

Argumentative essay on social development and popular culture in media

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



In today's world, the Internet pervades every aspect of life, from smartphones to streaming video. Television has already become a mainstay of popular culture, with everyone receiving their news and entertainment from this pipeline of information. Every single human need for information or entertainment can be accessed with the push of a button, which creates a culture of immediacy that some people believe threatens societal development. However, despite these cries of anti-intellectualism, popular media creates a more literate youth culture, who are well aware of the varying attributes of media culture and advertising strategies. In this paper, we will explore the ways in which media strengthens social development, as well as the potential downsides of a society run rampant with instant gratification.

The iPhone generation has created a culture in which no one need ever leave their mobile phone or laptop. Everything can be done with the simplest action on a phone, from contacting nearly anyone you can in multiple ways (speaking, texting, IMing, even through webcam) to checking your bank account or looking up information. With this in mind, people are able to be more informed than ever before. Personalized blogs, as well as sites like Youtube, allow people to manufacture their own content and exercise their own creative muscles, becoming their own authors of culture.

Some argue that the pervasiveness of exhibitionist reality TV and its popularity means that media is "becoming increasingly coarse and trying to be--its largest challenge--shocking in an unshockable society" (Will, 2010). However, despite the prevalence of trash television, today's media offers the

chance for greater social development in most of its programming. For one thing, popular media promotes greater media literacy today. Decades of television advertising have made those generations that grew up on it well aware of the things that people do or say to get people to watch or buy something. It is the nature of capitalist society that companies advertise their products in a certain way to appeal to those who would continue to buy from them. The news is the same way; we “ came to think of information as something that got fed to us from above” (Rushkoff, 2010).

This media literacy of the new generation has reached the level where television shows, like *The Simpsons*, derive humor from their own skewering of these media tropes that today’s kids know all too well. “ The program invites us to make active and conscious comparisons of its own scenes with those of other, less transparent, media forms. By doing so, the show’s writers help us in our efforts to develop immunity to their coercive effects” (Rushkoff, 2010). With shows like these, kids are more well armed against manipulative news and advertising media, and as such are better equipped to make up their own minds about what to believe or buy. This fosters greater social development and responsibility, as people become more media literate due to the training of shows like *The Simpsons*.

As a consequence of this media-savvy culture, people read fewer books on the whole. While many people portray this as a bad thing, citing a potential lack of experience with the written word which can stunt language development and communication, this could not be further from the truth. In fact, children actually write more now with the constant typing of the Internet culture – “ Teenagers today read and write for fun; it's part of their

social lives” (Goldwasser, 2010). Thanks to instant messaging, blogging, and social media, the written word is a much larger part of their social lives, and as such they have a greater exposure to it. Though some can claim this might dilute language due to new words being formed, and typos being potentially more prevalent, the sheer amount of correctly proofread content on the Internet means that people are given access to a greater amount of immediate professional content than ever before.

The immediacy of social media means that people have much easier access to news, and are able to report it themselves in an articulate way. Someone can read a news story from CNN. com, get the full story from other news websites and blogs, as well as Twitter coverage from people who are at the site of the story, and even offer their own perspective for the world to read and absorb. “ The Internet has turned teenagers into honest documentarians of their own lives -- reporters embedded in their homes, their schools, their own heads” (Goldwasser, 2010).

Some claim that the Internet culture makes people even more alienated from themselves, due to the fact that it is much more easy and convenient to respond to people via email and smartphones. Even in mixed company, people tend to take out their phones and check them in lieu of communicating face-to-face with others - “ when technology brings us to the point where we're used to sharing thoughts and feelings instantaneously, it can lead to a new dependence” (Turkle, 2010).

This is a recurring theme in business and personal interactions of late, as the immediacy of Internet media has become preferable to actual physical and verbal interactions. However, people still have the choice to have face-to-

face conversations with people, and are able to be perpetually present in each other's lives – no amount of technology will restrict that. In fact, email, text messaging and instant messaging act as a means to provide more opportunities to find more people, make more friends, and even find romance. Rather than replacing our normal means for social lives, it enables us to simply have more than we have now.

In conclusion, the new nature of media today creates positive social development in the citizens of our culture, creating more media-literate, intelligent and skilled writers that can navigate a more complex and immediate level of information and entertainment. They have the tools to deconstruct media and marketing strategies, understanding exactly why they are presented in the way they are, and how to recognize media manipulation. Social networking allows for a greater level of interaction and involvement with peers and loved ones, and a greater proportion of typed and written communication allows for greater language development, fostering more productive communication amongst others. In these ways, society is positively developed through contemporary media.

Works Cited

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