

# Effects of technology on relationships

[Life](#), [Relationships](#)



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Instant digital and online communication of the modern world influences love and courtship in relationships. The generations of today allow their interpersonal relationships to be formed and shaped according to the technology that is offered. This is one of the many important matters that are influenced by technology. Technology is manipulating the world with positive and negative effects; it causes scientific advancement, it affects the economy, and importantly, it changes communication between people.

This change can be seen in intimate relationships. To see how communication technology has changed love as a whole, one can observe how technology has changed different types, or stages, of intimate relationships. Three possible stages are an early dating stage at which flirting and courtship occur, a marital stage in which commitment is vital, and a long-distance relationship in which a couple is temporarily separated. These stages of relationships have changed in history and will continue to adjust according to society and, of course, technology. Communication has continuously been evolving ever since language existed.

Language gives the distinctive ability for the evolution of human society. Language starts at the basis of spoken words; information is conveyed through conversation aloud or written in forms of letters. Efficient communication has involved written messages even in the earliest of civilizations. Since 522 BC written messages were sent between people in the Persian Empire. For a message to travel 2000 miles, it would take 10

days for a man on a horse at a speed of 200 miles per day; clearly, there were no other options or methods to send a message such a long distance.

Until much more recent centuries, the only way to speed up the transferring of a message was to speed up the messenger himself. In the 11th century messages were sent slightly faster using pigeons (Gascoigne 1). As a next big step in the 15th century, the new technology of printing was invented. It spreads so quickly that every European country soon uses this new invention. The invention of the telescope in the 17th century allows for optical signals to be sent across a longer distance (Gascoigne 1).

The application of electricity to enable communication did not come until much later in the form of the static electrical telegraph in the 18th century. Another long time passed post-telegraph telecommunications technologies before the speaking telephone would be invented (Winston 28). But by the time that Queen Victoria had ended her reign in 1901, the telegraph also left its greatest days behind (Standage 1). Distant signaling by voice appeared only 2 centuries ago—a very recent advancement considering how long communication has existed (Winston 33).

The telephone was invented in the late 19th century—within 20 years, 2 million telephones existed in the United States. “ During Queen Victoria’s reign, a new communications technology was developed that allowed people to communicate almost instantly across great distances, in effect shrinking the world faster and further than ever before. A worldwide communications network whose cables pned continents and oceans, it revolutionized business practice, gave rise to new forms of crime, and inundated its users

with a deluge of information. Romances blossomed over the wires” (Standage 1).

Finally, the 20th century brought the inventions of the radio, television, and internet into human society; another influential invention was the famous cellular phones. These inventions spread to all parts of the world generously and quickly. With internet abilities, electronic mail became an option, and soon a preference over post mail. Instant messaging, text-messaging, and video chatting are all continuing to spread. Additionally, the convergence of internet and cellular devices can currently allow web access anytime and anywhere (“Internet” 1).

The modern day communication options are incomparable to the early civilizations’ options. Modern communication capabilities cannot even be compared to the communication 200 years ago; so much has changed. Intimacy and loving relationships have always had certain steps and stages along the way. Dating and marriage are often regarded as popular topics of discussion. One can picture ladies gossiping and journalists commenting on what women should do, on what men should do, or how both parties should act in certain situations.

However, love and intimacy are also sometimes observed in a more general and objective sense. The relationships of today can be compared with each other as well as compared to equal relationship settings of the past. Early developing intimate relationships today is a very open and general topic as compared to what it once used to be. “Courtship no longer occupies a vital place in Americanculture. The term itself seems quaint and outdated” (Cere

4). Some researchers believe that the traditions of courtship eroded in the 20th century.

They also believe that courtship's end caused the destabilizing of marriage in recent years (Cere 4). Research shows that a device such as a cell phone and the text messaging that it offers substitutes face-to-face communication and is killing relationships. This is vital in an early developing relationship because communication in this stage can either cause the progress or downfall of the whole relationship. Interestingly, researchers have found that the reason men and women spend so much time on the Internet is because of the easy communication management and the environmental control that is offered.

Particularly for the early stages of developing relationships, internet communication and other technological forms do not have any benefits (Kasallis). While research shows that text messages can be endearing and sweet for couples to interact and communicate, men and women may develop opposite opinions about the issue of text messaging. It seems that because text messaging (along with some other new technology) is so new, ground rules have not yet been established in the etiquette of the text message, and so for this reason these new technologies have had such pressure on early dating and flirting relationships (Pressner 1).

In addition to the effects of text messaging and online communication to already developed intimate relationships, there is the whole issue of relationships that have been created in cyber ways. Social networks, such as Twitter and Facebook, offer the communication between old and new acquaintances. Yet today's technology does not nearly end there; in addition

to such online social locations for communication, couples and singles are offered with online dating services, such as Match. com and eHarmony.

Such online services (now also accessible on cellular devices ever since the Cell and Internet convergence) are lacking reality and are artificial. Yet this does not stop men and women. In fact, the disconnectedness often attracts their attention and is tempting and addicting. Another stage of relationships is marriage. The marital stage is considered the most committed and based on emotional attachment. In this stage, the couple is considered dedicated and can be referred to as family members; the couple can also bear children. Research shows that marriage, partially due to the previous dating stage, has also changed in recent times.

In the past, the “ courtship” dating stage set clear ground for marriage as a next step. Since early dating is affected in modern day, marriage is not regarded as the next conceivable step. Also with technology changes, divorce laws have changed, allowing marriages to end with no faults, and opening more options to couples. “ Many of the essential features of love as courtship — the longing for permanence, the desire to donate the self to another — must, in the economists’ story of courtship, be either submerged into contract theory or dismissed altogether as irrational” (Cere 10).

The effects of online communication and text messaging on marriage are observed as well; with both positive and negative effects. Noticeably, a little free time along with the internet is possibly harmful and damaging to a married couple. With services on the internet such as dating, social networks, and pornography, a dedicated husband or wife could get carried away. Such services are easily accessed, easy to use, and emotionally easy

to handle because no work is required to be put in as with a husband or a wife.

Nevertheless, other researchers say that marriage has been made easier in recent years due to the interconnectedness. A husband or wife can always send an email, make a phone call, or even easier—send a text message to one another. With this ability, there appears yet another aspect: married couples do not experience the love and desire for each other when not together (Sahlstein 1). A simple phone call can eliminate any feelings the couple has of missing one another or of desire for the other. With such quick digital communication today there is less of this excitement as in previous years.

A third type of a relationship is a long-distance relationship. A simple example of such a couple is when the husband must leave for the military for long periods of time. In the internet age today, this long distance relationship is aided by such programs like Skype. A couple can not only send quick e-mails, it can talk on the phone, send instant messages, and video chat. This is somewhat of a revolution in comparison to relationships even a hundred years ago. Long distance relationships have had problems in all cultures and times.

Since beginning of history, long distance relationships was a matter that was avoided at all costs. Yet in today's world, technology has definitely benefited this form of intimate relationship, allowing a couple to stay in touch in numerous ways. Most interestingly, studies show that in such a relationship, being together and being apart mutually allow and constrain on another in multiple ways (Sahlstein 1). Modern society is enhancing and providing this

ability for long-distance romantic partners to feel connected and still be separated at the same time.

The technology, particularly for communication enhancement, has changed probably the most in recent years causing changes and adjustments in all areas. Relationships and interpersonal communication is just one area that is currently affected, and it is not yet clear if it for the ultimate better or the eventual downfall of intimacy between men and women. In dating, marriage, and long-distance relationships, the effects of communication technology are currently observable. However, new technology is being developed and new standards are being set; and so, one may only wonder where intimate relationships will end up next. New problems may arise, as they always do in time; yet with such an instinctive and desired emotion of love, humans and their relationships will have the ability to prevail.

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