# Concerns raised over social media's impact on Maltese students' attention and learning



Statistician Vincent Marmarà has raised significant concerns regarding the impact of social media on attention spans and mental development, particularly in the context of Malta’s education system. These issues are set to be discussed in detail at the fifth edition of the State of the Nation survey and national conference, scheduled to take place at Verdala Palace on 6th June. This year’s conference will focus primarily on education and its challenges.

In a recent interview with Lovin Malta’s Tim Diacono, Marmarà warned about the addictive nature of social media and its potentially detrimental effects on people's ability to focus and think deeply. He described the consequence as people becoming “mental two-year olds,” suggesting a regression in cognitive maturity. Marmarà explained, “While social media can be a useful tool if used wisely, it poses a very serious danger when it becomes almost as indispensable as the air we breathe.”

He elaborated on the issue, highlighting the prevalence of low-quality content consumption, such as short videos and continuous updates about others’ lives, which he believes diverts attention away from self-improvement. “Our minds are subtly being trained to only think in short bursts, with the result being a lack of patience and reflection. Have we stopped thinking in the long-term? Are we still asking critical questions and seeking serious answers?” Marmarà asked. He also questioned how the reliance on artificial intelligence, such as AI tools for quick answers, might be affecting the educational process and problem-solving abilities.

The upcoming conference aims to address a wide array of pressing questions concerning the education sector. Topics to be discussed include the potential elimination of homework, the extension of school hours, and whether mobile devices in the classroom serve as educational aids or distractions. Another key concern is whether children are using technology to avoid deeper intellectual engagement.

Marmarà also pointed out the rapid pace of technological change compared to the slower evolution of the national curriculum. He emphasised the need to teach critical thinking effectively, while also addressing students’ mental health without exacerbating stress. “Could the education system be overprotecting young people from the realities of life they will someday have to face? Are students learning how to solve problems or do they fall apart at the first challenge?” he asked.

Further reflecting on higher education, Marmarà noted that university years might be the only time students can think freely but questioned whether this freedom is genuinely realised in today’s environment. He also highlighted the evolving role of AI technologies such as ChatGPT, asking whether they represent an aid or a hindrance to universities’ educational missions and the cultivation of critical thinking skills.

The conference will begin by presenting scientific insights about the demographics and characteristics of Malta’s population to provide a foundation for the ensuing discussions. Marmarà expressed the importance of understanding who the people are and what defines them before experts, speakers, and the public engage in debates about the nation’s future.

By bringing these issues to the forefront, the State of the Nation conference aims to stimulate informed dialogue on how Malta’s education system can adapt and respond to the challenges posed by technological influences and shifting social behaviours.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://timesofmalta.com/article/state-nation-conference-2025-focus-education.1108650> - This URL supports the claim that the State of the Nation conference in 2025 will focus on education and is being led by consultant Lou Bondi and statistician Vincent Marmarà.
2. <https://tvmnews.mt/en/news/fifth-edition-of-state-of-the-nation-conference-to-focus-on-education/> - This link corroborates the fifth edition of the State of the Nation conference, which is set to discuss education and its challenges.
3. <https://www.tiktok.com/@lovinmaltaofficial/video/7489435990650522882> - This TikTok video explains Vincent Marmarà’s concerns about social media impacting attention span and mental development, aligning with his statements about its effects in the context of Malta's education system.
4. <https://www.instagram.com/maltadaily.mt/p/C8cFQCBMUV7/?locale=zh-hans> - This Instagram post mentions a survey conducted by Dr. Vincent Marmarà and Lou Bondi, highlighting public perceptions that might be discussed at the conference.
5. <https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2022/08/study-insight-power-dynamics-politics-malta-media> - This study, co-authored by Dr. Vincent Marmarà, provides insights into media consumption and political behaviors in Malta, which can be linked to broader discussions on social influences and education.
6. <https://timesofmalta.com/article/state-nation-conference-2025-focus-education.1108650> - This URL further supports the involvement of Vincent Marmarà and Lou Bondi in the conference, emphasizing its focus on significant issues affecting Malta, including education.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiwAFBVV95cUxPYWlLQVBjMFBkLUJmeVF0Z1k2M2tIYlBteV9YWTlKMTZSODIyS3ZoOEtkTGc0WmE3eVhEdzFiSk80eUVXcmtyaWNPSE42NHVCNjF2WmtRWndYemxDQU9zdVVub1RENlF2aEFCNHFkREhmSHRrckc4WUltV3Njdkh6RXhHUDBVdkZHenRnOU9TMmRhRGFkMHBEWjlacmJvZ1dtVkMtY1ZPc210dHFSWHFhWkpMdzUzY2NCaGN5RkhPQTI?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data