The internet argumentative essay

Entertainment, Video Games

The internet has been hailed as one of the greatest innovations of the 20th century and has caused what can only be termed as a revolution. The internet is available in most countries worldwide and is available to over 120 million people globally, which is approximately 2% of the world's population (Saisan et al., 1). This is because the internet has been the driving force of information technology and is responsible for the major lifestyle change that has been experienced in the world today. The internet possesses two characteristics which have been vital to its success: it is the richest source of information; it provides a fast and interactive form of communication. These two characteristics have literally transformed the world into a global village. The internet has become indispensible in the running of our daily lives in virtually all sectors of our lives. The use of the internet should however be limited, because overusing the internet can have negative effects especially on social relations with other people and child development.

Each person uses the internet in a different manner because it is a huge information resource (Saisan et al., 1). Some people choose to use it for entertainment, work, games, or research. Certain psychologists argue that overusing the internet can result in internet addiction. The internet is also being used by many people to relieve stress, anxiety, or depression. After a difficult day, the internet is popularly used to entertain and comfort. (Dreyfus 50) points out that for some people who develop internet addiction; it becomes an unhealthy means of coping with negative emotions. Instead of dealing with negative emotions, the internet is used as a means of escape. The internet addict develops an unhealthy dependence on the internet and is unable to deal with unfavorable emotions healthily.

The internet presents a great opportunity for the propagation of other compulsive behaviors. For example, it offers an opportunity for addiction to online gaming. Online gaming is a big industry and it is projected to reach $ 19 billion by the year 2013 (Guan and Subrahmanyam 1). A research study by Cheng et al., (2), was carried out to investigate life satisfaction experienced by gamers on different levels of personality dimensions. It was found that the neuroticism often experienced by these gamers negatively affected the satisfaction they derived from life. It was therefore concluded that there was a negative relationship between the frequency of internet surfing and satisfaction in life (Cheng et al., 3). Teenagers are much more vulnerable to internet addiction as found by (Saisan et al., 2). This is because adolescence is a difficult period characterized by self-exploration and identity crisis. Teenagers who are facing developmental challenges are more likely to use the internet as a coping mechanism.

Other compulsive behaviors which can be encouraged by the internet include addiction to pornography and cybersex. The addict may be engaged in visiting adult sites, adult chat-rooms, or fantasy sites. In addition, one may become addicted to cyber relationships where friends on messaging, social networking sites, and chat-rooms are more significant than real life friends. Other studies however, reveal that computer gaming assists in cognitive development of the individual (Dreyfus 52). These studies outline that cyber relationships, social networking, and online gaming are relaxing activities which do not necessarily result in addiction. These studies, however, do concur that excessive use of the internet may have negative effects on relationships (Dreyfus 52).

Young children need an adult's supervision to validate the information that they have heard, felt, and seen (Guan and Subrahmanyam 1). Unfortunately, the internet does not contain any form of controls or checks to verify reliability of information. This means that children who use the internet are bombarded by information and are therefore their ability to differentiate between what is real and what is unreal, because reality in the virtual world cannot be ascertained (Akin and Iskender 138).

Some school children who are highly engaged in online activities demonstrate academic problems which may be a direct result of these activities. These students lack skills in writing because they plagiarize the projects. Moreover, the informal language used popularly in emails spills over in formal writing in essays among high school students (Saisan et al., 1).

It can be debated that the internet has been an enriching resource for intellectual and innovative work. However, the internet is often abused by children who neglect vital social activities like chores, quality time with adults, and homework. Dreyfus suggests that internet users will progressively lose the skills and the forbearance to conduct themselves favorably in the real world (53). In addition, the proliferation of illicit content on the internet like hate speech, pornography, bias, violence, and inappropriate content is easily accessible by children.

Pornography is an especially sensitive concern especially with regards to children because they are often drawn into this illegal and lucrative trade (Dreyfus 53). Pornography destroys the innocence of children by exposing

them to adult activities and also harms them physically especially where they are exposed to pedophiles or child traffickers. It encourages the children to lose their inhibitions, teaches them to engage in sexual activities, or used to blackmail the children.

Online victimization and sexual solicitation are grave concerns whose incidences have been increasing steadily in the past years. A form of online victimization is online harassment where the victim is threatened or subjected to offensive behavior which is of a non-sexual nature (Guan and Subrahmanyam 1). Cyber bullying is also a form of harassment which can be described as the online mode of traditional bullying. Sexual solicitation occurs when one invites an individual to divulge sexual information, participate in sexual acts, or sexual talk. A recent study amongst 10-15 year olds reports that approximately 33 percent had experienced online harassment while another 15 percent had received sexual solicitations (Guan and Subrahmanyam 1).

It cannot be denied that the internet has revolutionized and contributed greatly to global development. Business can now be conducted across the world from any location in real time, and one can communicate with a friend in a faraway land cheaply, and in real time too. However, these remarkable developments have also been responsible for the proliferation of social decay and risks with which it is associated. Overusing the internet can result in internet addiction, and it also propagates other forms of addiction like online gaming and cybersex. The internet can also damage the cognitive development of a child due to the lack of adult validation of what the child is

exposed to online. It blurs the sense of reality in exposed children, thus distorting his/her cognitive development. It also contributes to unhealthy social development as more time is spent online than in the real world. This stunts ability to relate to others in the real world. The internet is also a lucrative ground for cyber bullies, sexual solicitors, and pedophiles preying on innocent children or people. Due to these factors, it is important that the use of the internet be limited or regulated so as to control the negative effects it may propagate.

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