

Cell phones are a net loss to society argumentative essay examples

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



Me: I support the statement that cell phones are a net loss to society. Most people have developed a significant addiction and the obsessive need to check their e-mail and social networks too often. That type of behavior creates an unhealthy dependency on cell phones, which leads to several issues in personal development and social relationships.

Opponent: The behaviors you described can happen, but you can't consider cell phones a loss to society just because people use them irresponsibly. That approach shifts the blame to devices that cannot determine how they will be used. If people use cell phones responsibly, they can utilize the advantages of technology, such as staying in touch with old friends, while maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Me: I never claimed that cell phones are the main cause of all social problems related to communication and conversation. Of course, anyone, with or without a cell phone, can experience tragic events in life that result in social isolation. However, abusing cell phones to monitor friends on Facebook constantly and play with apps is detrimental because it distracts people from their own thoughts and their surroundings. It's no wonder that people are under so much psychological stress when they never take a break, engage in any self-reflection, or observe the world around them.

Opponent: So you think cell phones are a net loss to society because they give people the ability to stay in touch constantly? Let me remind you that without cell phones, a lot of situations would be psychologically stressful. For example, imagine a scenario in which your family member or good friend is undergoing surgery. Would you consider a cell phone as a loss in that case or would you be happy knowing that people can reach you to report the

outcome.

Me: Cell phones in most cases make people unproductive and incompetent, but you cannot classify cell phones as negative in all cases. In emergencies, they are beneficial. However, emergencies are rare cases. For the most part, the negative effects of cell phones on society are stronger than positive effects.

Opponent: And how exactly do cell phones make people unproductive? With smartphones, you can use a single device to schedule your tasks, communicate with people, access the internet, use it as a GPS device, etc.

Me: If people use cell phones “ simply to fill a void,” (Bell, “ Eyes Without a Face”) which is usually the need for social interaction, that will not be a productive decisions because they will use it merely as a distraction from self-reflection and other, more important things in life. Not to mention that using a single device that stores your personal information, including passwords, for multiple purposes is a high security liability.

Opponent: Nobody forces people to keep their phones on when they are on vacation. Furthermore, according to a report published in “ The Economist,” people “ still have the same small circles of intimacy as ever” (qtd. in Bell, “Eyes Without a Face”), which means they are free to choose privacy whenever they want. And even if you are concerned about security, you can’t isolate yourself from every social interaction or technology just because someone might steal your information. That’s not even living at all.

Me: Of course, being afraid of every possible threat is not the way to live, but let’s consider a recent security hole on the Android operating system. The recent Trojan application, also known as the Master Key exploit, enabled

black-hat hackers to take complete control of Android devices while remaining undetected. Researchers estimated 99 percent of all Android devices were at risk when the Master Key was discovered (Lomas, “Android”).

Opponent: OK, but isn't it obvious that responsible behavior is the key difference between people who experience security issues and those who avoid them? It's the user's responsibility to update software, install anti-virus programs, and take precautionary measures. No security system is perfect, but it can reduce risks of data and identity theft.

Me: If we go back to my statement that cell phones are responsible for making people incompetent, you will notice that their incompetence often extends to areas of security. How many people still memorize passwords? Master Key is a clear example why people shouldn't let the system memorize their passwords, but I guarantee most of them will continue doing that because they are lazy or because our memories are weak now that machines memorize everything for us.

Opponent: Your argument is wrong. I'm not subjective in this case, but you should consider that an average technology user today needs more passwords than before. When cell phones were still in infancy, people had to know their 4-digit PINs to unlock the phone. Today, every social network or membership site you register with requires a password.

Me: That leads us to the next key issue of cell phone abuse, and it is called information overload. There is a lot of noise online, and because there are practically no more boundaries between cell phones and internet-based

services, including social networks, using cell phones leads to exposure to too many information.

Opponent: I don't see how this is relevant to the discussion.

Me: It is relevant because information overload decreases both productivity and personal development. If you give people too much information, they will get stuck in analysis paralysis and never take action.

Opponent: I see your point, and it does make sense to a certain extent.

However, people were always divided into action-takers and procrastinators, so cell phones do not make a significant difference.

Me: They do make a difference because they increase information overload exposure, so more people get caught up in analysis paralysis and become procrastinators, which is a loss for them and society.

Opponent: That can happen, but your reasoning is misguided. Cell phones are not a loss to society. People decide how they use cell phones, and if they can't control themselves, they are at fault.

Me: You are forgetting that cell phones assist in creating conditions that cause losses to society. For example, these days, meaningful communication is reduced to a bare minimum, but people still feel good about themselves because they have a lot of people on their contact lists or a lot of Facebook friends. According to Turkle, that provides us with "the illusion of companionship without the demands of relationship," which means that "we have sacrificed conversation for mere connection" (1L).

Opponent: Notice that the keyword in this scenario is "we have sacrificed." It doesn't say "cell phones have sacrificed" because people are responsible for their actions. Their devices are only tools they use to achieve their goals.

Me: I don't think anybody's goal was to reduce conversational skills or achieve social isolation, but that is what's happening at the moment, and the development of cell phones contributed to the fast-paced lifestyle, in which it is easier to send a virtual gift and card to your friend than take the time to prepare one and meet them in person.

Opponent: While cell-phones changed our lifestyle, you are missing several benefits to online interactions. For example, through social networks, you can gain access to communities of like-minded individuals that engage in marginalized discussion. Let's say you are a fan of old text-based video games. You will hardly find any like-minded friends in the physical world, but you can find and develop several meaningful relationships online.

Me: Yes, but how reliable are those relationships? According to Turkle, physical interactions require patience because carrying out meaningful conversations requires trust, which needs to develop over time ("The Flight from Conversation"). These days, people are used to getting instant answers. They expect friends or colleagues to be available at all times and respond to their inquiries immediately. As a result, conversations dumb down and tolerance decreases, which makes building meaningful relationships much more difficult.

Opponent: That depends how you define meaningful. If you bond over a common interest, the relationship will have a purpose and your communications will reflect that. However, if by meaningful conversations you mean sharing deep thoughts and reflections, I will have to disappoint you. Those types of relationships have always been interpersonal and never meant to be shared with people other than your closest friends. The

appearance of cell phones and social networks did not change anything. Just like speakers didn't share intimate details in front of large audiences before, people don't have to share their personal information online.

Me: Most people do that, and because cell phones enhanced the "sharing experience," it is common to find people who post their entire lives online while being completely oblivious of privacy and security hazards (Bell, "Eyes Without a Face"). That type of behavior clearly indicates that cell phones are detrimental to society, especially since their inclusion of social networking

Opponent: It appears that you have a lot of objections to cell phones and their detrimental effects on people. If you are so focused on those issues, why don't you propose some solutions rather than just criticize the impact of cell phones on society?

Me: It is possible to engage in various solutions. For example, Turkle recommends creating device-free zones and promoting the value of meaningful relationships and conversations as role models to children (1L). In my opinion, the best approach is to turn off cell phones during nighttime to improve sleep quality and learn how to survive without checking social networks and text messages first thing in the morning..

Works Cited

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