NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL SITES ON STUDENTS

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Abstract:

　　Times have surely changed. The world has been made flat by the World Wide Web. Today, we live in a world where contacting someone, sharing our journeys as well as our thoughts is just one click away. Social networking sites are now available to cater to one's immediate social needs. These networking sites have made it possible for us to chat with friends who live in distant places as well as share with them pictures and videos of whatever we are up to instantly. Today, it is very hard to find a teenager who doesn't have a Yahoo, a Gmail, a Facebook, or a Twitter account which they use to keep in touch with friends, to express or share what they have in mind and to use for school-related purposes. No doubt, Social Networking Sites are of great help in the youth's daily life; however, it has positive and negative effects which depend on how a person will utilize it. The negative effects of these social networking sites overweigh the positive ones. These sites have caused some potential harm to society. The students become victims of social networks more often than anyone else. This is because of the reason that when they are studying or searching their course material online, they get attracted to these sites to kill the boredom in their study time, diverting their attention from their work. The overuse of these sites on a daily basis has many negative effects on the physical and mental health of students making them lethargic and unmotivated to create contact with the people in person.

Key words: *Contacting and sharing thoughts, social sites, World Wide Web, negative effects overweigh the positive ones, potential harm to society.*

Introduction:

Today, teenagers and students are constantly on the internet and this is changing their means of communicate with others. The use of phone has been less and the means of communication for teenagers and students is now more on text messages and through social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. These networking sites surely have positive

effects**.** However it is more evident that the negative effects overpower these positive effects. The focus of this research paper is the negative effects of social networking sites to students. Through surveys, comments and research from the internet, the researcher was able to gather some information regarding these effects. And one of these is the damage and changes it brings to the brains of young users. Students who tend to get too caught up with such networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are said to have short attention span. Another is that, young people today are becoming more self-centered caused by their urge to create an image for their selves through their Facebook profiles. In addition to the damage it can cause to the brain, social networking sites make the youth lack the ability to communicate in a proper manner. Correct grammar is not properly used anymore. And these sites may also lead to addiction.

Another set of negatives effects is, somehow, the violation of human rights. One is sexual solicitation. This is due to too much freedom of youth that leads to meet ups resulting to abuse and harassment. And one of the most explicit negative effects that are common to teenagers is cyber bullying. This is one of the greatest issues being found in social networking sites because it is a place where the drama in high school continues. Cyber bullying may be done in different ways. But one thing is for sure, it degrades others. Since there are millions and millions of people who are engaged in using different networking sites all over the world, this research is not made to stop teenagers or even everyone to use networking sites. These sites offer a lot, and helps people in many ways. This research just wants people to know what may be the probable causes of too much use of these sites. It advices people especially students, to not spend their whole lives wasting their time updating and updating their profiles. Not everything revolves around these networking sites. It's just a matter of balancing and knowing what is and is not good. Our priorities straight and remember that despite being given all that we need, a little extra work wouldn't do us harm.

Negative Aspects of Social Sites:

Social networking is really making students and teenagers less social. Being social and connected has become dangerous for both mind and body, because students are becoming less and less likely to go out of their way to create social situations where they would interact with

people face to face. This is a bad thing because it has been proven that there is so much that people can learn from their brief interactions with one another, on a day-to-day basis. Also, students and teenagers are choosing to stay in and stay online versus going out and being social and doing anything physical. Therefore, these social networking sites are not just affecting the mind but are also affecting the body by creating more unhealthy people. So why is it that they are becoming increasingly popular when the list of negative effects can go on and on? There is a big problem that is just now being brought to attention, which is that social networking is negatively impacting the ways students are interacting with each other. This is apparent when you compare how people talk to a person online to how they would address someone, in person. That is because talking to someone online is impersonal because of the lack of emotion put in to the word you may type to someone, because when you talk to someone in person you are way more likely to put lots of thought and emotion into all the words you say. On top of that there are also other major problems. Experts have argued for years that social networking sites are having a negative impact on today's youth.
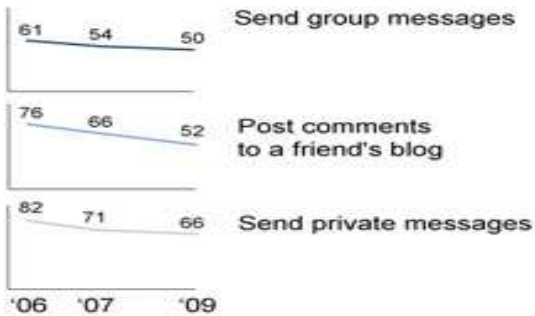
With the ability to communicate with your friends instantaneously, also comes the ability to communicate with people who you do not like as well. People have the ability to abuse instant communication to start a fight or bully over social networking sites. This is because they do not have to see the other person. In most cases that makes it easier for people it to be mean to others because there is no face staring back that them, just a person on the other side of a screen. Jordan K. Turgeon, a writer for the Huffington post says in his article, "Everybody knows that what you write is public, but because there's a screen in front of you, you feel somewhat anonymous." (Turgeon). Turgeon is basically saying that people who are mean over social networking sites don't feel guilt for what they do because they can't see the other persons reaction, and people now a days seem to go but the philosophy what they can't see is not happening.
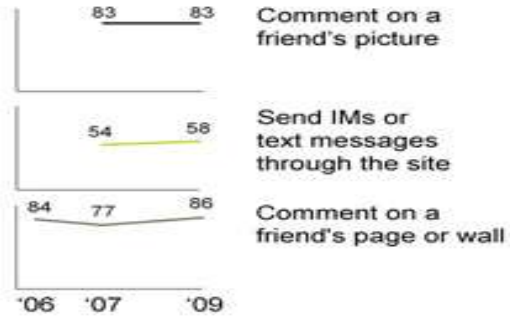
Teens' activities on social networking sites

The percentage of teen social networking site users who have done the following activities, over time (2006-2009).

Declined over time

61   54   50   Send group messages

76   66   52   Post comments to a friend's blog

82   71   66   Send private messages

'06   '07   '09

No statistically significant change

83   83   Comment on a friend's picture

54   58   Send IMs or text messages through the site

84   77   86   Comment on a friend's page or wall

'06   '07   '09

2009 data only:

Join groups: **37%**
% of teens on SNS

Pew Internet
Pew Internet & American Life Project

Use your cell phone to view or update your profile: **25%**
% of teens who access SNS through mobile devices

(image from pewinternet.org)

Since the boom of social networking sites, teen depression and suicide rates have gone up. This is thought to be in part due to "in-your-face friends' tallies, status updates and photos of happy-looking people having great times, Facebook pages can make some kids feel even worse if they think they don't measure up," according to Lindsey Tanner. On Facebook, you are given two ways to show that you like or have an opinion of what the person is saying on their page. They are being able to "Like" photos, comment, and status or to being able to write a comment on them. Being able to "like" and comment on aspects of people lives can have both positive and negative effects. In some situations it is bound to make someone feel better about themselves, for instance, if they have 50 likes and a lot of positive feedback being commented on their photos or statuses they are going to feel better about themselves, but to someone who does not get any likes or positive comments it is a huge reminder that maybe they are not as popular or have as

many friends as that person with all the likes. Also, to that person that gets all those likes they become very narcissistic and begin to expect to get all that positive feedback on their life where as the kid with one like is more likely to not be confident in their appearance or even how they are living their life leading to other deeper more psychological issues in the future.

Depression is one of the many explanations of why teens check out of the real world and rely on social networking sites to communicate. In an uncomfortable place they can just pick up their phones and escape. Facebook games are also becoming more common, and they is addicting for teens, because it gives them an alternative life online. Michael Price says in his article Alone in the Crowd, "The most dramatic change is our ability to be "elsewhere" at any point, to sidestep what is difficult, what is hard in a personal interaction and go to another place… We are tempted to give precedence to people we are not with over people we are with" (Price). Why is it so hard for people to give their undivided attention to the people they are with? This is another perfect example of an escape from reality. When there is an awkward moment just pick up your phone and scroll through Facebook and live though someone else's life momentarily.

One of the most commonly argued problems with social networking being so negative is that it affects people's work. In class, and during homework, kids are often talking on Facebook instead of doing their work. Studies have shown that kids checking their Facebook at least once every 15 minutes while doing their work are getting much lower grades. So what does that mean for this generation and generations of adolescents to come? It is going to cause the next generation to become lazy and get more distracted in their future. This is because kids naturally have the ability to zone out when things are too hard or seem boring but now the distractions of the social networks are creating an even bigger problem because they spend more time zoning out then completing their work. That will cause them to put less work into future and then look where we are. There are many ways to try to stop this distraction. This generation of kids is largely motivated; it seems that their only motivation at some points is talking to their friends. There is much talk about whether social networking is causing kids to have trouble developing their social skills.There have been many articles written on this topic and it is becoming increasingly apparent that there is truly a problem with children's social development becoming impaired due to social networking. Researchers think that it is due to kids mostly interacting with

each other online and not being in person where having proper social skills are needed to have conversations, whereas online there is rarely any depth to the conversation. It is easy for a kid to come across as having two different personalities because of the difference of how you may act online verses in person. The effect of this is causing kids to be lonely but without them even knowing it, because they feel like they are with friends just by typing to them, but that is not the case.

Loneliness is one of the saddest effects of this problem for many reasons. In his article Alone, Michael Price says, "We have so many new ways of communicating, yet we are so alone". First, people in this day and age are constantly looking for positive feedback on every aspect of their life; without it they feel alone and worthless. With that need people feel that they need to be talking to someone at all times? Why have we gotten to a place where we need the internet to meet people. Not that long ago people were out socializing in person and meeting people. It was rare, almost weird, for people to meet online and now it's widely accepted. People can go days without any in person social contact but without constant communication online they feel that their life is lonely. "We are living in an isolation that would have been unimaginable to our ancestors, and yet we have never been more accessible." (Marche). Other negative side effects of social networking websites include the following:

➢ Reduced learning and research capabilities

Students have started relying more on the information accessible easily on these social networking sites and the web. This reduces their learning and research capabilities. According to Youth Voices (**www.youthvoices.net**), social networking can become very addicting; consequently, teenagers lack normal everyday social skills that are needed. Some feel more comfortable talking via social network or text messaging rather than in person.

➢ Multitasking

Students who get involved in activities on social media sites while studying result in reduction in their focus of attention. This causes reduction in their academic performance, and concentration to study well.

Reduction in real human contact

The more time the students spend on these social media sites, the less time they will spend socializing in person with others. This reduces their communication skills. They will not be able to communicate and socialize effectively in person with others. The employers are getting more and more unsatisfied with the communication skills of the fresh graduates due to this reason. The effective communication skills are key to success in the real world.

Reduces command over language use age and creative writing skills

Students mostly use slang words or shortened forms of words on social networking sites. They start relying on the computer grammar and spelling check features. This reduces their command over the language and their creative writing skills.

Time wastage

Students, while searching and studying online, get attracted to using social media sites and sometimes they forget why they are using internet. This wastes their time and sometimes students are not able to deliver their work in the specified time frame.

Poor Academic Performances

Students get low grades in school due to lack of the desired information and writing skills.

Loss of motivation in students

The student's motivational level reduces due to the use of these social networking sites. They rely on the virtual environment instead of gaining practical knowledge from the real world.

Effect on health

The excessive use of these sites affects the mental as well as physical health. Students do not take their meals on time and take proper rest. They take excessive amount of coffee or tea to remain active and focused which effects negatively on their health.

The overuse of these sites on a daily basis has many negative effects on the physical and mental health of students making them lethargic and unmotivated to create contact with the people in person. The parents should check and balance on their children when they use the internet. They should be on guard whether they are using it for appropriate time period or not. The peers and teachers should also help students make them aware of the negative effects and explain what they are losing in the real world by sticking to these social networking sites.

Conclusion:

Students today have begun to rely on the accessibility of information that is available on the social media platforms specifically as well as the web in general in order to get answers. This means that there is a reduced focus on learning as well as on retaining information. In addition, students are attempting to multi-task. They are trying to check various social media sites while they study. This leads to reduced academic performance. Besides, their ability to concentrate on their task at hand gets significantly reduced due to the distraction that is brought by all these social media sites. The other negative effect on students is that they are spending too much time on social sites, and much lesser time on socializing in person. In fact, there is a lack of body signals besides other nonverbal cues, including tone and inflection in case of social networking sites. Thus they cannot be considered as an adequate replacement for any face-to-face communication. Not only this, students who are spending a great deal of time on these social networking sites are not able to communicate in person in an effective manner. These social media sites have become so popular in such a short time because the information gets published in a fast way. This has actually created a lax attitude for using proper spelling as well as grammar. In fact, the students are unable to write effectively without the aid of the spell check feature of a computer. The kind of anonymity that is available on the Internet has made many

Students forget that they need to filter any information that they post. In fact, many colleges as well as potential employers tend to investigate the social networking profiles of an applicant before they grant any acceptance or an interview. And there are many students who are not constantly evaluating the content which they are publishing online. All this can lead to negative consequences even later on in their life. We all need to realize that social networking communities are here to stay, considering the millions of users that they have. In addition, there are blogs as well as the video blogs. And there are students who are actively engaged in all these online communities. But we also need to look at the kind of effects that these sites are having on the youth, especially the students.

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