

7 Ways to Make Media Work for Your Relationship

A photograph of a young Black couple sitting at a white table. The woman, on the left, has long dark wavy hair and is wearing a light pink top. She is holding a black smartphone and looking at it with a smile. The man, on the right, has short dark hair and a beard, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. He is holding a white smartphone and looking at it. In front of them on the table are two white bowls filled with cereal. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor space with a window.

LIVE WELL UTAH

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Does social media add or detract from your relationship with your partner? Check out these tips on how to use media as a tool to strengthen your relationship.

According to recent statistics, over 97 percent of American adults own a mobile phone, and 67 percent own a smartphone.

In addition, the platforms and mediums for connection are seemingly endless (Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, email, Instagram, WhatsApp, IM etc.).

Increased options for instant connection can have positive and negative impacts on relationships. While online resources can help us stay connected to those we love and increase relationship satisfaction, being constantly connected to the world through online platforms can also potentially lead to neglecting our partners, conflict, less relationship and life satisfaction, and affairs.

Consider the following seven ways to use technology to strengthen your relationships.

1. **Checking-in texts.** Take a minute during a break to tell your partner you are thinking of him or her or to send a “kiss.”
2. **FaceTime/Skype.** While media cannot replace actual face-to-face time, it is an important tool that can be used to help couples stay connected. This is particularly true for couples who spend extended periods of time physically apart (e.g. military, those who travel for work, etc.).
3. **Facebook Posts.** Facebook can be used to publicly express admiration and appreciation for your partner. Photographs, memes, videos and messages can all be used to express affection.
4. **Instagram.** Instagram can be a great way to share moments and different aspects of your day and life with your

partner. This can be particularly useful for couples who are often physically separated due to work or other circumstances.

5. **Email.** Emails can be a fun way to share possible gift ideas found online, date night or getaway ideas, silly pictures or jokes or just to check in with each other.
6. **Pinterest.** Similar to emails, Pinterest can be used to collect fun date night ideas, funny pictures to share with each other, or to create a dream board for future events or goals.
7. **YouTube and Videos.** Videos can be a fun way to connect with each other if you are watching, discussing and/or laughing about them together.

While using media to express affection and commitment can be a great boost to relationships, in order to prevent misunderstandings or frustration, be sure to also discuss boundaries for technology with your partner (keeping profiles public, being open and honest about technology use and who you are communicating with, having technology-free zones or time while you are together, etc.). By having an open and honest discussion and agreeing on boundaries as a couple, you can better ensure that technology will be a benefit rather than a detriment to your relationship.

This article was written by Naomi Brower, Utah State University Extension professor, naomi.brower@usu.edu, 801-399-8206, and Elizabeth Davis, Utah State University Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Assistant Professor for Kane County, elizabeth.davis@usu.edu