

Pros and Cons of Social Media

Communication is an essential part of the human life when it comes to connecting and advancing our society. Ever since the beginning of time, different forms of communication were established such as: sign language, body language, visual communication, and written communication. Now in modern culture, communicating has taken a whole new level with social networking. The social media sites make it accessible to interact between a multitude of people, and our generation has grown used to staying linked to the whole world via these sites. However, in addition to these good motives, there are also many bad motives for social media users, and participating in social media today deserves attention.

Social media help you keep in touch with friends and family that live far enough away that you can't visit them on a regular basis. These sites provide a way of communication for any and all kinds of relationships. 93% of adults on Facebook use it to connect with family members, 91% use it to connect with current friends, 87% use it to connect with friends from the past, and 72% of all teens connect with friends via social media (ProCon, 2017,p.1).

Social media sites also help students do better in school. It helps create social communities and groups for learning, developing and collaborating on innovative ideas and products beyond the confinement of a classroom (Bennett, n.d, p.1). Additionally, they help those who are socially isolated or introverted connect with others. More than 25% of teens report that social media makes them feel less shy, 28% report feeling more outgoing, and 20% report feeling more confident. Youth who are "less socially adept" report that social media gives them a place to make friends and feel more comfortable being vocal through a social media platform (ProCon, 2017, p.1).

Although (to many) social media has its upsides, (others also agree that) it has its downfalls. Instead of interacting with those around them, social media causes users to fixate more on how they can build up their character of having a great time or being funny. Walking through the mall, the heads of numerous shoppers is all one can see. Hunched over with their eyes glued to their phones, eager to catch up with the latest tweets, see the just posted "selfie" of their favorite celebrity on Instagram, or liking funny posts on Facebook.

Another factor of social media use is cyberbullying. 52% of students have reported being the victim of cyberbullying with 84.2% naming Facebook as the site through which they have been bullied, followed by Instagram (23.4%), Twitter (21.4%), and Snapchat (13.5%). Middle school children who are victims of cyberbullying are almost twice as likely to attempt suicide (ProCon, 2017, p.1). Social media has made teens emotionally weak and disconnected due to lack of social engagement.

In addition, despite having a plethora of emojis (expression of feelings) available on smartphone keypads, social media makes it difficult to express and show real feelings due to the fact that its platform creates a barrier to face-to-face social communication. One could doubt if the expressions of the opposite person are authentic since you simply cannot sense their emotions (Bennett, n.d, p.1). Also, they allow the spread of inaccurate and misleading information.

To sum up, social media use has both its advantages and disadvantages. It gives people the power to share and make the world more open and connected while, on the other hand, it can make people out of tune with their surroundings. Both sides of the debate can be favored by different people. Yet, considering the advantages and disadvantages, it is hard to defend social media the way it is available and used today.