

Psychosocial effects of technology



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Introduction

As individuals of a modern society, we are used to technology being present in almost every area of our everyday lives. Being that technology is so present in our everyday lives, it is almost impossible to live a normal life without it. Technology such as laptop computers and cell phones have become fixtures of modern culture, affecting how we communicate, work, and spend our free time. Though the effects appear minimal on the surface, technology can alter an individual's physiological state. Technology affects how we view ourselves, our relationship with others, and the ways in which we communicate, therefore, creating negative psychosocial effects on the lives of individuals.

Though technology is meant to promote the positive aspects of human connection, it creates an abundance of negative effects and backlashes. Technology has been created and manifested in numerous forms throughout the twenty-first century. Technology is a large umbrella term, due to the thousands of creations that can fall under its category. Technology can range from a physical creation such as a laptop and a cellphone, to a virtual creation such as the Internet, its various websites, and various social media applications that can be accessed from both cell phones and computers. The Internet, which can be accessed from numerous technological devices, allows individuals to fully participate in its virtual world through sharing pictures, online chat forums, blog posts, and to write about their life and daily activities through social media. Through these various avenues, the Internet allows users to create virtual relationships and communicable ties.

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Though all of these facets seem extremely positive, the negative impacts outweigh its benefits. For every positive feature, in turn, creates a negative psychological impact in some shape or form. Technology can affect our individual mental states of being, how we view ourselves, the ways in which we communicate, and our relationships with others, which are some of the most important features of our human existence. Through technology we have redefined acceptable behaviors and moral norms, the basis of communication, and who we are as a culture.

One might ask why it matters that technology has affected our psychosocial states of being. It matters because we are mentally no longer the same culture that we were before these technological advancements. As a society, our mental states have changed negatively. We have become lazy, dependent on technology, isolated, and unable to put down our technological devices. Though technology can be extremely helpful, these are not positive changes, and have affected the human brain, human interaction, and communication culture as a whole. We must be observant as a culture in how often we use our technology/ the ways in which we use our technology, in order to lessen its negative psychosocial affects, otherwise, we will not be able to live without it. In order to be proactive and lessen these affects, we must look at the devices that have forever changed the face of communication and the negative ways in which it affects our mental state and social aspects of society.

There are numerous technological advancements that have entirely redefined communication as a whole and the ways in which our society communicates. These technological advancements consist of cell phones, <https://assignbuster.com/psychosocial-effects-of-technology/>

which allow instant communication through texting, and computers, which allow for the download of various communication software, applications, and social media apps (which can be found on both devices). Frequent uses of these devices and applications have allowed methods of communication to be entirely redefined, because most elements of communication can now take place virtually. Technology is extremely convenient and appealing, making it extremely difficult for users to resist, or wish to have face-to-face communication. A survey of undergraduate students showed that 85 percent use technology and social media to stay in touch with friends as opposed to other forms of communication (HumanKinetics. com). Due to its convenience and easy accessibility, technological communication has become a staple of our society and has entirely redefined not only the way in which we communicate, and but also affecting one's relationships, due to communication playing a significant role in the creation of human ties.

Technology Negatively Affecting Personal Relationships

The quality of and logistics of human relationships have suffered negative affects due to technology use. Communication is a huge aspect of relationship building and when the basis of communication changes, the basis of relationship building changes as well. Communication plays a fundamental role in producing “ the common understandings” that help create moral norms and “ social value systems” (Bruce Drake, Kristi Yuthas, Jesse Dillard). Within technological avenues such as texting, communication is entirely virtual and many elements of conversation are lost such as body language, tone, and facial expressions, allowing conversation to become extremely impersonal and lack depth (Psychcentral. com). According to

psychologist Sherry Turkle, technological communication, such as texting, ironically interrupts relationship building, and does not foster conditions, which are necessary to build a true connection with another individual (Psychcentral. com). Being that individuals are constantly connected through texting, they do not receive the proper alone time, which is necessary in developing a connection with others (Psychcentral. com). In a recent study it has been found that the interruption of texting in a physical conversation “inhibits the development of closeness and trust”, and reduces the empathy that one can feel for others (Wbur. org).

Technology does not substitute the quality of physical conversation and does not reach the same heights and depth that physical conversation can.

Through conversation, individuals search for and create moral norms, in which technology prevents the possibility of having these in depth conversations (Bruce Drake, Kristi Yuthas, Jesse Dillard). Physical conversation provides the tools necessary in which people can develop “personal identity, build close relationships, solidarity and community”; elements that are all lost within technological communication (Bruce Drake, Kristi Yuthas, Jesse Dillard). Instead, communication and relationships fostered through technology are extremely substance less, due to the fact that it is difficult to kindle a true connection in a virtual world, have in depth conversations, and rely on virtual fulfillment. Therefore, technological relations have numerous backlashes. Like realistic relationships, the relationships created through technology give individuals reassurance and validation. If the multitude of these associations is not fulfilled through virtual interaction, it can cause one to feel empty. It is extremely likely for

one to feel empty when they rely on this type of validation, because it is virtual, and therefore, less likely for these associations to be fulfilled instantly, as opposed to physical contact. Relationships and the process of relationship building have changed, due to our societies shift in dialogue thanks to technology.

What we say and how we say it has been entirely changed thanks to technology, which has reinvented the technicalities of language. Cell phones and computers that operate off of a wireless connection can provide users with extremely fast technological communication, allowing messages to be delivered with speed. Abbreviations and colloquial language allow users to type fast messages within texts and chat rooms to one another. Though these aspects seem extremely positive, they can be extremely dangerous for communication culture. Wireless connection and new conversational mechanisms provide the perfect equation to entirely redefine the face of communication. Users have become extremely accustomed to this type of fast pace communication, to the point where they can no longer live without it, due to its convenience and simplicity. Technology makes users desire speed as an essential need, which is extremely detrimental to quality communication. Technological communication, such as texting, and online chat rooms, have virtually destroyed the English language and uses of its correct forms within these devices, have become few and far between. Individuals are no longer taking the time to place emphasis on certain expressions or to be grammatically correct, because it is simply easier and faster to speak colloquially, therefore, preventing quality communication (Donovan A. McFarlane). Quality communication requires effort and without

it, it leads to various misunderstandings (Donovan A. McFarlane). When communication is misunderstood, it is no longer efficient or achieves its purpose (Donovan A. McFarlane). In our society speed is often mistaken for efficiency (Donovan A. McFarlane). Individuals would rather summarize what they are saying, instead of properly explaining their ideas, due to our society's need for speed, that technology makes us desire (Donovan A. McFarlane). Though it is meant to simplify communication, technology has made communication more difficult, due its impersonal nature and lack of quality, which promotes ineffectiveness, as opposed to cohesive dialogue (Donovan A. McFarlane).

Technology Affecting Behavior, Mental Health, and Mental Processes

As a culture, behavior has also been redefined through what is now seen as morally correct and acceptable. Technology has set these new standards in behavior and implemented entirely new social boundaries. It been said that technology such as the Internet, does not promote social integration (Kraut, Patterson, Lundmark). Over the last 35 years “ Citizens vote less, go to church less, discuss government with their neighbors less, are members of fewer voluntary organizations, have fewer dinner parties, and generally get together less for civic and social purposes” (Kraut, Patterson, Lundmark) due to technology, therefore, enabling social disengagement and a less unified society. According to HumanKinetics. com, technology can cause one to feel, “ distracted, overly stressed, and isolated”, due to frequent use.

Technological avenues, such as texting, further manifest negative behavioral habits by hindering our ability to confront situations, allowing individuals to

hide behind the screen of their phone (Psychcentral. com). Bernard Guerney Jr., founder of the National Institute of Relationship Enhancement, believes that texting creates a “lack of courage” to approach an intense or awkward situation, because it is simply easier to hide behind a screen, which can hinder one’s social growth (Psychcentral. com). One can grow from certain life experiences, which now have now become obsolete through the advent of texting (Psychcentral. com). Technology also manifests lazy behavior (Insidetechnology360. com). Technology’s numerous functions enable most manual work to be done digitally, therefore, making the lives of individuals much easier and ultimately making them lazier. As technology evolves, devices are able to do more and more for users (Insidetechnology360. com). For example, Apple’s iPhone feature Siri, allows users to press a button and talk into the phone to request an action such as surfing the web, or making a phone call. As if making a phone or surfing the web was not easy enough, Apple has made it all the more easier by allowing users to perform these actions with a push of a button. Features like this, in addition to many other features of technology, breed a lazy society, because we no longer have to perform any actions ourselves, because technology can simply do it for us.

Additionally, technology enables the developing of more severe personality disorders. With features that enable users to create a profile about their life on social media sites, such as Facebook, and features that allow users to post up-to-the minute pictures on their daily activities on social media apps such Instagram, it allows users to become fixated on their appearance and reputation. Therefore, users will often post their best traits via Internet, enabling for the manifestation of behavioral conditions, such as narcissism

(Humankinetics. com). The more one is engrossed, the more likely one can experience physiological, emotional, and behavioral changes such as narcissism (Yi-Fen Chen). Certain activities and interactions a user can partake in will increase the likelihood that there will be psychological traces left behind from the virtual environment, within the individual, after experiencing it (Yi-Fen Chen).

The negative affects of technology, which are visible to the human eye, appear minimal. These affects can be seen in the way communication has changed and the way in which we narcissistically portray ourselves via Internet, and do not seem extremely harmful. The affects in which we cannot see, such as, those that affect the brain are the most detrimental, because they target our mental health. Negative affects of technology of have further manifested themselves in the forms of possible addictions and mental illnesses. Being that technology is extremely present in our lives and convenient, it is hard for some to live without it, creating an inseparable and unhealthy relationship between the user and technology in the form of an addiction. Though it is not a recognized disorder by the American Psychiatric Association, there has been much speculation to include Internet Addiction in the latest addition of the DiagnosticandStatisticalManualofMentalDisorders (U. S. National Library of Medicine), due to the manifestation of unhealthy relationships between users and technology. Internet Addiction is seen as an impulsive “ spectrum disorder” which consists of “ online and/or offline computer usage and consists of at least three subtypes: excessive gaming, sexual preoccupations, and e-mail/text messaging” (U. S. National Library of Medicine). In 2012 study done by the Department of Psychology and

Neuroscience at the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado, showed a strong correlation between problematic Internet use and psychotic-like experiences (U. S. National Library of Medicine).

As a society, we must be extremely conscious and aware towards our technology use, due to its horrible psychosocial affects. Due to the way that it is positively promoted within our society, most individuals would never suspect the horrible backlashes of technology. We must be proactive about the way in which we use technology/ how we use our technology in order to prevent serious changes towards our behavior, mental health, relationships, and how we communicate. These affects are extremely detrimental towards our society and if we do not act upon them by monitoring our technology use, communication, social interaction, and our own mental health will only grow worse, and we will therefore have a communication crisis.

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1