

# Detrimental effects of social networking

[Sociology](#), [Social Networking](#)



Social networking is all the rage with society. It is a main outlet for both personal and professional networking. Whether its job related and trying to put the word out for prospective employers or just connecting with a long distance friend via instant message, there aren't too many people who have not taken advantage of this option to connect with others. There are not many households without the technology to take advantage of this option in communication. It seems to be the main form of contact within society today.

The problem with this method of communication is that it does not allow for strong face to face interaction and allows society to in a sense to hide themselves. This inherently has led to a society with lower self esteem and has put a wall up with its users lowering standards of social interaction. It has had such a negative impact and should be used with greater caution especially within the teenage and young adult generation. Such sites as Facebook, Myspace and orkut have had an extremely negative impact on society and what should be perceived as acceptable.

Social Networks and the ideas and activities associated with these networks have become profoundly detrimental to society today. It has escalated into much more impressive problems such as cyber bullying, intense obsession and lessened interpersonal communication skills. Let's first examine a less extreme, but equally important problem with social networks. Interpersonal communication is imperative for growth and self confidence in an individual. Social networking and the sites associated with this practice have greatly diminished the growth process of interpersonal communication.

Nurturing a younger group to be more secure with themselves and aid in shaping those who are to be the future leaders of our society is harder due to lack of communication skills. This lack stems from excessive use of these internet sites. Social network sites, chat rooms, instant messaging allows for the user to hide behind a screen name or online profile, lessening personal communication, instead using the computer as a crutch for relating with peers and new contacts. (Acar, 2008). These networks have made it possible for people to hide and not have to give 100 percent of themselves.

It creates a negative impact when it comes time for important events such as interviewing for a job or giving an important speech for a class. Young adults are so in tuned with who is doing what and where others are dining out at for that moment versus developing the necessary skills to be a productive member of society. A theory known as the anxiety and uncertainty management theory (Gudykunst, 1985) deals with interpersonal communications with different cultures, but it also provides helpful insight into communication with strangers as a whole.

According to Gudykunst's (1985) theory face to face communication with strangers or other people not known personally or professionally by the individual lessens anxiety and increases social skills necessary for growth as a human being; thus trying to relate through a computer is proven detrimental to social growth and diminishes interpersonal communication skills. The extreme continual use of these networks as a social means is going to lead to a profound number of angst ridden individuals trying to

function in society. Social network sites, chat rooms and online communities have created an obsession factor.

The online community is so hyped up and popular, if you don't have an online profile one way or another you are not considered as part of that "in crowd" when it comes to online communities. It's likened to the new pair of basketball shoes youth must have in order to fit in at school. Some people have become so obsessed with being online it has shaped their life and consequences have proved to fatal. This leads into the obsession factor of these networks. Short of being a drug, some people are so hooked on online gaming and competing against others or building their farm or getting a high score, the real world takes a back seat.

Normally playing a game wouldn't be a bad thing; however the fixation of beating or "one upping" your other 65 friends in an online game has had detrimental effects. This was proven when a Jacksonville Florida woman age 22 was playing Farmville on Facebook and was thoroughly engrossed in the game. Her 3 month old son was distracting her and as she stated "interfering with her game" to a point that she violently shook him which resulted in the infant's death. (Jamison, 2010). Internet addiction is a very serious condition. Social networking sites contribute to this by adding games and online activities that entrance the user to become a habitual user and assist in the addiction. It's been stated that internet users are becoming addicted the same way an addict becomes addicted to drugs or alcohol. (Renee, 2010) Another facet of social networking that is becoming a trend that most definitely needs to be stopped is cyberbullying. Cyber bullying is

using digital technology and online forums to harass another individual. (McQuade, Colt, & Meyer, 2009) Networking has opened a new door for teenage criminal activity and given them the opportunity to harass and hide behind a screen name.

Online communities allow users to “pose” as someone else, becoming misleading and deceptive to the person being harassed or bullied. A strong supporting case of this was the Megan Meier case, where a young girl was in belief that she was talking to a boy who was interested in her, only to find out it was an ex friend's mother who was in fact portraying herself as a boy seemingly interested in Megan to gain her trust and then began taunting and teasing the 15 year old Megan who then took her life because of such intense harassment.

Cyber bullying is such a horrific occurrence and just one more thing that teens are faced with, and social networking is the gateway for the heinous act. Another facet of cyber bullying is occurring with Facebook, where there is bullying or teasing because of lack of friends. Facebook shows users how many friends each other have. If one person has a lower amount, teens are known to harass and chide them for it (Zay, 2011) While there are many users of social networking that have benefitted, the cons of this communication far outweighs the pros.

It has produced a less educated more stressed society and this is most prevalent in teens and young adults. To secure a more educated, socially aware and confident society, these networking sites and mediums should be used sparingly and the younger generations should develop relationships

more fluidly through face to face communication to enhance self esteem and strengthen moral skills.