

Example of essay on how digital world affects student behavior

[Technology](#), [Internet](#)



How the Digital World Affects Student Behavior

Introduction

One of the most and possibly the greatest occurrences in the 20th century is the rise of the mass media (Isacosta' Site, n. d.) whereby television, radio, and print became the primary sources of information and entertainment.

Television, among the three major forms of mass media, played the biggest role in changing the views and behavior of the audiences in such a way that it created an early window- an idea in media that creates another dimension, especially for the children, to see the world even before they experience it - consequently, inducing the curious minds of the viewers, especially of the younger audiences (Baran & Davis, 2012). Not too long after the rise of mass media, digital technology emerged as another powerful type of media, which paved the way for the rise of the information age (Isacosta' Site, n. d.).

Media budget refers to the idea of the people's daily media consumption (McAlpin, 2013). " Typical 8 to 18-year-old children spend four hours of media consumption daily -- twenty-nine minutes with television; two and a half hours listening to music; one and a half hours on the computer; one hour and thirteen minutes with video games; and half an hour reading print" (Baran & Davis, 2012). As media continues to revolutionize and newer technologies flock to the market, people begin to utilize newer technologies; thus, taking time away from the other media that they use in their daily time budget. With the portability and convenience brought about by these modern technologies such as laptops, tablets and smartphones, people begin to adopt the system of double booking in which a person uses two different technologies at once (McAlpin, 2013).

Unlike the previous generations, Generation Z –commonly defined as the children born from 1995 to 2007 – was born in an age where digital technology and the Internet has become a fad among their age group (Isacosta' Site, n. d.). From the generations who spent their childhood playing on the streets and going out to the mall with their family and friends, the youth of today has easily grasped the life, which revolves around the world of technology; thus, making Generation Z the first tribe of “ digital natives.” As what Mark CcCrintle said, Generation Z is “ the most connected, educated and sophisticated” youth, yet are also considered the first tribe of “ digital natives”. However, with the ever-revolutionizing technology, they, too, tend to become immigrants to the newer technologies (Kingston, 2014).

Immigration to the Digital World

Prior to the “ digital natives” were the “ digital immigrants” who first experienced traditional media before the coming of the computer technology.

Before there were computers and the Internet, students go through the agony of looking through hundreds to thousands of book catalogs to find related books, periodicals, and journals in the library. They give away surveys and conduct one-on-one interviews to gather as much data as they need to make their research as accurate and as updated as possible. With the emergence of the digital media, however, research was made easy with thousands of virtual archive from all over the world being accessible through the use of the Internet. Thus, students need not spend their entire day in the library to look for books that will help support their research. Their

references can now be accessed anywhere with the help of the Internet and the mobility of their devices.

Uses-and-Gratifications Approach

The uses and gratification approach, as credited to Herta Herzog (Baran & Davis, 2010), is used as a framework in “ understanding why we use media or why we are motivated to choose particular types of content” (Rubin, 1981; Hartmann, 2009). Students use digital media because it gives them the convenience they need, especially in communication. They are motivated by what the digital media can do for them such as communication, “ easier” access to information, and entertainment.

Utilizing the Digital World as Part of the Academe

Nowadays, more and more academes are beginning to utilize the digital media as an extension to posting and submitting class requirements as well as conducting classes online. However, studies show that online courses cannot fully assess the students’ performance (McAlpin, 2013) because students have the tendency to become too dependent on the efficiency of the Internet such that their ideas become less of an input.

Nonetheless, the Internet and the digital search tools have incurred a positive impact on the students’ research habits (Purcell et. al, 2012).

Digital World: A Pool of Congested Information

However, the Internet does not always make your research easy. In fact, the Internet contains billions and billions of archives from all over the world: some having meaty and useful content while others being only a waste of

time.

Search engines can only work as accurately as the keywords you type in the search box. Typing the keywords will then redirect you to a list of websites, which may probably contain the necessary, if not the unnecessary, pieces of information for your research. Looking for the right keywords, on the other hand, is not the problem of the researcher. Instead, it is the burden and responsibility of the website owner and the web content creator (Kent, 2004).

Downside of Researching Online

The digital world is a pool of congested information; hence, there is a battle between meaningful and inadequate content (McAlpin, 2013).

Undergraduates, on the other hand, tend to settle for substandard information; thus, compromising the accuracy of information and the quality of research. They tend to rely solely on the Internet for every information they need and they do not go out of their way to actually get raw data, which can keep their research up to date. Furthermore, researchers have the tendency of power browsing where they have a “ tunnel vision” of the document as they look only for the right keywords. This is because they do not want to go through the hassle of reading hundreds of pages and more often than not, they tend to take the details out of context (Cull, 2011).

Echo chambers is when researchers look for information that will support and confirm their hypothesis or relate to their opinion instead of looking for information that will challenge their ideas. This behavior, however, fosters information bias and polarization among people who use the Internet as a

source of information (McAlpin, 2013). This is because they only type in the keywords they want to know about; thus, the content of their online research becomes filtered, preventing them from becoming challenged.

Plagiarism, on the other hand, is an irresponsible use not only of the Internet but any other sources available; nonetheless, it is one of the most common mistakes that students commit while doing their research. They tend to copy and paste other' works into their own and forget about citing their sources properly (Scanlon & Neumann, 2002).

Personal Behavioral Effects of the Digital World

As mentioned above, the emergence of many different digital technologies resulted in “ double booking,” which encourages multitasking. Multitasking, at many different levels, can be advantageous in such a way that a person can do two different things at the same time, making them seemingly productive. However, multitasking does the opposite as it fosters inefficiency at work, decreasing productivity and hindering cognitive function (McAlpin, 2013).

Kirk McAlpin (2013) said that online communication has the potential to negatively alter a person-to-person relationship. Despite the Internet opening the opportunity for diverse connections, it diminishes the quality and value of human relationship. As we all should know, there is a fine line between virtual and personal relationships. And as cited by Stuart Wolpert (2014), Yalda Uhls said that emoticons are a poor substitute for face-to-face communication as it does not reflect the intensity of the genuine human emotion.

Also, with the emergence of the digital media, people tend to engage in less social interactions. They may be physically present. However, their attention may not be with the person they are with; rather, on the device that they hold. This opposes the idea of Uhls that we are social creatures and that we need device-free time. This behavior then results in the decline of a person's social skills, which is especially detrimental for younger kids whose lives revolve around the digital world.

As cited by Littlejohn and Foss (2009), Donald Ellis has identified two levels of the influence of medium theory: individual and social level. The individual level concerns two individuals and how both communicate with each other. The idea behind this is that the reception of the message becomes different, depending on the media used. For example, when asking your teacher for a deadline extension via SMS or e-mail, you would not get the full impact of your teacher's wrath for your asking for an extension but at the same time, you get to accomplish your goal. With this, we can assume that students would most probably approach their teachers virtually rather than physically because they have the impression that it is less traumatizing for a teacher to reprimand his students virtually than being chastised physically.

The social level, on the other hand, explains how different media affects the " pattern of social interaction" (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). For example, when using GoogleDocs in crafting a major group paper, a member may be too focused on getting the job done while the others may have a short-attention span in which they tend to do other things while appearing to be working on the same activity. In contrast to a person-to-person interaction, they would

be able to get more job done as well as incur better ideas when they face each other rather than when they face their own devices.

Conclusion

The digital world has vast effects in the lives of the academic community. One is that the digital media has drastically changed the meaning of research for students. It has been identified that “doing research” means “Googling”; hence, the previously slow process of doing a “research” for an assignment becomes fast-paced, with mostly only inferior information to suffice their assignment (Purcell et. al., 2012). Moreover, their simple means of research may sometimes turn into plagiarism because of their lack of knowledge and probably their lack of motivation to cite their sources properly. Students dare to take advantage of the idea that information is overloaded online; hence, teachers would not be able to notice the “crime”. Despite the emergence of the digital search tools and the Internet, there are still scholars who do not solely rely on online texts; rather, they prefer reading printed text as it keeps them focused on the task. This would be unlike reading online where there are a lot of noise to consider.

It is arguably true that the effects research is focusing too much on the unintended negative effects of media rather than on its intended positive effects (Baran & Davis, 2012). However, we cannot ignore the fact that with the help of digital media, research did become easier as online books, periodicals, and journals have become more accessible through the use of the cyberspace. It is in the way that students utilize the digital world that

they are affected either positively or negatively in an academic and or personal behavioral perspective.

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