In favour of internet and social networking sites essay sample

Technology, Internet

WE are now living in an information society because of the advent of the internet and various social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Netlog, Zorpia, Whatsuapp and Blogs, among others. The proliferation of these sites has attracted both the young and the old and surprisingly, political parties, churches and other civic organisations. These sites have to a certain extent drawn people from disparate geographical locations closer. Of course I cannot rule out the problem of the digital divide which has hindered many people from accessing the internet and partaking fully in the process of communication via these networking sites. For this article I tried to gather views from various stakeholders across the social spectrum on the impact of these sites in Zimbabwean society. Information is one of the basic requisites for driving social change in communities. It keeps people updated with the current trends because being current is the currency of these days. The social change due to the flow of information can either be positive or catastrophic to social development. I tried to find out from the " netizens" themselves if the networking sites are offering a panacea to social ills and imbalances or they are merely exacerbating moral decay. It has definitely been a boon to society.

Over twenty years ago the only way we had to keep in touch with others was by snail mail or phone. Now the majority of households have at least one computer and/or smartphone device. This has allowed for people to stay in touch with family, find old friends that they have lost touch with over the years and even network for their business. Without social networking alot of this may not have been possible. It gives us a platform to share our views, opinions and thoughts. It even helps in Communication skills enhancement.

There are no boundaries or borders for a person to connect with other people living even in other continent. It does keep a person updated about he latest happenings in the world. Verily it is a boon for society, if used judiciously. The biggest gifts that mankind has got is technology and more so, it is the information technology that has brought this world closer. While growth, development and speed of progress have increased due to this, a special bonding is happening between human beings. This is through the social networking. Well, internet has got many social networking sites such as Facebook, Orkut, Twitter etc and this has become the special platform for strangers to become friends or as a powerful tool of communication.

But here is the big question- is social networking really a boon or bane? especially in the case of students and today ' s generation. Yes, there is no doubt that this helps increase your friends circle, the opportunity to interact with different people and make new friends across the world. But many are asking if the social networking sites are indeed being used for such productive reasons. There has been an increasingly disturbing behaviour found in students and youngsters after their exposure towards such sites.

Their interaction with family members, their concentration towards studies, their interest in outdoor activities have come down drastically. Moreover, youngsters are being lured by conmen and other shady individuals through these sites and this is leading to grave risk. A recent incident of an IIM student committing suicide after knowing about her boyfriend through a social networking site is a clear example of how extreme things can become.

The experts are suggesting that using of social networking is not wrong but the way it is being used is important. Students and youngsters must be given guidance on what should be the dos and dont ' s. Also, the students must be educated on the overall developmental activities instead of getting glued to the mobile phones and computers and spending precious time chatting. Students from their end must take initiative to find out how best such sites can be used. So folks, wake up and use technology as a boon and not a bane.

Internet Piracy

Many teenagers have cell phones, MP3 music players, and access to Internet-connected computers, often all on the same device. In an age where Internet connectivity allows for the sharing of data in the blink of an eye, it's easier than ever to get access to a wide variety of music and video. The problem is that for every legitimate pay service there are multitudes of networks offering free illegal downloads. Questions to consider include " Is the Digital Millennium Act good or bad?"; " Is sharing a media file any different than sharing a book with a friend or leaving a magazine on a bench? Is it actually stealing?" and " Once you have created and released something how much control do you have over it?" Internet Privacy for Teens

Enacted in 1998, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) was established to protect the privacy of children under the age of 13. Under the act, no website could solicit personal information from users under the age of 13 without parental permission. The Internet is ever changing, however, and in 2010 the Federal Trade Commission began to look at whether or not

to expand the law to teenagers up to age 18. The consideration was in response to the explosion of social networking that teens enjoy, and gives parents access to their children's personal Web accounts. Questions to consider: " At what age does someone have a right to privacy?"; " Can teens be trusted to manage their own online profiles and personae?"; " How much right do parents have to protect their children?" and " Do you have a right to privacy on something that is as public as the Internet at all?" Internet Kill Switch

In the event of a national emergency, should the leader of a nation have the power to gag electronic communication? In 2011 this scenario was played out in Egypt during a political upheaval. The idea of an off-switch for the Internet is as old as the Internet itself. The question is whether or not political leaders have the right to exercise this power in a nation with protection of free speech. Things to consider: " The President has other powers of communications censorship that have been exercised in times of war; is this any different?"; " Does free speech protect the Internet more than newspapers and television news?"; " What are the ramifications of shutting down the Internet?" and " Are there legitimate reasons that the President might shut down the Internet?" Is the Internet Killing Empathy?

The Internet has provided access to images and video with greater ease than even television did. With wireless Internet access and Web-capable cell phones we have exposure to lurid imagery of violence and cruelty, both real and make-believe. One only has to look at any website's comment pages to see instances of people using anonymity to be cruel to other strangers. With

this anonymity and constant exposure to desensitizing imagery, is the Internet killing human compassion? Questions to consider: " Are generations that came after the Information Age more or less compassionate than those that came before?" and " Are there any ways that the Internet brings people together, rather than pulls them apart?"