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English

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Negative Effects of Technology

Technology has harmed the way we connect with others. Firstly, it can cause mental health disorders in teens, affecting their social relationships. Secondly, when it comes to social media, lines of privacy are crossed and that puts already at-risk teens in further danger of getting harassed online. Lastly, while technology brings people closer, it also drives them apart. The negative effects of technology on communication far outweigh any benefit technology could bring to relationships.

Some relationships are only based on online communication. In *JourneyHolm's* article "How the Internet is Changing the Way Humans Communicate in the 21st Century," computer-mediated communication, or CMCs, are relationships that are solely dependent on online and social media. With CMCs, you can communicate with people worldwide and reply to messages whenever you want. However, people base relationships solely on CMCs, which can have consequences. People need physical cues for deeper communication and to avoid any miscommunications. Tones of voice, such as sarcasm, can be lost through text, and abbreviations don't express emotions and reactions as accurately as face-to-face interactions. Additionally, people tend to share more than needed and create "hyperpersonal relationships" due to the lack of those physical cues (JourneyHolm). The article continues to note that "a downfall is seen while communicating via CMC when the relationships form under false pretense."

(JourneyHolm). In other words, people experience the same issues as with catfishing. If a relationship is built on lies, it will be disappointing.

Sadly, of the negative relationships built online, teens are being affected the most. Social media causes mental health problems and eating disorders. Apps like *Instagram* can sometimes show already at-risk teens pictures of influencers and celebrities taken in perfect lighting and flattering filters, and that can make teens feel bad and insecure about their bodies. In “Social Media’s Effects on the Teen Brain” statistics show from a 2021 data leak on *Facebook*, “32% of teen girls said that they felt bad about their bodies after using *Instagram*” (Bowman 2023). The technology that teens use to communicate is negatively influencing the way teens think about their bodies.

There are apps that are also affecting how people communicate. In “Do Social Media and Smartphones Make Your Friendships Stronger?” Proulx discusses how the *Find My* app is affecting their users. *Find My* allows people to share and track their friends’ and families’ location at the touch of a fingertip. On the other hand, people can develop a fear of missing out when they check their phone and see that all of their friends are in one place without them. The article goes on to say that the app encourages stalking and an obsession for needing to know where your friends are at all times, which takes away their privacy. Some stuff you just want to keep to yourself and not broadcast to everyone you know.

While it’s true that technology helps us communicate instantly and globally, personal information can be leaked. In the article “Is Technology Helping or Hurting Your Friendships?” Kirsch points out that “Problems can be made public” when communicating online (2012). Online relationships can also be a substitute for real relationships. Which, as stated earlier, can deprive a person of a deeper relationship and communication that face-to-face relationships can

provide. Also mentioned in the article, “In other cases, your sarcastic comment may be read as a personal attack” which shows how a joke can create drama in a relationship without in-person context (Kirsch 2012). When you send a message to a friend that is meant to be a joke, but they take it as an insult instead, it’s because you can’t convey joking tones through text like you can in real life.

Overall, technology hurts the way we communicate with each other. Sure we can connect worldwide, but at what cost to our friendships and mental health? The people who are suffering the most are teenagers because they are the most vulnerable online. Which extends to their privacy as well. *The Veldt* by Ray Bradbury addresses a similar topic. The children in the story become dependent on the houses’ technology, which drives their family apart. It is easy to make a connection between this dystopian future and our present.

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