

Functionality in Classic

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FIGURE 4.1 Conscious but Locked In

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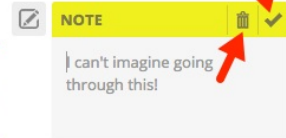
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FIGURE 4.1 Conscious but Locked In
Erik Ramsey (right, with his father, Eddie) suffers from locked-in syndrome.

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THINK OF THE ADVANTAGES THAT DIGITAL MEDIA have brought to so many lives over the past few decades. Thirty years ago, if you wanted to contact someone far away, you most likely wrote a letter. Phoning could be expensive, and email was largely unavailable. Now you might email, text, Skype, tweet, or blog. Twenty years ago, if you wanted a piece of information that was not available in your home, you might have traveled to a library. Now you would probably go straight to the Internet.




FIGURE 1.1 Digital Interaction
People stay wired to their digital media, even in social situations.

Around the world, billions of people now spend much of their time interacting through digital media (FIGURE 1.1). In fact, many people, especially young people, feel panicky to be away from their 24/7 connection to the electronic universe. When was the last time you willingly went a week without your phone or computer? A day? Some of you probably cannot last more than a few hours, or you become anxious when your instructor insists that cell phones be turned off in the classroom.

You might think, therefore, that our more frequent communications with others would bring many benefits to our social lives. Early proponents of social media, such as the creators of Facebook, envisioned a flatter world—that is, a world with fewer obstacles between people. In their view, technology would make us more connected and give us stronger social ties. We would stay in touch with old friends while easily making new ones. Our new friends would be people who shared our interests, whether they lived on the next street

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CHAPTER 1 The Five Foundations of Economics

Economics is the dismal science.

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FIGURE 4.1 Conscious but Locked In

As a psychological state, locked-in syndrome has been compared to being buried alive. Imagine that you see all the sights around you and hear every noise, but you cannot respond physically to these sights and noises. Imagine that you can feel every itch, but you cannot scratch yourself or move to gain relief. Hard as it is to imagine, Erik was lucky in that he was able to blink. Other such patients have no voluntary muscle movement. They have often been mistakenly thought to be in a coma for years, receiving no pain medication or socially appropriate communication.

Recent scientific advances have raised the possibility that Ramsey and patients like him will be able to communicate. That is, we might be able to "read" their thoughts by imaging brain activity in real time. Communication of this kind is the goal of researchers who, in 2004, planted electrodes in the

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Chapter 4 Consciousness

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THINK OF THE ADVANTAGES THAT DIGITAL MEDIA have brought to so many lives over the past few decades. Thirty years ago, if you wanted to contact someone far away, you most likely wrote a letter. Phoning could be expensive, and email was largely unavailable. Now you might email, text, Skype, tweet, or blog. Twenty years ago, if you wanted a piece of information that was not available in your home, you might have traveled to a library. Now you would probably go straight to the Internet.




FIGURE 1.1 Digital Interaction
People stay wired to their digital media, even in social situations.

the creators of Facebook, envisioned a flatter world—that is, a world with fewer obstacles between people. In their view, technology would make us more connected and give us stronger social ties. We would stay in touch with old friends while easily making new ones. Our new friends would be people who shared our interests, whether they lived on the next street or on some tiny island thousands of miles away.

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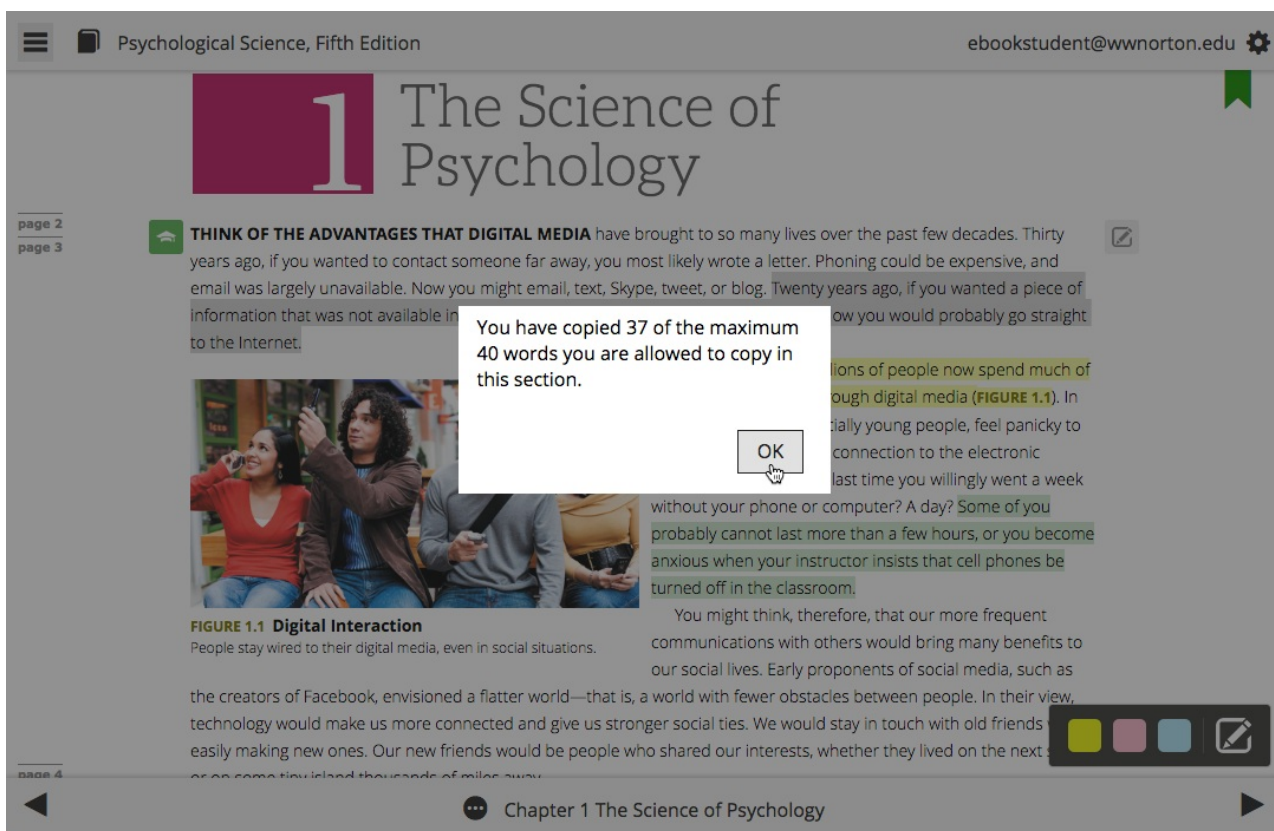
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Some of you probably cannot last more than a few hours, or you become anxious when your instructor insists that cell phones be turned off in the classroom.

You might think, therefore, that our more frequent communications with others would bring many benefits to our social lives. Early proponents of social media, such as the creators of Facebook, envisioned a flatter world—that is, a world with fewer obstacles between people. In their view, technology would make us more connected and give us stronger social ties. We would stay in touch with old friends and easily making new ones. Our new friends would be people who shared our interests, whether they lived on the next

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People stay wired to their digital media, even in social situations.

Around the world, billions of people now spend their time interacting through digital media (FIGURE 1.1). In fact, many people, especially young people, feel panicky to be away from their 24/7 connection to the electronic universe. When was the last time you willingly went a week without your phone or computer? A day? Some of you probably cannot last more than a few hours, or you become anxious when your instructor insists that cell phones be turned off in the classroom.

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Facebook now has over a billion users. Many Facebook users visit the site several times a day. None of these people are sad and lonely, right? All of them have become happier through social media?

On the contrary, there is evidence that the more people use Facebook, the less happy they are in their daily lives. In 2013, at the University of Michigan, the psychologist Ethan Kross and his colleagues performed a study concerning Facebook use. The researchers texted the study participants five times a day for two weeks. In those texts, they asked the

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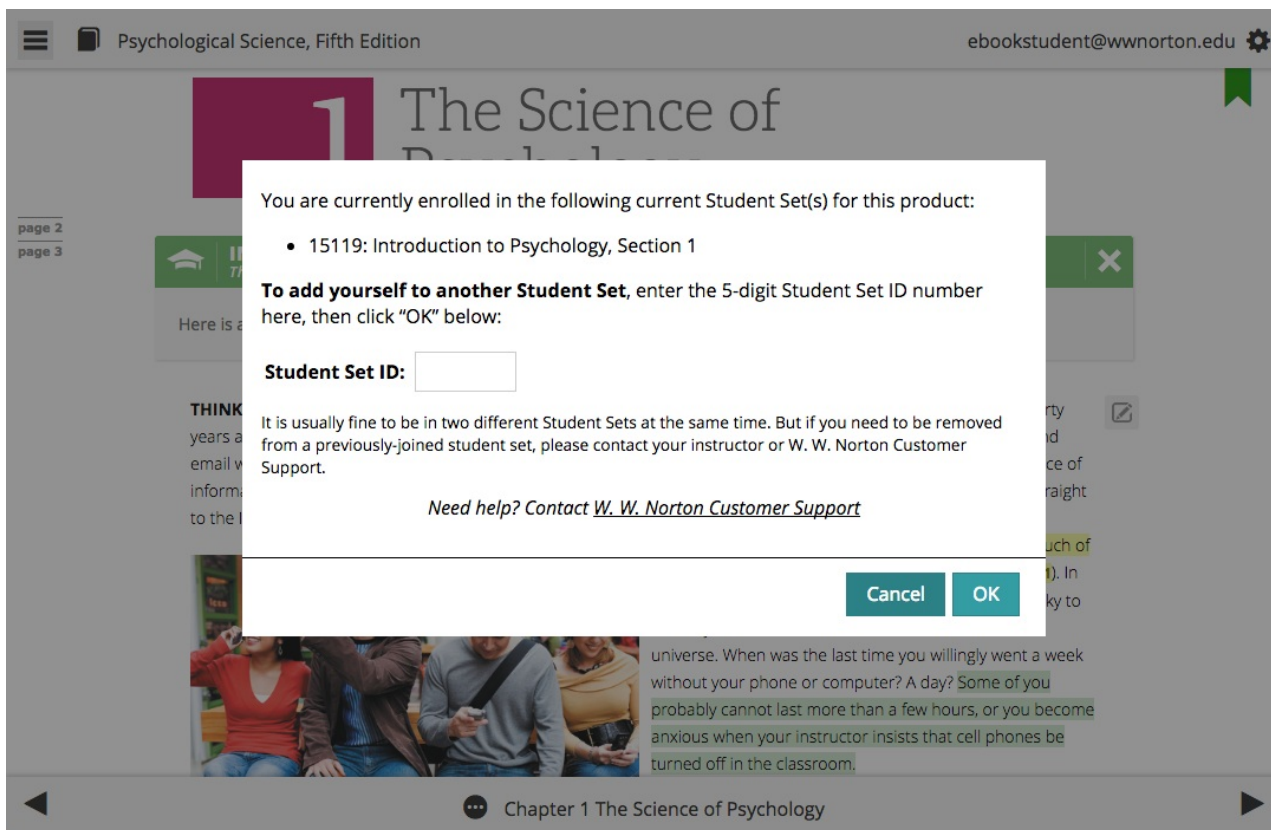
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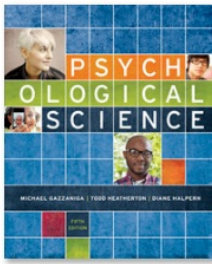
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CHAPTER 4

Socialization, Interaction, and the Self

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that's going to convey what we want to say about our lives and ourselves. Accounts are built and meticulously curated to create just the right impression. The best photos must first be selected. Then they are cropped, filtered, and further enhanced using an expansive array of editing tools. Clever captions are thought up and hashtags applied to every post. We must post often but not too much, lest we spoil the effect. The point of this is not only to create our own sense of self but also to project that self out into the world for approval. So we must always keep up appearances. And it's this part—about having to manipulate how we look to others, about seeking and getting followers, likes, and comments—that has some Instagram users thinking twice. While many are still content with the platform as is, a growing number of young people are setting up secondary accounts on Instagram that upend the normal rules. Contrary to "rinsta" (or real Instagram), these "finstagram"

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