

The impact of social media



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The internet was created to allow people to gain access to information, find answers to their questions/problems, do research, and being able to connect to those who they are not able to connect face to face with. With the creation of the internet, it led to the creation of social networking websites such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat, were created to allow us to communicate with others and helps us stay connected with people who are far away. However, the social networking platforms are corrosive to 'real' community because it created cyber bullying, destroys self-esteem and causes us to be more isolated from the 'real' community.

Cyberbullying is a form of bullying but it is done over the internet, where the victim does not know who they are being harassed by. The bullies are able to harass others over the internet without consequences because they are able to create fake accounts and are able to disguise their identity. Reports indicated that roughly 93% of teens are actively using the internet and 75% own a cellphone, up to 40% of students are victims of cyberbullying (Schneider et al, 2012). The main difference between cyberbullying and traditional bullying is that, the bully is able harass and belittle the victim in front of an audience while staying anonymous. Teens being bullied may severely have detrimental effects towards their mental health because

majority (~60%) of cyberbullying victims were also (~37%) school bully victims (Schneider et al, 2012). This can cause the victim to feel as they cannot escape from their bullies because they are being constantly harassed at school and online; therefore, having the victim to fall into a deep depression, having suicide thoughts, or having psychological distress. It was found that victims of cyberbullying were associated with increased risk of suicide (Kim et al, 2019).

We as a society have become addicted to staying online and following social media celebrities' lives. Social media has become increasingly popular in the last decade and there was a finding that, the more a person is using social media, the lower the self-esteem was (Andreassen et al, 2017). As a result of constantly being bombarded with super materialistic things they see from celebrities or "Instagram Influencers", this leads viewers to make false comparisons base on images of another person's life to their own. We find ourselves constantly comparing ourselves to celebrities, and then we cannot able to attain a similar lifestyle, we don't feel fulfilled or satisfied with our lives; this illustrates a psychological effect on teens or anyone, such as self-doubt, depression, self-esteem issues, jealousy and more. Thus, Social media is no longer bringing people together like it once use to but rather ruining people's self-esteem and leading to depression and wanting them to be alone.

The purpose of social media platforms was to allow us to connect with old friends, create new friendships join new communities, etc.; but now people are just staying inside and interacting with others behind a screen. By the age of 18, the average European will have spent 3 years of 24h days

watching screen media; then at the age of 80, they will have spent ~18 years of their lives stuck to a screen (Barnett et al, 2010). Social media platforms are no longer used to connect with new people to meet in person and create a real connection. Teens now a days are no longer going out to meet new people or to hang out with their friends but rather are staying inside to talk to their friends. Thus, building more of a cyber relationship rather than a real relationship (face to face); this is corrosive to our ‘ real’ community because interacting over the internet requires less work than meeting someone face to face and people will often choose connecting over the internet rather than face to face.

To conclude, Social media has changed the way we made personal connections with people and how we view the world. Social media is no longer used for its intended purpose of creating real connections with people but rather continue to be corrosive to building personal face to face connections with people and the ‘ real’ community. The negatives of social media greatly outweighing the positives, it provides a platform for cyberbullying, causes self-esteem issues and isolates people from each other.

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