

Argumentative essay on does social networking affect students

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



The modern times offer a plethora of new and improved technological gadgets, devised for the purposes of making human life easier and more interesting. Internet usage is a pervasive force in the lives of almost every single human being, from a simple Google search, movie and image downloading, to the ubiquitous social networking. And, taking into account the most insidious element of student experience, no wonder so many adolescents seek friendship, romance and so much more on social networking sites, such as Facebook, Myspace, and similar. However, as it is mostly the case with young and developing minds, they do not know when to draw the line and realize that “enough is enough.” Consequently, this obsession with social networking well outgrows its use and becomes an all-consuming force in the lives of young people, who think about nothing else, except checking their Facebook account to see if anyone commented or liked some of their posts. Thus, the very existence of Internet and all its branches of programs and utilities is a thing most welcome for a person who knows how to utilize it towards a personal betterment, instead of doing what most students are doing: allowing social networking to run their lives, and believing other people’s opinion about themselves more than their very own, and falling into the trap of lack of focus on their studies and in some cases, even cyber-bullying.

Humans are social beings and thus, having friends and being popular is a key notion to strive for, where students put a lot of effort into presenting themselves as likeable, to be able to gain access into a social group and not be outcasts, because “group affiliation not only supplies emotional security, but also is a source of status and reputation with motivational properties the

group context of social relations assumes a centrally important place in personality development during the adolescent years” (Cotterell 1). And this is exactly what social networking does: it fosters social interaction through communication via instant messages and chat programs with old friends, through browsing other people’s profiles in finding out more about them, and subsequently, if they would be good “ new friend” material.

A similar thing was already happening in the past, with pen pal letters and phone calls, it merely developed into what we have today. Still, if it all stopped there, one would see no problems with social networks being (overly) used by students. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Students become too reliant on this kind of interaction, almost to the point of neglecting the real world while preferring the online version of it, perhaps because it offers more stability and more positive feedback from people whose opinion should not even matter. Thus, these students’ values become turned upside down and every aspect of their real life suffers on account of it, while they do not even realize it.

First and foremost, the up-to-date technology offers numerous portable devices, such as tablets and smart phones with the ability to get online anywhere. With this aspect of their social life satisfied, the students consider their cell phones the key to their social life. The phone’s small size, a plethora of abilities and a constant availability of internet seems, regrettably, to be too much of a temptation for a large number of students, who are usually caught playing with their mobile phones under the desk or in the back row, either surfing the Internet or more frequently, using social networking sites. Therefore, during this time that ought to be spent learning,

revising and exercising, the students are neglecting this very relevant aspect of their development because of their inability to put down their phones and forget about social networking for a certain amount of time. Needless to say, by not paying attention to what is said during class, they are bound to have gaps in knowledge which will become harder to fulfill as they grow older. Of course, technically, phones are forbidden in class, but as it is the case, numerous students are not paying any attention to this rule and are neglecting the primary reason they are in school/university: to focus on learning. When such things become somewhat of an obsession, it is natural that they will not have any regard for rules and will just do as they please, that is surf the Internet and chat in class.

Moreover, the time students spend online socializing with each other, can in most cases, be spent more wisely by physically socializing outside, by organizing a get together which includes the social aspect and a real tangible connection, instead of merely sitting in front of the computer all day. It appears that human interaction is losing its physical side, or as one surveyed student put it: " Signing a Facebook wall is a lot easier and less time consuming than picking up the phone to call a friend. Not many in college have time for that." (cited in Pempek, et al. 231). It is true that time is an asset one has least of and should be valued and cherished while spent accordingly, but can calling a friend to ask how he is doing really be considered a waste of one's time? Surprisingly, for people such as the above quoted student, it is. The fast paced life of today has made us think it easier and better to simply leave Internet notes on other people's profiles and to enquire about their life, than to actually meet them.

Not to put a price on friendship, but it seems that friends have become a commodity online, on sites such as Facebook, where there exist people whose profiles count an astonishing number of friends, sometimes going over two, three thousand. If a person has so many friends, is it really possible that all those people are his friends? There is a very slight probability of this. But, the law of the Internet states that people with more friends and more “likes” on their pictures and posts are at the top of the social hierarchy, and in demand as friends to other people. Thus, this enchanted circle of false online friendships continues, to the point of turning “friends” into mere collectibles for the purpose of popularity.

In addition to treating friendship as commodity, students often fall into the dangerous trap of cyber-bullying. In some cases, this cyber-bullying is an even more dangerous phenomenon, due to the fact that adolescents, even university students are in search of comforting words and understanding online, from strangers, especially when they do not find these things among their friends and family, and thus, harsh words from strangers can have devastating consequences. For instance, the media is wrought with newspaper headlines of young people who were desperate of peer approval, whether it was for their sexual, religious or otherwise affiliation. There are numerous chatrooms for equally minded people, looking for support, but of course, as it is the case in real life, there always exist people who thrive on making others feel bad about themselves and their life choices. Thus, it becomes painfully clear that “there have been several high-profile cases involving teenagers taking their own lives in part because of being harassed and mistreated over the Internet, a phenomenon termed cyberbullicide -

suicide indirectly or directly influenced by experiences with online aggression” (Hinduja and Patchin 2006).

Naturally, not all cases of cyber-bullying end up with the victim’s suicide, other important factors also come into play, such as different mental issues, emotional and psychological instability, and other traumatic life circumstances. But, it is germane to note that in these cases, one word taken the wrong way can have tragic consequences, due to the fact that “ bullying and cyber-bullying scored higher on [the] suicidal ideation scale than those who had not experienced those two forms of peer aggression” (Hinduja and Patchin 2006). Thus, this aggression aimed at people with extremely low self-esteem and with melancholy and depression issues tends to bear tragic consequences.

Another problem with social networking, closely connected to this issue of needing attention and approval are posted pictures in what is considered inappropriate attire, especially when it comes to girls and young women. Blinded by the media which emphasizes external beauty to painful extremes, makes these female individuals highly insecure about their looks, and are thus, desperately in search of public approval, which they hope to get by posting revealing pictures of themselves, which deem them girls of weak morals or even worse, targets for stalkers and in case of underage girls, pedophiles. But, they do not seem to be bothered by any of these things, as long as the number of “ likes” on their posts and pictures keeps growing, making them more popular and thus, accepted as part of the world of the beautiful.

Overall, the Internet has brought numerous things a responsible and

reasonable adult can find good use for. However, in case of so much “power” being put into the wrong hands, as it is with students, and generally young people being allowed to do whatever they like online, with little, if any, constraint, this can lead to lower grades, inability to cope with real life problems and preference for the virtual world, all of which leads to an individual becoming a loner and an outcast, something that he or she initially strived very hard not to become. The Internet and especially social networking can offer an easier way of staying in touch with family and friends, and sharing significant moments, but simultaneously, it is of the utmost importance to remember that as in real life, safety comes first in virtual life as well, and real life experiences, such as education and close friends should not suffer. It is all too easy to get lost in the vast world of Internet, but if parents manage to teach their children to use it wisely, no problems should arise, despite all the dangers.

Works Cited:

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