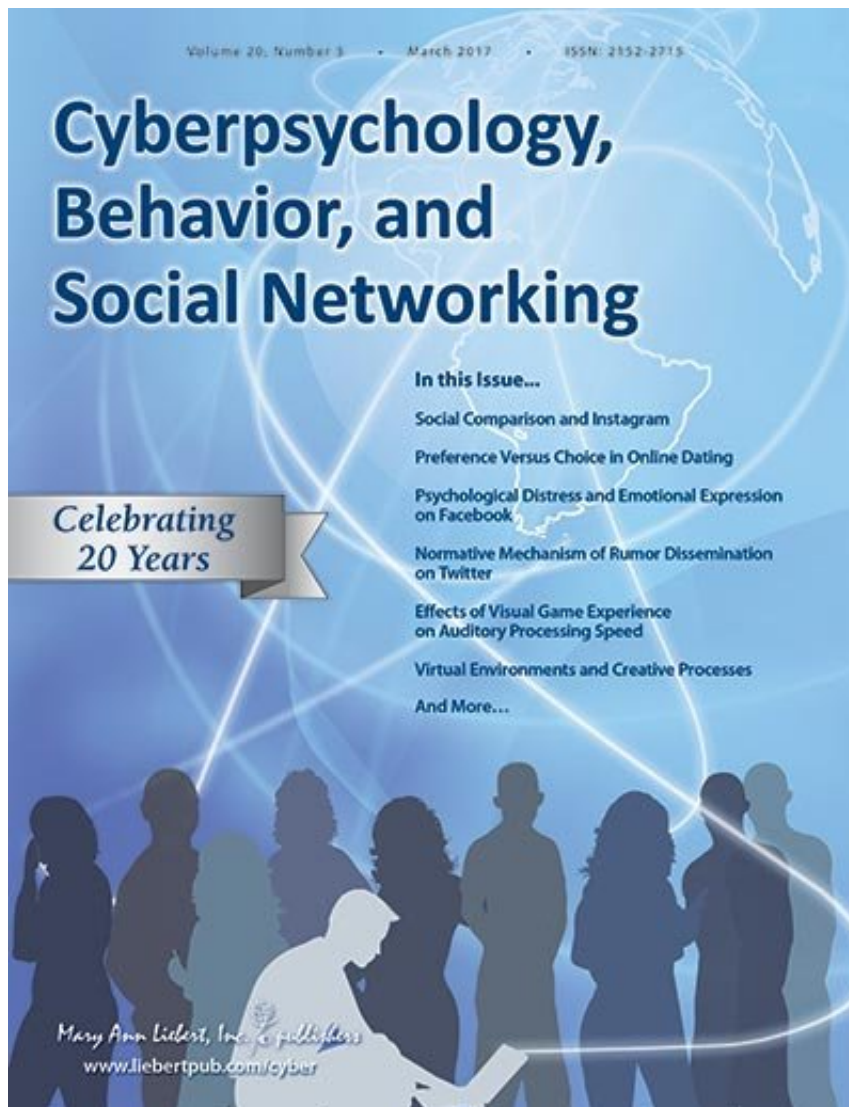


# Moderate Facebook use promotes happiness in adults with Autism spectrum disorder

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Credit: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

Among adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a new study has shown that those who use Facebook, in moderation, are happier than those who do not. This finding could not be generalized to overall use of social media, however, because the same was not true of those who used Twitter, for example, as reported in an article published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*.

In "Social Media Use and Happiness with Autism Spectrum Disorder," coauthors Deborah Ward and Karen Dill-Shackleford, Fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara, CA and Micah Mazurek, University of Virginia, Charlottesville found that while happiness and Facebook use increased together up to a certain point, the beneficial effect of [social media](#) use then waned. The researchers propose that that ability to interact with others on Facebook, instead of in more challenging face-to-face interactions may help protect these individuals against [mental health issues](#) associated with ASD such as depression.

"Some studies report that up to 50% of adults with ASD have co-occurring [social anxiety disorder](#). Facebook may provide a safe starting point for training and refinement of conversational skills," says Editor-in-Chief Brenda K. Wiederhold, PhD, MBA, BCB, BCN, Interactive Media Institute, San Diego, California and Virtual Reality Medical Institute, Brussels, Belgium. "Increased self-confidence in one's abilities may lead to eventual translation of these new skill sets into improved face-to-face interactions."

**More information:** Deborah M. Ward et al, Social Media Use and Happiness in Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder, *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* (2018). [DOI: 10.1089/cyber.2017.0331](https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2017.0331)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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