

# Evaluation argument

[Sociology](#), [Bullying](#)



The debate over whether or not social media is beneficial or harmful to kids has become a rising argument in the past few years. This is due to the increase of children possessing smart phones and having frequent access to the internet. It is estimated that more than sixty percent of kids ages thirteen to seventeen have a social networking profile of some sort (AACAP, 2013). Social media is harmful to kids because it exposes them to situations and content they are not emotionally and mentally capable of handling, allows room for cyber bullying, and can cause them to form detrimental habits.

Technology is an extension of what goes on in the real world. Bullying was around before the Internet, but cyber bullying makes it easier," explained Dr. Brian Primack, an assistant professor of medicine and pediatrics at the University Of Pittsburgh School Of Medicine. Although bullying is nothing new; when it takes place in the digital world, the public humiliation can shatter young lives. Photos, cruel comments, taunts and threats can travel in an instant. These then can be seen, revisited, reposted, and linked to a huge audience.

Cyber bullying is using digital communications, like social media, to make another person feel angry, sad, or scared. Many experts agree that intent and context are important as well (AACAP, 2013). If the behavior was intentional, that's clearly cyber bullying and there should be consequences. However, if a kid inadvertently hurts another kid, then he or she may just need to learn better online behavior. Online messages can be more confusing or scarier than in-person communication because there are no face-to-face cues to help you understand people's intentions.

Helping kids recognize bullying will help them learn to better deal with it. Kids may be apt to use more hurtful and extreme language online than offline. It's not uncommon for cyber bullies to say things like " I wish you would die," " You're ugly," or " Everybody hates you. " If a kid said these things out loud in public, a teacher, a parent, or even another kid would probably overhear and intervene. Cyber bullying can happen anytime, whereas regular bullying generally stops when kids go home.

A child could get a text, or see posts on Facebook at any moment. Cyber bullying is very public, which can add to the harmful effects it can have on children. Posts can spread rather quickly to a large, invisible audience due to the nature of how information travels online. Daily overuse of media and technology has been proven to have a negative effect on the health of children, preteens, and teenagers by making them more prone to anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders, as well as by making them more susceptible to future health problems.

A review of research from the past decade has found that adolescents who demonstrated Internet addiction scored higher for obsessive-compulsive behavior, depression, generalized and social anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, introversion, and other maladaptive behaviors (AAP, 2013). There is also considerable debate within the mental-health field about whether dependence on technology is a true addiction, like alcohol, drugs, or gambling.

In fact, the American Psychiatric Association, which produces the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, decided not to include Internet

Addiction in their latest revision. Some experts in the field argue that the unhealthy dependence on technology may be a symptom of some more fundamental pathology, such as depression or anxiety. To underdeveloped minds, these affects can be extremely harmful and can affect them later in life. However, not all usage of social media can be totally harmful.

In 'Why Social Networks Are Good for the Kids,' by Sara Lacy, argues that social networking can make people more empathetic, and that 'sites like Facebook and Twitter are more about extending your real identity and relationships online. " Indeed, we get actual 'endorphin rushes"(Lacy, 2013) from connecting with friends and staying in touch with people we don't see or interact with daily. Social media usage can be a door to technological literacy as well; which could help children prepare for their future professional lives.

A 2008 study by the MacArthur Foundation suggested that social sites led some kids to learn to adjust software code in the video games they played, edit video games, or fix computers; and in an ever-advancing technological world, these skills could be helpful. As with everything, balance is the key. Parents should take care to educate their children as much as possible on the dangers of too much social media use, as well as encourage use for educational and socializing purposes. Taken as a whole, social networking impacts children in ways that most people would expect it to.

The biggest questions are: How different is virtual empathy from real life empathy? And how is the development of virtual feelings different from the development of real feelings in general? Parents should be aware of the

appropriateness of their child's activities on social networking portals, as well as talk about removing unacceptable content or connections to people who may be a bad influence. Parents play a large role in helping maintain kids' online safety.