

When you read the following extracts, or any newspaper or magazine articles, think about:

- what the writer is saying
- the aims of the writer
- how the writer achieves these aims
- how successful the writer has been.

Find some examples from the text as evidence for your points.



▲ Changing social habits are a fertile subject for writers.

**reversion** Returning to something.

#### HINT

When you are thinking about structure, look at the paragraphs and try to say what the main idea is for each one. For example, in paragraph 1, it is that social media are addictive; in paragraph 2, it is that social media companies deliberately make their social networks addictive. Then ask yourself why some paragraphs are longer and where the writer brings in evidence. Finally, consider why the last paragraph is so short.

### ▼ 'SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION IS A BIGGER PROBLEM THAN YOU THINK' BY MIKE ELGAN FOR *COMPUTER WORLD*

Social networks are massively addictive. Most people I know check and interact on social sites constantly throughout the day. And they have no idea how much actual time they spend on social media.

If you're a social media addict, and your addiction is getting worse, there's a reason for that: Most of the major social network companies, as well as social content creators, are working hard every day to make their networks so addictive that you can't resist them.

Cornell Information Science published research earlier this month that looked at (among other things) the difficulty some people have in quitting Facebook and other social networks. They even have a label for the failure to quit: 'social media **reversion**.'

The study is interesting because they revealed the difficulty people have quitting Facebook because of addiction. Participants intended to quit, wanted to quit and believed they *could* quit (for 99 days), but many couldn't make more than a few days.

The addictive aspect of social networking is associated with FOMO – fear of missing out. Everyone is on Facebook. They're posting things, sharing news and content and talking to each other 24/7.

The network effect itself is addicting, according to Instagram software engineer Greg Hochmuth, 'A network effect is the idea that any network becomes more valuable as more people connect to that network. The phone system is the best example of this phenomenon – you have to have a phone because everybody else has a phone.'

In the world of social networking, Facebook benefits most from network effect. Facebook happened to be the top social network when social networking busted out as a mainstream activity. Now, everybody's on Facebook because everybody's on Facebook. And even people who don't like the social network use it anyway, because that's where their family, friends and colleagues are – and because of addiction.

The contribution of network effect to the addictive quality of web sites is accidental. But social sites are also addictive by design.