

Researched Persuasive Writing and Speaking

A Generation of Isolation: The Adverse Impacts of Technology

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Technological innovation has been centred around the idea of connectedness for years. From the first cellular phone to the behemoths of social media platforms the world revolves around today, humans can now facilitate communication globally. However, alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals around the world are combatting a social pandemic - loneliness. Rapid technological evolution was a subliminal curse in disguise - harmful to the masses. Through the causation of unhealthy dependencies that distract from sustainable relationships, the promotion of unrealistic expectations about human interaction and the creation of barriers to social skill development, the world has become less connected because of technology.

Decreased physical interaction from using technology has humans moving farther away from satisfying their social primitive needs. A study published in the *Journal of Psychological Research on Cyberspace* revealed bonding that occurred through in-person interaction was more substantial than bonding that occurred “by video chat, audio chat, and IM [instant messaging] in that order.” (Greenfield, Michikyan, Sherman, 2013) With the emergence of technological communication, it is possible an entire generation may be unable to communicate and develop healthy relationships.

There is an ongoing phenomenon, of the socially excluded looking towards games as an opportunity to find validation and build status. However, brief digital interactions commonly found in the gaming medium do not allow for empathy, critical thinking and compromise to develop, causing a detriment to the social health of an internet-centric generation. Although it could be argued that video games and other forms of internet forums alike can facilitate effective communication, research proves otherwise. An article by Carol S. Lee, Ph.D., amplifies that solely facilitating connection

through virtual avenues can lead to potential mental health disorders, an example being the 'Internet Gaming Disorder'. The condition is characterized by the tolerance to increased gaming, and the abandonment of past interests, hobbies and self-care (Lee, 2017). Building relationships solely online may lead to various mental illnesses and isolation as real-world connections do not match preconceived notions adopted through online bonding.

Technology causes feelings of inadequacy, forcing individuals to strive for lifestyles that bring no real satisfaction. People are deemed socialites through trivial measures that do not translate into real life. Consumerism, workaholism and materialism nurtured through digital platforms, force people to work harder to achieve goals many find worthless at the end of their lives. Streaming networks and social media applications are ultimately run by corporations that aspire for monetary gain. Platforms such as Snapchat and Instagram have business models that rely on people's insecurities. Despite their socially beneficial facades, companies collect data through invasive measures that are disadvantageous to unaware consumers.

Technology has made civilization less connected by promoting unrealistic human interaction expectations, pushing humans away from necessary rudimentary habits and pressing dissatisfaction. Presently, technology has gone from a mechanism to solve the world's greatest challenges to eliminating minor inconveniences. Although technology is developed for the sake of efficiency, these efficiencies prove to be disadvantageous in the long run. Ultimately, as mortal beings, the key to satisfaction in life does not derive from not facing challenges but rather overcoming them and building resilience.

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