

Social Media and Its Effects on Communication

As teenagers, we spend most of our time on social media, but we do not know the bad effects it is having on our daily face-to-face communication with others. In documents A,B, and C called “Teenage Social Media Butterflies May Not be Such a Bad Idea,” “Antisocial Networking?,” and “Use of social media by college students: Relationship to communication and self-concept,” state many reasons why social media can be harmful to the communication between people. Documents D and F: “Is Social Media Driving People Away From Real Interaction” and “Teenagers on Social Media: Socialization and Self-Esteem” also provide us with information about social media’s negative effects on communication. As we grow up, we see that teens are more involved in texting than actually talking in person like Hilary Stout says in one of her articles. Social media affects us negatively for three reasons: it’s easier to be cyberbullied, easier to feel negative emotions/ low self esteem, and we can’t see or feel the real emotions of a person.

To begin with, I agree with Hilary Stout’s argument that kids are less interested in face to face communication because social media can make it easier for them to be cyberbullied. According to the article written by Melissa Healy, it says, “Mikami’s research found that they were more likely to harass, bully, and take online risks such as “sexting” or “MIRLing” (text-speak for “meeting in real life” a stranger one has chatted with online), or to be vulnerable to others who harass, bully, and coerce.” This lets us see that teens are exposed to dangerous things while on an internet site. Facebook for example is a worldwide site where kids may

contact strangers and receive unwanted messages that can hurt them. Cyberbullying can have an effect on face-to-face communication because it distances teens from each other. Evidence for this can be found in “Antisocial Networking?” that says, “In general, the worries over cyberbullying and sexting have overshadowed a look into the really nuanced things about the way technology is affecting the closeness properties of friendship.” If I had a friend that was being bullied online and she didn't want to text anybody at all, how could I know what's going on? We would need to have a conversation in person so that I could be able to help them do what is right. I agree with Hilary Stout’s argument that kids are less interested in face to face communication because social media makes it easier for them to be bullied, both online and outside.

Secondly, social websites affect in person communication between teens because it causes them to feel negative emotions and it lowers self esteem. Studies show that using social media sites such as Facebook, make people unhappy with their life. “... find it increasingly difficult to not only socialize in situations where it is called for, but they are generally more depressed and anxious in actual social situations”, says resource D, an article written by Righ Knight. As a teenager, I have felt like these websites have a negative effect on my life because sometimes I feel distant from people who I call “close friends.” Maybe some teens are not satisfied with their life because they want it to be like everyone else’s. These types of visions lead to low self esteem or feelings like envy and jealousy. According to resource D and F, “They found that the most common emotion aroused by using Facebook is envy. Endlessly comparing themselves with peers who have... . There are more negative impacts of social media on the self-esteem of teenagers than there are positive impacts.” From a girl’s point of view when we

see other girl's pictures, we think to ourselves, "Why can't I have as many followers as her or why can't I be as pretty as her?" This is one of the many reasons why girls and boys have a low self-esteem and why they can't have a face-to-face conversation with others. They are afraid that some kids may compare them to others and think less of them. Social media affects communication between teenagers because it causes them to feel negative emotions and it lowers their self esteem.

Finally, social media affects direct communication because we can't see or feel the real emotions of a person. Through a screen, we won't ever know if someone is feeling sad or depressed, or if they're just so happy they wanna jump everywhere. The author of Resource B says, "Today's youth may be missing out on experiences that help them develop empathy, understand emotional nuances and read social cues like facial expressions and body language." Some parents believe their kids should go out and talk to other kids so that they know what it's like to develop empathy for them. In other words, texting through a screen will not help you understand the way someone else feels. Some teens may have had a bad experience with sites but they may still want someone to talk to. How will we know what we can do to help if we don't even go out to ask instead of just texting them? The article "Teenagers on Social Media: Socialization and Self-Esteem" shows evidence for this that says, "5.7% of teenagers felt afraid to go to their computer. The use of social media leads to cyberbullying, which leads to depression, thoughts of suicide, and sadness." We have to go and ask face to face how someone is really feeling. We won't know if the person we're texting is happy or just a few seconds away from committing suicide. Some people say that social media has positive effects on communication because it helps those with long distance friends to stay in touch. According to

Megan Sponcil and Priscilla Gitimu from Youngstown State University, it says, “It seemed that college students were using social media sites to communicate with others as well as to occupy free time when they are bored.” Although some say that social media helps to stay in touch with distant partners, I believe it doesn’t because we don’t know the real feelings of a person behind a screen.

In conclusion, we know that teenagers will never stop using sites to text and we just have to try at least once to go out and have a real conversation with a friend. Social media affects our face-to-face communication negatively for three reasons: it’s easier to be cyberbullied, easier to feel negative emotions/ low self esteem, and we can’t see or feel the real emotions of a person. Growing up in a place where technology only improves is very hard. It is hard because we are just so attached to a screen that we can’t even go out and have a real talk with friends or family. We just have to get used to our technological world, whether it brings us closer or farther apart.