

The social media revolution

A Uranus in Pisces story

Marilena Marino

With over 2.8 billion active users worldwide, social media is now more globally dominant than ever, and continues to grow at an unprecedented rate. The impact on the way we think, relate and communicate has been nothing short of astounding. What is the astrological force majeure behind its success?

Social networking sites first entered public consciousness just under twenty years ago. Today they seem like an indispensable part of daily life for many of us. As of January 2017¹, there were 2.8 billion *active* social media users worldwide, corresponding to 37% of the world population. This number keeps growing at a staggering rate year-on-year, with the latest reports indicating a 22% increase over 2015.

How can we, astrologers, explain the rise and prodigious success of this seemingly unstoppable phenomenon?

If one were to look at a sign representing social media, one could do worse than look at Aquarius. After all, it does occupy the house symbolising groups and associations. Denoting, amongst other things, all electrical types of communication, as well as social idealism and group consciousness, this is the sign motivated by friendship, networking and the advancement of humanity. As an Air sign, Aquarius naturally wants to connect with others, and preferably on a large scale. Friendships define Aquarius yet people of this sign can exist quite happily alone; they just need to know that they are part of a collective, of something larger than themselves, sharing a common interest.

But Aquarius is just a stepping stone on this utopian journey, offering a medium – technology – and the vision of connecting the group. There is a more pervasive, universal and emotive energy at play in the success of social media. Like a new religion, social media taps into the collective consciousness by offering a platform for self-expression, overcoming isolation, and sharing knowledge, products and ideas. At the press of a button one can now experience universal connectedness, by reaching out to one's family or long-lost friends on the other side of the world; marketing one's music, photos, videos, or products globally; discussing books, movies, shows or the news with like-minded individuals; or even trolling a brand, politician or celebrity directly, all in the comfort of anonymity.

And if dissatisfied with one's real-life persona, it is even possible to create a virtual one promoting the illusion of a perfect image or lifestyle.



Aquarius' ruler, Uranus, is a much-loved archetype in astrology. It is the hallmark of all that is new and wildly different during a given period. Its reputation as the 'cosmic trickster', the Awakener, the accelerator of thoughts and events, is unchallenged in astrology², as is its association with intellectual brilliance, cultural innovation and technological invention.

With characteristics derived from the time of its discovery – the English agrarian and industrial, and the American and French revolutions – it is linked to all insurgences and innovations in society, including "the need of a collective to permit or deny itself change"³. It is the red pill of *The Matrix* fame: once ingested, it begins to reveal the world in all its ugliness, as a prison wherein the individual is but a cog in the machine. Rejection and intolerance ensue, instigating an irrepressible need to act, with unorthodox and disruptive effects.

Liz Greene likens the basic principle of Uranus to the process of making an omelette: "One has to break the eggs!"⁴. Often the broken egg shells are in the realm of individual values and human emotions.

Uranus last transited Pisces between 2003 and 2010/2011. As the final sign in the zodiac, Pisces is concerned with oneness and universality⁵. It hankers for transcendence and fusion



with the cosmos, like water infiltrating everything on its path, in an endless cycle of nature. From its modern ruler, Neptune, it embodies permeability; from this planet and its traditional co-ruler, Jupiter, the capacity for exponential growth and scale. A highly spiritual and artistic sign, it overflows with empathy, longing and imagination. Through acts of self-giving and compassion, it loses the illusion of the separateness of the self. A strong sense of communion is felt with all things, all afloat in the same psychic ocean.

Overwhelmed by the harsh realities of the world, it may sometimes take refuge in escapism, avoidance, and addiction.

While in Aquarius between 1985 and 2001, both Uranus and Neptune traded places during the first decade of the new millennium, each in mutual reception from the sign ruled by the other. This created an unusually long and continuous synergy between the two archetypes, spanning a quarter of a century, and remarkable for the absence of major political or similarly concrete upheavals⁶ typical of Uranus transits. The result has been a more pervasive and epochal metamorphosis of our collective imagination and cultural vision. Fundamental perspectives and structures of reality (such as national and geographical constraints) were dissolved to make way for a more connected world and an entirely novel way for humanity to relate⁷. From the explosion of mobile telephony, to that of home computing, and the tremendous growth of first the Internet and social media subsequently, these Promethean advancements have enabled individuals to feel part of and contribute to a progressive globalisation of experiences, and have revolutionised the way we think, relate and communicate.

From the personal to the collective, our growing love of social media has not simply transformed us at individual level, it has changed the way we do business, the way we are governed, the way we live in society, and what we do. And it has done so at breakneck speed. Consumers are no longer passive. Open discussion and relationship nurturing are now essential for organisations to thrive. Civic participation and engagement have exploded to the extent that no entity is now spared

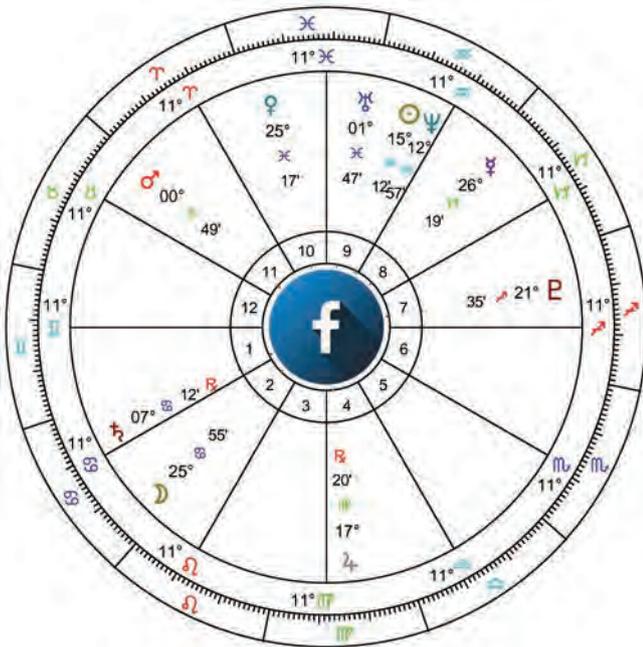
from the direct and often ruthless voice of the masses. In this setting, the conventional rules and methods of distribution, government and marketing are disintegrating, in favour of an increasingly ground-up approach. Innovation in all fields of endeavour has accelerated thanks to the countless opportunities now available for disseminating a product, concept or work of art. Workforces, workplaces, the work we do and the organisations we do it for are now radically different. Every new digital capability has a ballooning administrative sector wrapped around it, creating jobs, stimulating economies and driving consumption⁸.

The charts of social media

In terms of astrological timing, it is no coincidence that the most successful networks today all debuted during the Uranus in Pisces transit.

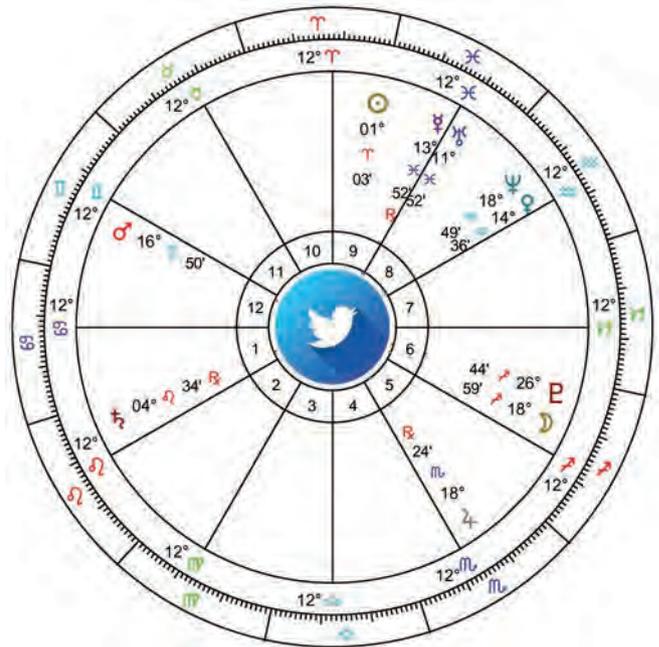
Facebook [see chart], with over 2.2 billion active users, is currently bigger than the three biggest nations on Earth combined⁹. It was first launched on 4 February 2004¹⁰ (time unknown) and has since established itself as one of the most dominant forces in online advertising¹¹. With the Sun in Aquarius (innovation) closely conjunct Neptune (universality), and dispositor Uranus in Pisces, Facebook was always meant to fulfil both a dream and an ideal for its users who feel part of an extended family (Moon in Cancer) with their network of friends. While Neptune vouches for the tremendous expansion and pervasiveness of the platform, the positive alignment between dispositor Uranus and Saturn speaks for its longevity and robustness. With Mars at 0° Taurus as the apex of a t-square with Mercury and the Moon, the Uranus ingress into the same sign in May 2018 is likely to usher in a shake-up of the organisation.

Instagram [see chart], with over 800 million monthly active users¹¹ was launched on 6 October 2010 (time unknown) with the avowed ambition of “igniting communication through images”¹². With Sun in artistic Libra and dispositor Venus in Scorpio closely conjunct Mars, this network has a magnetic



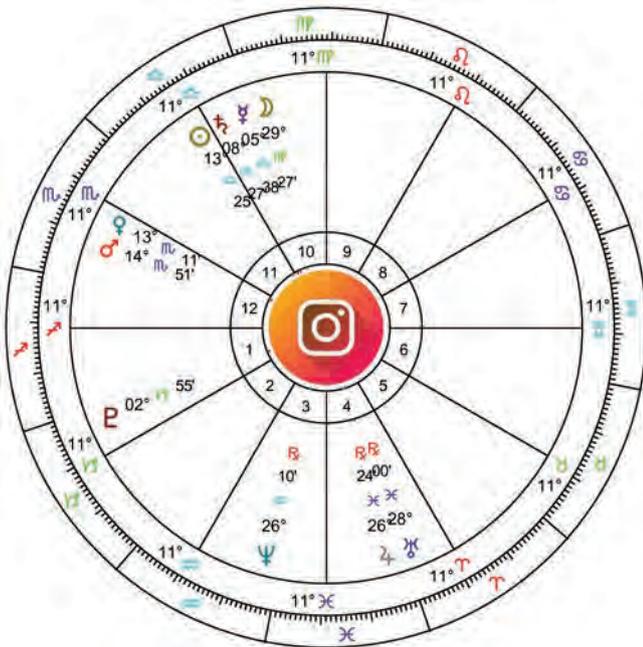
Facebook Natal Chart

Feb 4 2004, Wed 12:00 pm EST +5:00 Cambridge, Massachusetts



Twitter Natal Chart

Mar 21 2006, Tue 12:50 pm PDT +7:00 San Francisco



Instagram Natal Chart

Oct 6 2010, Wed 12:00 pm PDT +7:00 San Francisco

appeal. Also marked by a close Sun-Saturn aspect, its success has been unparalleled, and shows no sign of abating. Unsurprisingly, Jupiter is closely conjunct Uranus in Pisces, magnifying its effect, and in a powerful t-square with Pluto in Capricorn and a personal stellium in Virgo/Libra (Moon, Mercury, Saturn and Sun).

Could the start of a slowdown in growth be expected after transiting Saturn triggered the t-square in December 2017?

Finally, Twitter [see chart], with 328 million unique monthly users¹³, sent its first tweet out on 21 March 2006, at 12:50pm PST. Helpfully for astrologers, the original tweet can still be accessed on <https://twitter.com/jack/status/20>. With the Sun in Aries in the 9th house, dispositor Mars in Gemini, and a t-square with Mercury, Uranus, and the Moon, you would expect concise, cutting and to-the-point communication is in the Twitter DNA [tweets are just 280 characters, maximum). A strong trine between Sun and Saturn also suggests staying power. In addition to the aforementioned t-square, the rising Moon is conjunct Pluto, which points at some of its well-known, opinionated (Sagittarius), powerful users, as well as the deep polemic it has engendered since its inception.

In 2018, Twitter experiences a Jupiter return which hopefully will help reverse the recent stall in user growth, likely due to transiting Saturn affecting the natal t-square.



Summary

The Uranus in Pisces revolution has transformed our existence beyond recognition. With a digital thread bridging the gap between nations, languages and ethnicities, it is all too easy to drown in this immersive world that gives the illusion of connectedness, and the reality of further isolation from the self and, at times, life itself. The shadow side of Uranus in Pisces – escapism, addiction and withdrawal – is the price paid for the increased technological enmeshing into the very fabric of humanity. And now that social media is so deeply embedded in society, removing oneself from such a service has psychological side-effects at a motivational, behavioural and emotional level¹⁴.

As for the future, it is feasible to conceive that Uranus' transit through hyper-connected Gemini from 2026 will re-shape human communication in as yet unfathomable ways. The future is brimming with opportunities; and the future of social connectivity has only just begun.

Endnotes

1. We Are Social, Digital in 2017 Global Overview, <https://wearesocial.com/uk/special-reports/digital-in-2017-global-overview> [accessed 28 August 2017].
2. Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, Penguin, 2006, pp.92-96.
3. Nicholas Campion *et al.*, *Mundane Astrology*, Thorsons Astrology Handbooks, 1984, p.223.
4. Liz Greene, *The Art of Stealing Fire*, CPA Press, 1998, p.3.
5. Sue Tompkins, *The Contemporary Astrologer's Handbook*, Flare Publications, 2006, pp.68-71.
6. Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos and Psyche*, Penguin, 2006, pp.355-365.
7. David Graeber, *Revolutions in Reverse: Essays on Politics*,

Violence, Art, and Imagination, Minor Compositions, 2011, p.15.

8. The B-Team, http://issuu.com/the-bteam/docs/150114_newwaysOfWorking_v12?e=15214291/11024330, [accessed 10 October 2017].
9. CBS News, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/facebook-users-2-billion-biggest-countries/>, [accessed 9 October 2017].
10. The Harvard Crimson, <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2004/2/9/hundreds-register-for-new-facebook-website/?page=single>, [accessed 9 October 2017].
11. CNBC, <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/09/25/how-many-users-does-instagram-have-now-800-million.html>, [accessed 9 October 2017].
12. TechCrunch, <https://techcrunch.com/2010/10/06/instagram-launch/>, [accessed 9 October 2017].
13. CNN Money, <http://money.cnn.com/2017/07/27/technology/business/twitter-earnings/index.html>, [accessed 9 October 2017].
14. The Psychologist, <https://thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-28/september-2015/why-do-we-social-media> [accessed 8 October 2017].

Chart Data

Facebook Launch

4 February 2004, at 12pm (time unknown)
Cambridge
Massachusetts

Instagram Launch

6 October 2010, at 12pm (time unknown)
San Francisco
California

Twitter Launch

21 March 2006, at 12:50pm (Rodden Rating: AA)
San Francisco
California



Marilena Marino has many years' experience in technology and communication in the TV industry. Owner of SparkAstrology.com, she started collaborating with the Astrological Association in 2017. In her role as Student Liaison Officer, she has worked to foster a two-way dialogue with students, to help strengthen their relationship with the wider astrological community, and to encourage them to embrace astrology more fully. Marilena's video interviews with leading astrologers can be watched on the Astrological Association's channel on YouTube.