

Social Networking or Antisocial Networking

Let's face it, we live in a world where people are constantly on any form of device wherever they go, but is that really such a bad thing? Several articles have addressed whether social media has affected the way people communicate. "Use of Social Media by College Students" by Megan Sponcil and Priscilla Gitimu, and "Teenage Social Media Butterflies" by Melissa Healy give their perspectives on this issue. Today, 76% of all Americans use online social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc... The usage of social media positively affects communication with other people by allowing people to express themselves, helping people stay connected with others, and by making it easier for others to interact with the real world.

To begin with, social media gives opportunities for teenagers and adults to be able to express themselves and their interests. Many times it becomes difficult to inform a large amount of people about an upcoming event that is important, especially with so many other things going on but that's when social media comes in hand. According to an article by Melissa Healy (Document A), she wrote, "Hannah says she relies on texting to make plans and pass along things she thinks are funny or interesting." Many people, like Hannah, find it easier to do things, such as make plans and coordinate events, using social media because it is simply a fast way to let people know about an event with a press of a button. In fact, my mom uses Facebook to invite family members about upcoming parties which is really helpful for her since she is busy with

work a majority of the time. People who are have a hard time making friends or finding people that share the same interests as them in real life rely on social networking sites to have someone to talk to. In an article by Hilary Stout, she wrote, “The NO. 1 reason it’s helping him come out of his shell and develop social skills that he wasn’t learning because he’s so shy.” Teenagers aren’t all the same, shyness among kids is not something that is strange. When timid kids have the opportunity to make friends or to communicate face to face with other children, they don’t because they lack that socializing skill, however by using social media it allows for many shy teenagers to communicate with other people and make friends without having to go through the trouble of having face to face interaction. Therefore, social media not only allows for people to express themselves, but it also contributes to improve communication in human interaction.

Additionally, social media allows people to stay in touch with others who are far away and even with people who they don’t see in person. We have all been busy at one point or another in our lives, however when you are constantly busy it become very difficult to keep up with the lives of our loved ones and friends, but with the help of social media it has become easier and faster to communicate without it interfering with our day to day actions. According to an article by Megan Sponcil and Priscilla Gitium, they claim that, “Social Media may also make it easier for users to monitor activities of people they have not seen in awhile.” People who live far away from friends or family members truly rely on social media to keep in touch. In fact, I live far away from my grandparents and some aunts and uncles, so I use Facebook to connect and interact with them. This makes my life and many other people’s lives easier when we want to catch up with anyone that is really far away. Another example of this can be shown in an article by Melissa Healy where she wrote that, “The teen keeps in touch with friends and coaches

from that phase in her life as well as with current friends.” Not only does social media allow for people to connect with friends and loved ones that live far away, but it also helps people to talk to friends that you may not see on a day to day basis. An example of this is when college students get so busy with school work that they barely get the chance to see their friends so they go onto a social networking site and talk on there. For this reason, communicating with other people is simple and fast because of the help of social media.

Finally, social media helps people interact with others in the real world. Many teenagers are introverted and can't seem to make friends because they are shy. According to an article by Hilary Stout, she claims that, “Some researchers believe that the impersonal nature of texting and online communication may make it easier for shy kids to connect with others.” Shyness among adolescents is normal. In fact, about 15% of all kids are timid which can make it difficult for shy kids to make friends however, with the help of social media, teenagers are able to communicate with others. For example, my cousin was really shy entering her freshman year in High School but she began to talk to people through Instagram which lead to them being close friends in real life. Hilary Stout also wrote, “Mr. Wilson suggested that Evan sign up and give it a try. The other day he was pleased to find Evan chatting through Facebook with a girl from his former school.” Many kids, like Evan, who have social media find themselves talking to people online who they know in real life which helps them build friendships easier. For this reason, social media is a really useful tool in helping introverted adolescents interact with other people.

In conclusion, social media is a strong contribution to the lives of more than half of the population in America. It is important to realize how much social media is used on a daily basis and how it affects the lives of many people whether it's in a positive or negative way. Social

media allows for people to express themselves and make their lives easier, it helps people stay in touch and it helps others interact with the real world.