

**Cybersecurity Career Professional Paper:**

**Social Media Intelligence Analysts, Cyberpsychology, and The New Mental Frontier**

Bryanda Epps

Department of Cybersecurity, Old Dominion University

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Professor Diwakar Yalpi

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## **Introduction**

In 2026, the digital age coupled with the entrenchment of social and parasocial openly accessible media has created a montage of new psychological behaviors, patterns, and addictions that transcend all traditional approaches of assessment. This new frontier has exposed the modern mind to all sorts of novel manipulation techniques, desires, crimes, and security risks for all verticals of human activity. Interconnectedness is at an all-time high, and open source information paired with investigative intelligence has fostered a stealthy new exploitative environment. Protecting the intersection of persons, property, business activity, and social media is a multidisciplinary endeavor that incorporates social psychology, anthropology, criminology, communication, political and computer science, and behavioral economics.

Social Media Intelligence Analysts address this complex arena head on, using cybersecurity principles, techniques, and tools, intelligence analysis and tools, and multiple social science principles and their frameworks. Reports are given with multiple units of analysis that intersect and layer on top of each other as human activity is monitored and studied. Example units of analysis include: account types, account content types, account relationships and engagement, account discussions, conversation starters, and comments, and account coordination to name a few using both an inductive and deductive research strategy. (Bhattacharjee, 2012) Whereas in an inductive research approach, the professional is looking to draw new conclusions based on whatever patterns and observations occur, and in contrast with a deductive research approach the professional starts with a stated hypothesis that must be vetted through the observations made on the social landscape to test their veracity.

## **Social Science Principles**

The principle of relativism in social science states that all things are related, whereas in a systems perspective, one system correlates and directly affects another interrelated system if a change occurs. (Diwakar, 2025. Module 2, Slide 4) From a Social Media Intelligence Analyst perspective, this is relevant in that current/world events and motivations will fuel and precursor the content created online, overall socioeconomic discourse, the types of cyber attacks that may be engaged, how platforms are utilized based on their function, and the ad spend that is dedicated to manipulating certain behaviors. All areas of human activity are impacted by technology, and that trickles to social media trends, hot spots, and interests which can in-turn have real world effects. As activity shifts online, technology platforms respond to user data, user patterns, and user participation. Actual causation is highlighted in the social science principle of determinism: current events dictated by past occurrences (i.e. the invention of social media). (Diwakar, 2025. Module 2, Slide 12)

It has been argued that modern algorithms tend to create a numbing response for those with under-developed frontal lobes, and can inadvertently create the “mindless scroll.” This, coupled with peer pressure and influence, can create an entirely new subculture of people with seemingly programmed behaviors and motivations. Low self-control, aka the “self-control theory”, is linked to a higher percentage of victim precipitation and cyber offending; minors and those with low computer literacy skills can be especially sensitive to this and algorithms. Those who use social media intentionally and purposefully will end up leading those who are subconsciously looking for quick dopamine.

A Social Media Intelligence Analyst intersects cybersecurity, information gathering, intelligence analysis, and social science to create informed intelligence reports, alert proper

authorities or entities of credible threats and disinformation, produce threat assessments, create visual maps and behavioral profiles, and narrative reports for sentiment pulses with the principle of parsimony in mind. This dedicated research requires speed, a keen eye to decipher through a noisy environment, sharp decision making, and easily digestible communication.

### **Application of Key Concepts**

According to Module 9, Slide 23, (Diwakar, 2025.) the various types of social media include, but are not limited to: social networks, discussion boards/forums, video and image sharing networks, social bookmarking sites, blogging and publishing sites, consumer review networks, interest-based social networking sites, sharing or creator economy networks, social shopping networks, image and video hosting sites, live streaming networks, messaging apps, collaborative project sites, and I would like to add gaming networks, niche marketplace websites, entertainment websites, career marketplaces, and niche hiring websites.

A Social Media Intelligence Analyst utilizes a suite of tools to establish a strong blueprint of the digital landscape that's being studied. Determinism has multiple frameworks to explaining data including a nomothetic approach and an idiographic approach; it's stated that utilizing both approaches will create a more holistic picture in research. (Module 2 pptx., Slides 13, 14)

Regarding social media, the nomothetic approach aims to take a general subset of gathered information from online and find patterns among the (often larger) datasets. Repeatable patterns could include: virality, computer bot behaviors, average engagement (general and topic-based), keywords and narratives, and sentiment temperatures. An idiographic approach is more specific and thought to be more accurate, focusing on a targeted person, narrative, event, or population where a deep analysis can be uncovered; this could be considered an iceberg method where metrics may include: themes, posting behaviors, speech patterns, and location. Once a pattern has

been identified from a nomothetic perspective, it can then be transitioned into a deeper analysis with an idiographic method.

### **Marginalization**

Victim precipitation tends to occur in more instances where the population is chronically online. Those in less fortunate communities tend to have a higher social media presence, thus increasing their interactions and potential for disputes and disruptions with real-life community implications. This subset of the population that may be looking to social media for income, fame, and social-status increases also has a higher percentage to be victims of data harvesting techniques and offensive, hostile, OSINT (open source intelligence). When patterns of behavior, opinions, and interests are easily accessible, those with more resources can craft unsuspecting plots to extract what little wealth the marginalized group may have without having proper cultural context that still may be missing from the data.

Society is affected when victimization occurs as a result of online activity, campaigns, and rhetoric in the form of tax payer payouts, physical and sexual violence, risky behavior, murder, and decreased sensitivity to the pain, trials, and tribulations of others. A desensitized population with a lack of empathy could be a recipe for societal disaster.

### **Career Connection To Society**

Marginalized communities interfix with society at large, and are often the backbone of modern day-to-day civilization. Social media makes the gap between the various classes of people even smaller, bringing the world extremely close together. Engagement and likeability are the barometer for those with the highest social capital online, though there are specific actions that must be taken to translate followers to cash if not sponsored by a platform. This creates a

potential for class exchange at an accelerated rate never seen before: where a well-off person could be bombarded with sports-betting ads and lose everything, and at the same time someone stricken with poverty could become wealthy overnight by providing the right information to the right audience at the right time and having a plan to capture their currency. Social Media Intelligence Analysts can capitalize on these types of activity patterns in their reporting.

## **Conclusion**

Social Media Intelligence Analysts have an interdisciplinary background that approaches a “wild-wild west” of a landscape when conducting daily functions, analysis, and research in the online field. Communications and resources are aggregated utilizing social science principles, OSINT, and research to create a digestible picture of what’s happening when, where, and why. Discernment is needed to spot discrepancies and disinformation campaigns, as well as the precipice of new and dynamic stories told in patterns of data. This complex new frontier is just at the beginning of the next social science revolution with cyberpsychology and data science being front and center.

## References

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