



# IS SOCIAL MEDIA RIGHT FOR YOU?

**T**oday, on the news and in conversation, social media is likely mentioned several times every few minutes. Twitter. Facebook. Instagram. Almost every news program and publication has a tagline to their Twitter account and Facebook page.

Just what is social media and how can you make it a part of daily life? Like sporting events, you can choose to be an observer or participant in social media. I will discuss the different types and benefits of the major social media platforms so that you can make more informed decisions as you venture into this expanding realm of communication.

## FACEBOOK

The largest and most popular social media platform is Facebook. If you are not on Facebook, you can be sure that your kids are, and your grandkids may have abandoned Facebook already. Worldwide, there are over 1.79 billion monthly active Facebook users (Source: *Facebook as of 11/02/16*). Facebook is the primary site for people to share photos and messages on the web. Facebook users must register, and all connections between users must be approved by both parties. Besides keeping up with the lives of your family and current circle of friends, Facebook allows you to connect with people you may know based on schools attended, towns lived in, places worked for and through mutual friends.



## INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a photo-sharing social media platform with over 500 million active monthly users (Source: *Instagram December 2016*). Instagram is owned by Facebook. The Instagram app has access to the camera on your smartphone, so uploading photos is a piece of cake. Instagram users post over 95 million photos and videos per day! To join Instagram to post photos or follow someone, you must have an account.



## TWITTER

Twitter is a messaging service that enables its users to send and read text-based posts and photos, known as "tweets." A free account allows one to post tweets that are available for others to read. You can also follow the twitter feeds of several people at once, and they appear in a sequential timeline. Twitter has 317 million active monthly users (Source: *Twitter as of 10/27/16*). Twitter users can be followed without approval of either party, and you can block followers you don't want. You must have a registered Twitter account to follow someone on Twitter.



## PINTEREST

Pinterest bills itself as "the world's catalog of ideas." Pinterest has 150 million active monthly users (Source: *Pinterest as of 1/23/17*). 81 percent of Pinterest users are female, and 87 percent of users have purchased a product because of Pinterest. The Pinterest interface is a series of photos that when clicked, link to an article contains more information on the subject of the photo. More than 14 million articles are "Pinned" each day.

According to the Pew Research Center, 79 percent of online adults use Facebook, 32 percent of online adults use Instagram, 31 percent of online adults use Pinterest and 24 percent of online adults use Twitter (Source: *Pew Research Center: Social Media Update 2016*).

So whether you decide to tweet, pin, upload photos or just observe, social media is a part of daily life. The vast array of social media outlets always offer much more information than most people are interested in, yet the options they offer have something for everyone.

