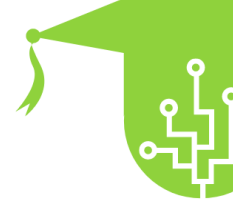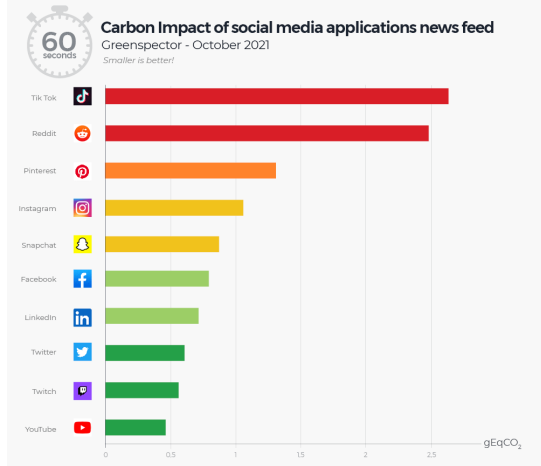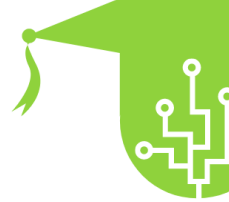# SOCIAL MEDIA AND ENVIRONMENT

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MODULE 7

Title :	SOCIAL MEDIA AND ENVIRONMENT
Key words :	Social media, environment, sustainability, technology
Prepared by .	Association WalkTogether Bulgaria
Language :	English
Objectives :	- Raise awareness about the environmental impact of social media, including energy consumption and electronic waste. - Promote eco-conscious digital practices to minimize individuals' carbon footprint and environmental harm. - Explore the potential of social media and technology as tools for environmental advocacy, education, collaboration, and responsible digital activism.
Learning Outcomes :	After mastering this module, students should be able to: - Identify potential environmental impacts of social media - Analyze the benefits and drawbacks of using technology to promote sustainability - Analyze examples of how social media can be used to spread awareness about environmental issues
Content Index :	1. Introduction 2. The Environmental Impact of Social Media A. How Social Media Affects Energy Use and Emissions B. The Impact of Social Media and Technology on Waste C. Social Media and Pollution 3. The Role of Social Media in Promoting Sustainability A. Increasing Awareness Through Social Media B. Innovation Using Social Media C. Environmental Legislation on Social Media

	4. Conclusion
Content Development :	1. Introduction In today's digital world, social media has become a regular part of our lives, changing how we communicate, have fun, and share information. However, despite its many advantages, social media has an impact on the environment. This discussion explores the connection between social media and the environment, looking at how it affects energy use, waste, and pollution. It also highlights how social media can help promote sustainability by raising awareness, encouraging new ideas, and influencing environmental laws. 2. The Environmental Impact of Social Media ● A. How Social Media Affects Energy Use and Emissions The massive data centers behind social media platforms use a lot of energy. These centers store and process the huge amount of data created by billions of users. The energy needed to run these centers, including cooling and electricity, contributes to environmental issues, like carbon emissions that worsen climate change. Additionally, the devices we use to access social media, like smartphones and computers, also contribute to this environmental impact. Carbon Impact of social media applications news feed — Greenspector - October 2021 — Smaller is better! Measurements made on a Samsung S7 smartphone (Android)

- ● B. The Impact of Social Media and Technology on Waste

The fast pace of technology, driven by our desire for newer devices to use social media, has led to a growing problem: electronic waste or e-waste. Discarded smartphones, tablets, and computers add to the growing pile of electronic waste. This waste contains hazardous materials, making it difficult to dispose of safely and posing risks to the environment. Moreover, because some digital devices have short lifespans, we frequently upgrade and dispose of them, worsening the e-waste problem.

- ● C. Social Media and Pollution

The constant consumption of digital content on social media platforms has consequences for the environment. The demand for devices and digital infrastructure leads to activities like resource extraction, manufacturing, and transportation, which contribute to air and water pollution. The digital advertising industry, which supports many social media platforms, generates a significant amount of digital waste, adding to the environmental burden.

3. The Role of Social Media in Promoting Sustainability

- ● A. Increasing Awareness Through Social Media

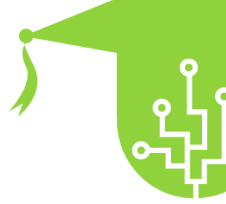Ironically, despite its environmental challenges, social media serves as a powerful tool for raising awareness about environmental issues. Activists, organizations, and individuals use social media to share crucial information, inspire collective action, and engage a global audience. Environmental campaigns, trending hashtags, viral videos, and impactful images shared on social media platforms can quickly reach millions, starting important conversations and driving meaningful change.

- B. Innovation Using Social Media

Social media is a dynamic space where innovators, entrepreneurs, and advocates for green technology come together. Crowdsourcing and crowdfunding platforms connected to social media offer opportunities for green technology projects to secure funding, build support, and bring their sustainable visions to life. Additionally, the ability to connect with like-minded individuals and share knowledge fosters innovation in sustainable practices, encourages eco-friendly choices, and speeds up the development of green technologies.

- C. Environmental Legislation on Social Media

Governments and regulatory bodies have recognized the potential of social media to engage the public in environmental matters and policy changes. Social media platforms provide a direct way for governments to share updates on environmental regulations, seek public input, and encourage compliance. Environmental advocacy groups and concerned citizens also use social media to pressure governments to enact and enforce stricter environmental laws and regulations.

4. Conclusion

	In summary, the connection between social media and the environment has two sides. On one hand, social media's energy use and electronic waste contribute to environmental problems. On the other hand, social media can be a potent force for positive change, promoting sustainability through awareness, innovation, and influencing environmental policies. As we address the environmental impact of our digital age, responsible and thoughtful use of social media can help us harness its potential to create a greener future.
Glossary :	**Social Media** – Online platforms that allow users to connect and share information with one another **Sustainability** – The practice of allowing for the long-term economic, social, and environmental viability of an activity **Technology** – The application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, or the use of tools and machines **Digital World-** Refers to the highly connected and technology-driven environment in today's society. **Environmental Impact-** The effects and consequences on the natural world and surroundings.
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Books:

Smith, A., & Newlands, G. (2017). The Environmental Impact of Digital Technology. Routledge.
Reports:

The Global E-waste Monitor 2020 by United Nations University.
Surveys and Research:

A Pew Research Center survey on environmental news consumption.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) survey on electronic waste.

Additional Information:

The Global E-waste Monitor 2020, a comprehensive report by the United Nations University, highlights the escalating issue of e-waste and its environmental implications.

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A Pew Research Center survey indicates that social media is a significant source of news and information about environmental issues for a substantial portion of the population.

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Resources (videos, reference link)	