Is the modern mobile phone a curse or a blessing to the world? essay

Is the 21st Century Mobile Phone a Blessing or a Curse to the individual, particularly the teenagers of the western world? There have been many negative and positive effects to both society and the individual stemming from the 21st century phones particularly the likes of the Blackberry and The Iphone. In this essay I aim to address the main areas of contemporary concern for phone use; Social life, Safety, growing interconnectedness, Technological convenience, accessibility of information.

Mobile phone technology provide the ability to reach someone anytime anywhere in the world through calling and texting and with the emergence of new smartphones, through the internet as well (allowing them to access the epitome of socialness, Facebook). This means people can be in contact constantly which promotes social behaviour. The Blackberry messenger is a relatively new application that has caused somewhat of cult amongst users. It's a messenger service is similar to the networking site Twitter, allowing people to post status' about their current activities creating a new level of social telephony.

Evidence of its success can be seen in the fact it has more than 70 million users, BGR (2011) and also the outrage of many when BBM stopped working for a week which caused a huge public uproar, BBC (2011). Unfortunately, mobile phones have also brought about anti-social behaviour as well. Siegel (2008) mentions that because people don't have to answer to face to face consequences it's easier to engage in abuse and antisocial behaviour such as sexting and cyber bullying, which according to the BBC (2009) is on the rise. Conversely, Mobile Phone technology has provided the benefit of security.

Parents buy their children phone for safety and security reason according to AMTA (2011). By children having phones they can always keep in contact with their parents so if anything goes wrong they can ring for help. For the rest of the public, it means being able to dial 999 and reach emergency services straight away or report a stolen item immediately. This constant communication can also impact negatively on society and the individual. With BBMs allowing one to post their statuses many choose to divulge their locations which leave them open to harm from mal-intentioned individuals.

Furthermore, the privacy of mobile phones means that crime can be organized easily and is difficult for the police to intercept as strict privacy laws prevent hacking. An example of this was in august 2011 where riots took place in most major UK cities. The Time (2011) " suggested that BlackBerry Messenger — the smart phone's instant-messaging service — may have played a more significant role in the mayhem" as people used them to tell each other where they were going to loot and encourage criminal behaviour at the time illustrating that phones hence pose a problem of safety both to the private life and the wider public dimensions. Another perk of the mobile phone is how it enables the user to access information easily through its various apps and links to the internet. Perhaps mobile phones are a ' Necessary evil' for the world. As detailed above they do pose issues to Safety, Social behaviour and independency of the average individual but the without the convenience of them, the world would be worse off. For example, take the Middle Ages, when people used carrier pigeons and post to send messages across to each other which often took weeks to arrive and months if you were sending messages across countries.

Back then the economy was also less advanced and slower because any communication between business and countries would take a considerable amount of time and hence by there were long lead times between ideas and plans and their execution. Furthermore, not everyone you sent mail to could reply back – it was often expensive to send mail or carrier pigeons hence limiting such communication to the wealthy and aristocracy. Even though the negatives seem to outweigh the positives when it comes to the aspect of mobile phones, they cannot be held solely accountable.

With the existence of social networking sights such as Facebook which have demanded a need for more social interconnectedness, mobile phones appear to only be a tool in which such achieves this, especially when relating to teenagers. If one could imagine a world without Facebook or any social networking sites at all then surely the use of mobile phones would be greatly reduced and so would some of the public – private issues such as safety and anti-social phone behaviour and overdependence on cell phones.

For evidence of this theory, one simply has to look to the late 1990's, a time where mobile phones were firmly established in society and there were no such networking sites like twitter etc. Much of the problems mentioned above were not significant or of a great concern as such issues did not feature in the Media often or at all suggesting they were not a big public dilemma. Moreover mobile phones were used primarily for calls and texts and the occasional browsing of the internet and they were affordable, so to a certain extent they were very similar to today. And yet, less people used them as frequently as they do today – Why?

Partially because there was no need as there were no networking sites like today. That said, I do not mean to accuse Facebook, twitter and the likes solely for the growing addiction to mobile phones. Obviously, the improvement in mobile phone technology that allows people to use it as PDAs, the growing importance of it as a fashion statement and the development of Apps that has also changed phones into entertainment devices are also responsible, But I single out Facebook because in my opinion it is the most influential factor among the target population this essay looks at, Teenagers.

In conclusion, Mobile phones are more of a ' Blessing' to the western world than a curse. They were created to provide convenience to everyday life and keep people connected to each other by making communication easier. Yes, there are several negative effects arising from them, Safety being probably the most prominent one in today's society but these issues are being efficiently tackled by society and in several years they may not be an issue anymore.

One can conclude that that the negatives only appear after overuse of phones which leads to the real problem, which is dependency. Lastly, the evidence of the blessing of cell phones can be seen in the years before 1835, where mobile phones did not exist and communication was tiring, and also from 1835 onwards where the invention of mobile phone helped evolve not only the economy and society but the individual as well.

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