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Social Networking Advantages vs Disadvantages:

Social networking seems to play an imperative part in people’s lives around the world. It can lead to be the elevation and downfall of society. On a daily basis kids will spend hours behind a screen on media sites like Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat. Social media helps an individual communicating with others and expressing how they feel. “Social Networking Websites are Beneficial to Children and Teens” by Jan Farrington and “The Secret Social Media Lives of Teenagers” by Ana Homayoun states the idea that social media has become popular and the internet becomes a place where different opinions can be explored. Some may disagree that social media rather brings out the disadvantages of losing the ability to have face to face conversations. “Children must be Protected from the Content of Social Networking Websites” by Elizabeth Racine expresses the idea that social media has its dangers that we might not be aware of when it comes to the question of our teenagers. Social media brings out the benefits of communication. Due to reasons of being in contact with loved ones, expressing oneself, and being judged on personality rather than facial features, although social media has its dangers of cyberbullying, inappropriate content, and invading privacy.

Social media is used by 76% of Americans, sites that include being Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook. Sites like this an individual shares his/her life story of a bibliographical profile, share images/videos from lifetime memories, and grows a communication with people. SixDegrees.com was the first social networking website ever known in the year of 1997 and from there as time passed one of the most popular media came to be Myspace, introduced in the year of 2003. This helped increase interaction with family and loved ones to keep in touch. Many took the advantage to interact in an easier way and grow a social attachment with close friends, and family. Facebook was the first to receive one billion users monthly in the month of October. There is an estimation of 71% online adults in the United States that use Facebook. Every day, Facebook brings about 4.5 billion "Likes," 4.75 billion content shares, and over 300 million photo uploads take place. As this generation expands in its technology new social medias like Instagram and Snapchat have become a popular use.

In the article “Social Networking Web Sites are Beneficial to Children and Teens” Jan Farrington states, “These sites help young people create and maintain lifelong connections with others and give them a sense of community.” (1). Young adults search for a specific community to connect, a community in cyberspace can be a big step to new interactions. Having social media allows an individual to stay in touch with their classmates, friends, and teachers as well. Farrington states an opinion addressed by “Lauren B., 17, from Arlington, Texas, who attends a high school “so big my friends and I never see each other during the day. So we IM everybody after school.” (1). There’s a soothing feeling that hits in knowing that once you get home you can catch up with your friends and update them on how your day was just by shooting a text. Social networking allows individuals to stay in touch with both local and distant friends. Most online communities play a part in various social medias that engage in real-life friendships building on conversation. Through communication, an identity is explored and becomes a part of someone.

When it comes to social networks people express themselves easily, by either words, pictures, or videos. There are some who are able to have an open conversation with anyone while there are others who do not know where exactly to start. Social networks gives them the opportunity to express themselves and be able to talk about whatever they desire at that specific moment. The article “Expressing Yourself through Social Media” Akhona states “People who are shy in communicating with others feel free to communicate using social … tell the whole world, how they feel.” (1). Especially people who are shy tend to take the advantage of speaking behind a screen and give a relieving vibe of being able to say what they always wanted to. In the article “Social Networking Web Sites are Beneficial to Children and Teens” Racine states Parry Aftab an executive director “….. also believes that the online world has a lot to offer. “This is a place where teens can be really who they are.” (3). The internet becomes a place where feelings and different opinions can be explored through the idea of experiences they have witnessed.

Take a look at the person in your surroundings, or walking down the street. Could you guess their profession or passions? Would you have guessed that they are an avid thinker, a poet, or an artist? I guess the answer would be no. Social media is a platform that allows one to express one’s character/ personality. People feel more comfortable showing their inner self. Social media allows people to be judged by their personality rather than their facial features. Sometimes it is hard for individuals to show who they are and what they are capable of. The article “Social Networking Web Sites are Beneficial to Children and Teens” Jan Farrington also states “Web sites are places where young people are judged on their personalities rather than superficial characteristics.” (1). Strangers and people around the world get to view this and can judge you not just on your looks but also on what you have to offer. Your thoughts, your opinions, and the lifestyle you hold on to. Parry Aftab states, “Online, kids are judged by their ideas, “not by who has the hottest body or coolest car.” (3). An individuals mindset is taken in consideration and for once you are questioned on the way you respond.

Others may disagree and refer to the idea that using social networking site can include many dangers that we are not aware of. One of the main dangers of social media comes with cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is taking action with the use of an electronic communication to bully a person, simply by sending a text of threats or any type of harassment. “Children Must be Protected from the Content of Social Networking Web Sites” Elizabeth Racine states “One time….told me in an IM that she was going to have somebody beat up one of my best friends.” (3). Basically dangers of any type of rumors or warning signs of a future scenario taking place should be reported to the school. Hurtful comments and reports of bullying is a factor of what comes along with using different social Medias. Many people ignore the idea of how hurtful it can be to another when bullying isn’t taken seriously. On usual terms, people turn shoulders and ignore that someone may be affected by what was said online. Cyberbullying is one of the disadvantages that come with having social media especially in the generation we live today.

Another negative side of social media would be having our young teenagers and children indulging with inappropriate content. Adolescents are growing up with more access to social networking; texting on different kinds of sites have become the main means of communication. Many people feel the need to over-share things about their personal lives online. Talking about personal things like pornography and content that you wouldn’t want your 10 year daughter or son to come across. Children see porn on the weirdest websites especially on sites that you would think would have games or simply would be a decent page to pull up. Elizabeth Racine states her personal experience “I typed in boys.com and was greeted by an image of a young boy, about 12 or 13, performing oral sex on a man.” (2). The fact that on a website dealing with the word “boys” you would expect to see games or something appropriate such as decent pictures of a gender of a male to pop up. The concern rises when at sites like Myspace there are suggestive photos and videos that invite an individual to see the pornographic. Especially when nowadays porn is an entertainment in the article “Children Must be protected from the Content of Social Networking Web Sites” Racine states “… I received another one today, which invited me to join a Myspace group which is pornographic… I saw comments posted by lots of kids who were under 18.” (3). Kids way younger than 18 not even adults have been entertaining groups invites such like those. But, instead there’s no awareness that disturbing personal images that our young children’s mind might even know about are scarred. These dangers should be taken in consideration and blocking inappropriate content will protect children more and to keep content like pornography to be filtered.

Although social media sites allow users to share information with friends and other sites on the internet, many people are unaware of how their privacy is getting out. The ideas that the things you believe are hidden are truly being invaded. Going along with the privacy issue, many people feel that they no longer want to share personal things. The thought comes to mind that there could be a typical stranger in another country who can see your profile picture and your information. The article “The Secret Social Media Lives of Teenagers” Ana Homayoun states “….it had rescinded admissions offers to at least 10 students who shared offensive images within what they thought was a private Facebook group chat.” (1). It is considered to believe that colleges, others can still get access to a specific chat or account that you might think is hidden. This is affecting countless users online and is a problem because personal information may get out that is not wanted.

Overall, social media is brought up to the idea that there are positive factors in having a social network. Social media helps you stay in contact with your long lost friend. It can help children stay connected with their long-distance Grandma, and keep up with the happenings of other distant family. Even though acts of cyberbullying, inappropriate content and invading of privacy play a role. The positive factors of finding your inner self-helps you learn to express yourself freely. In a way your opinion is rather spoken than hidden, for once in your lifetime you are not judged on your looks. Your thoughts and mindset become the main attention when using social media. It helps become acquainted with using the computer and today’s technology.

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