

How do online social networks affect communication



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Effects of Online Social Networking to Communication Introduction Online social networking (OSN) has positive and negative effects on the individual lives of its users and the social community as a whole. Unfortunately, all too often, the cons of OSN outweigh the pros, and the long-term effects of this craze to an individual's social relationship to his or her immediate surroundings are, at best disturbing, at worst dangerous. According to James Gardiner in his research regarding the impact off OSN to the ways people, particularly the young, communicate with each other, it has a huge effect that needs to be thoroughly studied since it involves a large percentage of internet users. Most of the users are teenagers to young adults who spend several minutes to hours of online networking with relatives, friends, and even complete strangers. Still, no matter how or whom these users interact with in this OSN world, the main reason is to interact and communicate. 1

For those who lived in a world prior to the advent of the internet and social networks, socializing mostly involves face-to-face communication. Release of private and personal information was limited to close friends or relatives, and never given to strangers. Now, people see information such as family trees, sexual preferences, mobile phone numbers, and even addresses, posted online. Despite the so-called control given by these OSN sites to keep the account private or viewable only to a limited group of people, it does not guarantee the safety of such information. Private thoughts and personal activities are posted as status messages, creating an image and feeling of closeness, openness, and reaching out among members of these OSN sites. Before, individuals share thoughts among close friends, limiting the responses within their circle. Now, with these OSN sites, almost anyone can post comments on thoughts or "blogs" previously considered as too

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personal to share with just anyone. 2 Since a large percentage of online social networkers log on to their accounts at least once a day to keep themselves updated with their online world, prevalence of personal thoughts and information being common commodities is a normal conclusion. If this is coupled with the power of anonymity, it can be a dangerous tool for those people who have ulterior motives. Also, the method of communication may have been easier, reaching a larger number of people, but it also slowly deteriorated into being less personal and colder. It is a common sight to see a birthday celebrant's profile wall bombarded with generic greetings lacking in personal touch and sincere emotions. If over half of the teenagers and young adults spend most of their social life logging on their online accounts, it could mean breeding a generation lacking in appreciation for the concept of personal, very limited, and close relationships. 4 It is surprising to see that a big reason for creating online accounts is to meet new people and broaden an individual's social network. It is like a domino effect that since most of an individual's acquaintances socialize online --- leaving them little time to personally interact with friends --- these friends consequently go with the current without realizing that this practice is spreading the concept of quantity over quality. It does not take a genius to see that this craze is detaching people from healthy and personal relationships. Reference (I need to get the name of the book)