

Social media vs critical thinking essay sample

[Media](#), [Social Media](#)



Instant messaging is not destroying the English language. It is in fact building the younger generation's interest and ability to communicate efficiently with their peers. All should embrace social networks and instant messaging as useful tools that can be incorporated into ones daily life.

“ Instant messaging language is characterized by a robust mix of features from both informal spoken registers and more formal written registers - in essence it is a hybrid language.” (Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008, p. 5)

There is a new wave of communication sweeping across Australia and the world. Generations are now typing, texting and tweeting their own unique language. This word abbreviated Morse Code like grammar sweeps from computer to phone on social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter.

“ Written communication in instant messaging, text messaging, chat and other forms of electronic communication have generated a “ new language” of abbreviations, acronyms, word combinations, and punctuation.”

(Varnhagen et al., 2009, p. 1)

According to media sources participating on social networking sites and instant messaging is having a negative impact on the use of the English language. Most at risk according to these sources are our younger generations.

“ Instant messaging, according to many, threatens youth literacy because it creates and compounds undesirable reading and writing habits and because

it's particular lowbrow vernacular damages students' abilities to employ regular formal literary skills." (Craig, 2003, p. 118)

Word abbreviation has not occurred due to social networking sites or because of the youth of today. The origin of shorthand or word abbreviation has been traced back as far the ancient Romans. Although unable to fully confirm this statement, the first documented shorthand writer is the Roman, Marcus Tullius Tiro from B. C. 63. (Haven, n. d.)

In 1819 Mr. Phineas Bailey compiled a shorthand system based on using symbols for sounds called " Phonography", this method is still widely used in today's society and is the basis for Instant Messages. (Haven, n. d.)

We as a population should accept this newfound language that is weaving its way into our everyday lives via instant message and social networking sites. Previous generations feared and wrongly condemned " Rock and Roll" music simply because they did not like or understand the attraction. Just as they were ignorant in their views, to state that instant messaging is destroying the English language would prove our own lack of knowledge in language communication.

This is not simply a fad that will slowly cease to exist only to be spoken as Net Lingo in certain circles.

" In the past every medium from comic books to television has been pegged as the destroyer of language skill, and accordingly, all have received their share of lambasting and censure." (Craig, 2003, p. 118)

Children and the youth of future generations are not suffering academically due this newfound skill for communication. They are, in fact inventing and exploring the English language and as a result actually learning more than their fore fathers into the use of grammar.

“ The phonetic slang of instant message leads to increased metalinguistic awareness and, therefore, tangible increases in overall literacy.” (Craig, 2003, p. 125)

By comparing the “ launch dates for major Social Network sites” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 5) and the English subject results from students undertaking the Victorian Certificate of Education (Quppa, 2009) one can access whether students are lacking academically due to the use of instant messaging.

1998

- Six degrees. com has been active for one year

- Essendon Grammar School, 47 Students reach scores

between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 8th in the state of Victoria.

- Dandenong High School, 2 Students reach scores between

40 - 50 and the school is ranked 269th in the state of Victoria.

2002

- Friendster comes online

- Essendon Grammar School, 70 Students reach scores between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 6th in the state of Victoria.

- Dandenong High School, 1 Student reach scores between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 341st in the state of Victoria.

2003

- MySpace launches

- Essendon Grammar School, 73 Students reach scores between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 5th in the state of Victoria.

- Dandenong High School, 2 Students reach scores between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 247th in the state of Victoria.

2005

- Bebo and YouTube become available

- Essendon Grammar School, 58 Students reach scores between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 7th in the state of Victoria.

- Dandenong High School, 2 Students reach scores between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 281st in the state of Victoria.

2006

- Facebook can now be accessed by all.
- Essendon Grammar School, 62 Students reach scores between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 7th in the state of Victoria.
- Dandenong High School, 2 Students reach scores between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 235th in the state of Victoria.

2009

- Social networks are now apart of everyday for most students
- Essendon Grammar School, 81 Students reach scores between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 5th in the state of Victoria.
- Dandenong High School, 3 Students reach scores between 40 - 50 and the school is ranked 183rd in the state of Victoria.

From the above data one can assume that the use of social networking sites is not affecting students in the completion of the VCE. This evaluation also provides evidence that instant messaging is not destroying the English language. In fact in the case of Dandenong High School, student participation has risen and the Schools ranking in the State has improved over fifty places.

As texting is restricted to 140 characters this may have stemmed the need to compress as much information possible into one sms or Tweet. Instant

messages and social networks have changed the way we all use the English language in a digital world.

“ Since their introduction, social network sites such as myspace, facebook, cyworld and bebo have attracted millions of users, many of whom have intergrated these sites into their daily practices.” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 1)

The use of instant message language is filtering into the school system, as discussed by a practicing Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher Debbie Frost, “ abbreviations commonly used in online instant messages are creeping into formal essays that student’s write ... “(Craig, 2003, p. 122)

Not all teachers feel that this new form of communication is aiding in the destruction of the English language and outline that the lack of understanding for the English language is due to the school curriculum not from the student’s use of social networking sites and instant messaging.

“ If students employ their instant messaging literacy in the wrong settings, it is because their other scholarly literacies have not been attended to well enough. It is not, however because IM has damaged their literary abilities or prevented the formation of these abilities.” (Craig, 2003, p. 126)

In reality the use of Instant Messaging has increased a student’s interest and awareness of the English language. This view is shared by the writer of “ lol: new language and spelling in Instant Messaging” with the following, “... this new language” (Varnhagen et al., 2009) may benefit students in terms of encouraging creativity in written expression and increasing literacy.

David Craig also highlights the positive effects that the use of social networks and instant messaging has on the English language.

“... Instant messaging is a beneficial force in the development of youth literacy because it promotes regular contact with words, the use of a written medium for communication, the learning of an alternative literacy, and a greater level of comfort with phonetics and the overall structure of language.” (Craig, 2003, p. 119)

Linguists however believe that students are not being lazy or careless with their use of grammar they are in fact participating in a new communication trend know as “ linguistic whatever-ism.” (Tagliamonte & Denis, 2008, p. 4)

As the popularity of social networking sites grows. It is inevitable that this new instant messaging language will merge into all facets of daily lives and not just be confined to the online or digital world.

One could easily presume that use of this new instant messaging language would merge with the spoken word. This indeed is not the case.

According to Peters, (Peters, 2008) “ For example teenagers are more likely to use the phrase “ he was like, “ Whats Up?”” then “ He said “ Whats Up?”” when speaking - but the opposite is true when they are instant messaging.”

The ease that instant messaging provides to be in contact and stay in contact with all via one simple push of the send button or press of the enter key maybe the reason for the popularity of instant messaging and social networks.

Are we then as parents, teachers, (the older generations) fearful that the younger generations are loosing the basic skills required for the English language or are we just unwilling to join this new media craze?

Craig believes that instant messaging should be regarded as an “ alternative literacy” (Craig, 2003, p. 127) a new form of communication requiring unique skills, shared by specific communities.

It may indeed not be the changes being made to the English language by the younger generations but the lack of personalization associated with instant messages that some fear for the future.

Using a common birthday greeting we will explore this further.