

# Social Media Revealed as Top Factor in UK Marriage Breakdowns

SWINDON, WILTSHIRE, UNITED KINGDOM, January 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Facebook takes the lead as the most problematic platform in UK divorces, with 46% of social media-related cases citing it as a contributing factor

Instagram comes second with 30% of social media-related divorce cases, while WhatsApp ranks third at 15%

Excessive time spent online ranks as the biggest complaint (42%) among couples citing social media in divorce proceedings

Secret conversations with ex-partners are cited in 38% of social media-related divorce cases

Online affairs beginning on social platforms account for 28% of cases where social media was a contributing factor

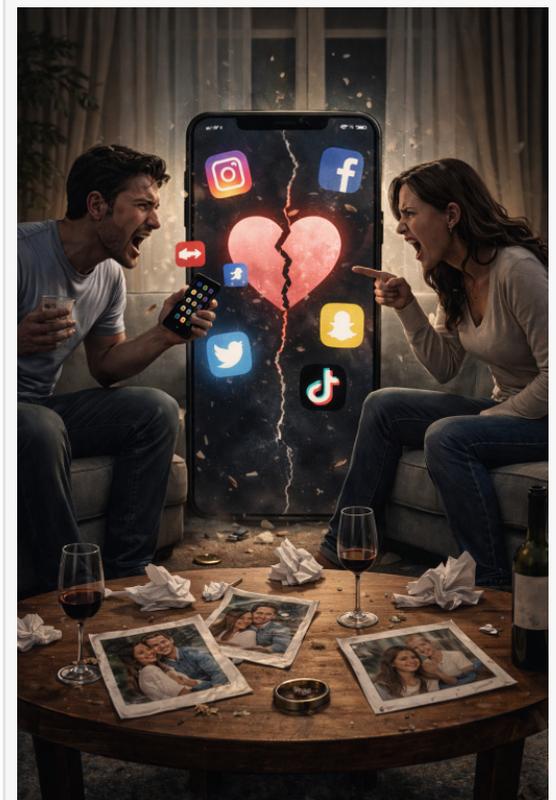
New research from [Divorce-Online](#), the UK's leading online divorce service, has revealed the concerning impact of social media on British marriages.

The study examined over 5,000 divorce cases from the past 5 years where social media was cited as a contributing factor to the relationship breakdown.

## Top Social Media Platforms Damaging British Marriages

The data shows Facebook remains the most frequently mentioned platform in divorce proceedings, appearing in 46% of cases where social media played a role. Many cases involved discovery of inappropriate messages or reconnections with former partners.

"We've seen a steady rise in cases where Facebook interactions have undermined trust between spouses," says Mark Keenan, CEO of Divorce-Online. "The platform's private messaging features and ability to connect with past relationships creates a perfect storm for marital problems."



Social Media proven marriage wrecker

Instagram ranked second in the study, cited in 30% of social media-related divorces. The visual-focused platform was often mentioned in cases involving jealousy over interactions with photos and suspicious following patterns.

"The way Instagram allows people to build close connections through interactions that appear innocent from the outside is particularly problematic," Keenan explains. "A spouse liking certain photos or exchanging direct messages can quickly breed mistrust."

WhatsApp secured the third position, appearing in 15% of cases, while TikTok and Snapchat rounded out the top five at 6% and 3% respectively.

Keenan notes: "WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption makes it a popular choice for secretive communications, while Snapchat's disappearing messages feature creates an environment where evidence of inappropriate behaviour is difficult to preserve."

#### Rank Platform Percentage of Social Media-Related Divorces

- 1 Facebook 46%
- 2 Instagram 30%
- 3 WhatsApp 15%
- 4 TikTok 6%
- 5 Snapchat 3%

#### Most Common Social Media Behaviours Leading to Divorce

The study also identified the most frequent behaviours cited in divorce proceedings. Excessive time spent on social media platforms topped the list at 42%, with spouses reporting that their partners prioritised online interactions over their relationship.

"Many clients tell us their partner is physically present but mentally absent – constantly scrolling through feeds instead of engaging with family life," says Keenan. "This creates an emotional distance that can be just as damaging as physical absence."

Secret conversations with former partners or new acquaintances ranked second at 38%, while online affairs that began on social platforms accounted for 28% of cases.

Public oversharing (14%) and financial secrecy related to online spending (10%) completed the top five problematic behaviours.

Keenan shares: "The ease with which people can maintain private conversations alongside their marriage creates temptations that simply didn't exist before social media. We're seeing cases where long-dormant connections reignite through a simple friend request."

#### Rank Behaviour Percentage of Social Media-Related Divorces

- 1 Excessive time online 42%
- 2 Secret conversations 38%
- 3 Online affairs 28%
- 4 Public oversharing 14%
- 5 Financial secrecy 10%

#### Least Problematic Social Media Platforms in UK Marriages

The research also identified platforms less commonly associated with marital breakdown. LinkedIn appears in just 0.8% of social media-related divorce cases, making it the least problematic major platform.

"LinkedIn is primarily focused on professional connections, which may explain its lower impact on marriages," Keenan points out. "However, we have seen some cases where business networking crosses over into personal relationships."

Reddit was mentioned in only 1.2% of cases, while Twitter/X appeared in 1.5% of social media-related divorce files.

Discord and Pinterest completed the list of least damaging platforms at 1.8% and 2.1% respectively.

"These platforms tend to be more interest-based or anonymous in nature," says Keenan. "The lack of existing personal connections and photo-sharing makes them less likely to facilitate behaviours that undermine trust."

#### Rank Least Problematic Platforms Percentage of Social Media-Related Divorces

- 1 LinkedIn 0.8%
- 2 Reddit 1.2%
- 3 Twitter/X 1.5%
- 4 Discord 1.8%
- 5 Pinterest 2.1%

#### Social Media Usage Statistics Reveal Troubling Patterns

The study's findings align with recent research from [Ofcom](#), which reports that adults now spend an average of four and a half hours online daily – up 10 minutes from last year. Women spend 26 minutes longer online than men, with a daily average of 4 hours and 43 minutes.

Particularly concerning for relationships is that half of all time online is now spent on Alphabet and Meta-owned services, which include several platforms identified as problematic in the divorce study.

"The combination of increased screen time and the concentration of that time on a few dominant platforms creates a perfect environment for relationship strain," Keenan observes.

## Age Demographics Show Significant Differences

The research revealed notable differences in how social media impacts marriages across age groups. For couples under 30, Snapchat appeared in 18% of cases – significantly higher than its overall appearance rate.

Meanwhile, for couples over 45, Facebook was even more dominant, featuring in 58% of social media-related divorces for this age group.

"Each generation has its platform of choice, and the divorce cases reflect this," Keenan notes. "Younger couples face different social media challenges than older ones, with platforms like Snapchat and TikTok playing a larger role in their relationship dynamics."

### Expert Advice for Protecting Your Relationship

Based on the findings, Keenan offers practical guidance for couples:

"Establishing clear boundaries around social media usage is essential. This means having honest conversations about what behaviours feel appropriate and what might cross the line," he advises.

Keenan recommends couples consider setting aside dedicated phone-free time: "Even small changes like keeping phones away from the dinner table or bedroom can significantly improve connection and reduce feelings of competition with digital platforms.

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