

The internet and american culture

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Cultural artifacts are defined as items, ideas, events, and rituals created by human beings that reflect upon the culture of a certain group of people. This broad definition suggests that the number of cultural artifacts in existence is quite large, with each artifact possessing its own distinct history and meaning. American culture is particular is composed of an unimaginable amount of cultural artifacts, particularly because of the wide range of people that consider themselves to be American. One of the largest and most significant cultural artifacts of modern American culture is the internet and social media.

With the many recent technological advancements of the last few decades, computers and the web have found a way to infiltrate themselves into the lives of most Americans. The internet and social media's presence as cultural artifacts illuminates modern American cultural values including virtual relationships, privacy, individuality, equality, and the acceptance of diversity. The internet is essentially a global communication network, which was the byproduct of the invention of computers. As the presence of technology such as computers and laptops rose, the internet grew as well. While not an actual object, the internet has far more power and influence in society than most typical objects. In the modern world, the Internet now exists on phones and tablets as well.

A subset of the internet is social media. Social media consists of several websites and networks that allow users to share content and connect with one another. Examples of popular social media sites include Facebook, Youtube, Tumblr, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. Each site differs in the type of content featured, as well as the means of communication among

users. The increasing presence of the internet in the daily lives of the majority of American citizens has revealed the newly formed cultural values of virtual relationships, in addition to privacy and individuality. One of the largest aspects of the world wide web is the creation of social media sites, which have shifted the norms of interaction in society forever. This idea particularly applies to the younger generation of Americans, who are more easily immersed into internet culture because it has surrounded them as they have grown older.

Teens and even adults have grown more used to texting and instant messaging their friends and family, rather than speaking in person or through a phone call. Social media has also allowed people to form relationships with people across the globe, whom they otherwise would not have been able to meet. Texting and messaging via social media has created a shift in language as well, as more and more internet users abbreviate words and language becomes more casual. For example, A commonly used phrase is “ to be honest”, which has been altered in virtual interaction to become the acronym “ tbh”. Online dating is another prime example of the way “ virtual” relationships has begun to intermingle with “ real” relationships, as people meet and get to know one another online before meeting in person. The formation of friendships via social media websites like Facebook and Twitter is also representative of the growing cultural values of privacy and individualization.

Prior to the existence of the internet, the relationships formed by individuals were always based on in-person interaction, and for children this meant that their parents were involved in the development of their friendships. Now,

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forming connections via the internet has become a way for kids and teens to keep their friendships private and outside of their parent's watch. The idea the kids and teens have a desire to keep aspects of their lives separate from their families indicates a stronger emphasis on the cultural value of individuality in America due to the internet. Some of the most positive cultural values that have revealed itself through the existence of the internet and social media as a cultural artifact are equality and acceptance of diversity. Social media in the last few years has become a strong medium for people of all ages, ethnicities, and sexual orientations alike to find themselves more involved in fighting for social justice movements. This is particularly because the internet brings people significant access to a large amount of information, and more and more people have begun to educate themselves on social matters such as racism and sexism.

One prime example of this is the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. This movement was born out of the rejection and desire to remove the systemic and ever-present racism that exists in society. For example, police brutality that has proven to be biased toward African American people was an issue that people across the country were made aware of because of videos of such brutality being posted on social media sites. The Black Lives Matter movement has become a hashtag on social media sites like Twitter and Tumblr, in which social activists and others seek to raise awareness of racism and communicate the importance of peacefully fighting against such oppression. If it weren't for the internet and social media, these movements would not be possible because not enough people would be aware that certain issues exist.

This is especially true for people who live in secluded communities who are only surrounded by the beliefs and opinions of those who live near them. Another example of social justice movements and the acceptance of diversity in turn is the He for She movement, which was also turned into a hashtag on twitter. This movement was created to raise awareness of feminism, and to combat traditionally mistaken beliefs that feminists fight for women to have dominance over men in society. In actuality, the He for She movement defines feminists as those who support equal rights for men and women. It is through the spread of such movements on social media that more and more Americans have begun to acknowledge the importance of respecting diversity and equality for all members of society. American culture is all-encompassing, and incredibly complex in nature.

There are multiple facets of the modern American culture, however, one of the most dominating cultural artifacts in existence is the Internet. The presence of the Internet and social media has revealed several American cultural values, including virtual interaction, privacy, individuality, equality, and acceptance of diversity. Ultimately, an analysis of the effect of the Internet as a cultural artifact proves the positive impact of increased communication on a global scale, as well as how such communication is imperative to inciting societal change.