

SOCIAL MEDIA HAS MADE US LESS SOCIAL. DO YOU AGREE?

With the increasing amount of time spent online, social media has drawn much criticism for rendering people as self-absorbed, hypocritical and unsocial tech-addicts. However, the sentence upon this platform of communication is made too hastily. Instead of being so critical, we should reflect about how it has widened our social circle to an unprecedented scale. The virtual empire of 500 million Facebook users, along with other social media networking sites, has undoubtedly allowed us to become more interconnected.

Social media provides an avenue to enlarge our social circle, which used to be largely confined within acquaintances formed through our education, career and family ties, allowing us to have more opportunities to interact. Previously, we rarely connected with those outside of our daily routines. Through social media, we are now able to access millions of personal Facebook profiles or strike up instantaneous conversations on Twitter with a single click, transcending time and space. Socialising is like fishing; the social media net will certainly catch more fish than the single rod of traditional communication.

Despite creating more opportunities to socialise, the quality of our communication has deteriorated. Communication through social media prevents us from conveying the nuances of a face-to-face conversation, depriving us of the opportunity to express human emotions with depth, variety and novelty; the gentle frown, the knowing blink and the subtleties in tone are all limited to the characters on a keyboard. In fact, it is ironic that while so many of us think that we are more social, more people are seeking treatment for web-addiction, feelings of alienation or loneliness in well-connected countries like South Korean and Japan. Perhaps social media has only given us the illusion that we are more social.

Of course, such concerns could simply be the hurdles we need to cross in order to use this new technology. In fact, the effects are negligible compared to the massive benefits reaped. Social media gives power to those who were previously powerless; it is a propeller that accelerates online interactions into off-line connections that can reform people's lives. Fan clubs are often started on web-based communities such as forums or Facebook groups and can snowball to form a momentum strong enough to bring hundreds of fans together in real life. Remember the revolutionary act of a twenty-six-year-old woman who fired the first shot of Arab Spring by a simple Facebook post; her online followers followed up off-line. Social media gives everyone an equal opportunity to limitless connections.

Perhaps it is part of the innate human psyche to fear the unknown, and tellingly so, new inventions are often treated with suspicion and scepticism rather than open arms. Found in every modern household today, the television was accused of rendering people antisocial from its onset. It is irrational to expect social media to uphold all the expectations we have for socialising. After all, beneath the veil of avatars online rests tender human hearts with a genuine desire to connect and to be connected.

495 words

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Lorraine Tham 11/9/13 5:26 PM

Comment [1]: START WITH A TREND
This is an effective one as it has a dual function of also stating a criticism of social media, which is then rebutted by the writer, leading into the thesis statement.

Lorraine Tham 11/9/13 5:35 PM

Comment [2]: THESIS STATEMENT + PERSONAL VOICE
These two sentences show not just the thesis statement but how the writer feels about the topic through 'critical' and 'unprecedented'.

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Comment [3]: ELABORATION
A short but necessary explanation of the topic sentence as it provides a different reason of why we have a smaller social circle previously.

Lorraine Tham 11/9/13 5:10 PM

Comment [4]: EXAMPLE
This example is integrated into part of the explanation, but it has specific mention to 'Facebook' and 'Twitter', which makes it a universal example

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Comment [5]: REITERATION / LINK
Creative use of a simile and metaphor to summarise the main point of this paragraph

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Comment [6]: ELABORATION
Very detailed explanation of the areas and reasons for which our communication has deteriorated.

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Comment [7]: EXAMPLE
This constitutes an example, as it gives even more details of the previous elaboration. Although it is very general information, writing out specific actions can also be considered as examples.

Lorraine Tham 12/9/13 4:03 PM

Comment [8]: EXAMPLE
Mention of countries in which a phenomenon occurs can also serve as an example, especially if you don't have specific and detailed knowledge of an example.

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Comment [9]: STRONG LINK
Good way to link from the previous paragraph to the next compared to just using a conjunction alone

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Comment [10]: EXAMPLE
Good use of a current universal example.

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Comment [11]: STRONG PERSONAL VOICE
A good conclusion where the writer uses judgment words and a metaphor to express her personal opinion.

Lorraine Tham 11/9/13 4:52 PM

Comment [12]: KEEP TO THE 500 WORD LIMIT.
It is possible to write a great essay in less than 500 words. You will be held in high regard for successfully showing the skill of being concise.