

English 221

Technology, Mobile Phone



English 221 21 February 2013 Caution: Take your eyes off the screen We have become a nation of distracted individuals, individuals with little interest of the outside world. We no longer pay attention to our surroundings. We walk the streets with our heads down tapping a text to someone from another time zone, and our ears plugged in to loud music. A quote from the article "Enough about you" from Brian Williams says, "Intimacies that were once whispered into the phone are now announced unabashedly into cell phones as loud running conversations in public spaces. Diaries once sealed under lock and key are now called blogs and posted daily for all those who care to make the emotional investment." This quote reflects that our lives consists of social networking and self-broadcasting that no longer fits to the category of a genuine conversation and acquiring better social skills. Overall, we have become obsessed and dependent on the Internet, in the end we have lost self-awareness and quality of life. While the Internet helps people feel connected with friends, family and even a foreign people from the other side of the world, the word "connect" has lost its value ever since social networking came to place. Society no longer has the same quality of communication and social skills. For example, when we say that one has meant people all over the world through a networking site does not mean he/she have the same qualifications of someone who has traveled the world. One must have actual life experience with people in order to gather wisdom. As I mentioned before, physical connection is key in having a true relationship. In addition, social skills are the next big contribution. A quote from Jack Soloman and Sonia Mausik in the book Signs of Life in the USA explains, "While online socializing may supplement face-to-face encounters,

it can be conducted in complete isolation as well". This means over a short period of time more and more people are losing their social skills. No matter how amusing the Internet can be, it is making people boring. People must actually do things besides sitting on a chair in front of a computer screen. Go out, travel, and explore life that is surrounding one's life. By then, one will have something great to say and something to offer to the world. For some shy individuals, online communication has become the savior to an enhanced social life. Nevertheless, this is not a positive interaction. The reason is the person will never have the opportunity to gain bravery to engage with others. They are trapped within a bubble that keeps them from having a friendship to develop further and become too comfortable to even try. In order for a real interaction, one must have a physical meet-up in order to truly connect. Although we say that we have gained the ability to multitask, we have also gained the ability to become lazy. Most frequently, students are the ones that are so distracted on their cell phones and social media that they leave their assignment until the last minute. Joanne Simpson, a professor from Johns Hopkins University, has observed a change in the attention span of her students. She sees a decrease in the quality of their work and increase of bad behavior. She sees more and more students zoning out in the class and she recalls them coming to class with poor energy levels and little interaction to the class discussion. In addition, many of her students complain about not having enough time or energy to focus. The problem is, students do have time but procrastination takes them over. Technology is the fuel of helping people or students feel zoned out. However, zoning out takes time like a sponge. Once time goes by, panic and stress

levels go high. Some students do understand that technology has taken them over but they say that they felt a constant need to be linked to the Internet and do not feel productive unless they are multitasking. Simpson also mentioned having an increase of bad behavior of her students. Spending too much time online slowly causes people to become rude and obnoxious. The reason is the Internet gives us the powerful opportunity to give our opinion without any consequences. Hiding behind a fake screen name makes one feel in power. Even if one is not hiding, one will never see the reaction of the person one is addressing. Sherry Turkle, psychologist and Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor of the social studies of science and technology says, " Many people still forget that they're speaking out loud when they communicate online. Especially when posting from a smartphone, you are publishing but you don't feel like you are," Also, " So what if you say 'I hate you' on this tiny little thing? It's like a toy. It doesn't feel consequential." Another way technology is making us rude is we are forgetting our manners. People are constantly on their cell phones talking to friends while people in the same room have something important to do. Also, most students in class lectures are engaged in other activities just like Facebook on their laptops instead of having the full attention to the professor, actively participating in class and taking notes. The attention span of our generation has shortened dramatically and they would rather update their Facebook statuses to pass their time. While sites such as Facebook and Twitter have the power to bring us closer together, they also have the power to tear us apart. Some examples are pictures, status updates, comments/wall posts, haters, and password. First, humiliation can also come

when a not so good friend of someone posted a shameful picture or video on the web. This sets off chain reactions of phone calls and messages from the person's friends and family. Sadly, sometimes a humiliating picture can cost one's marriage or job. Second, sometimes people have their moments where they post things in anger or sadness that there are times that the post, may be found offensive to others. Third, there will be a time where someone who hates a person and will find ways for the person to have problems in his/her personal life. Lastly, when one's boyfriend/girlfriend will want his/her partner to give up one's passwords. This will cause problems because if the person does not give up the password, the partner will think the person has something to hide. And if one does, the partner will not like a message or something else one has private. It is very difficult to maintain a healthy relationship period, but with Internet's involvement it's even more impossible. There are aspects of the Internet that is helpful for people to stay connection. For instance, when a disaster occurs the Internet is a reliable source of communication. In the end, the Internet is here to stay. It's integrated into every aspect of life and has changed who we are as distracted individuals. We live upon the distractions of social media and the new technologies that keep us entertained. However, this distraction keeps us from exploring the real world of life, wisdom and true connection to others. We depend in the Internet for too many things, we must learn to be independent and realize our addiction. We must stop this addiction before we lose our self-awareness and quality of life. With a little effort we will no longer be isolated but surrounded with people who truly want to socialize.