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Impact of internet on interpersonal relationships

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Abstract

Gone are the days of relying on “Tortoise mail” to connect with people far away. Today everything and everyone is available at the touch of a button. Back in the early years of the internet, people felt that the internet would create a global village, transcending the boundaries of time and space. But on the other side today Internet is causing a multitude of social and psychological problems as it is affecting their social relations. Most of the people do not know each other, and even more likely that neighbors do not know a person’s friends or relatives.

Can online relationships be meaningful, perhaps even as meaningful as in-person to person relationships? It is easy enough to give information on the internet. And while it is impossible to change bedpans online.

Relationships are more than just acquaintances now. The Internet is a malleable and diverse technology, and its effects must differ, dependent on the purpose of its use. This paper is a review and it shows that technology like internet has limited the human aspect of socialization by creating an internet identity that depicts that human relations have developed into a character version of chameleon.

Keywords: Internet, online relationship, person to person relationship, psychological problems

Introduction

It is a medium uniquely capable of integrating modes of communication and forms of content. Internet - What is the Internet doing to the relationships that we have with friends, relatives, neighbors, and workmates?

On one hand, many extol the internet’s ability to extend our relationships as we can contact people across the ocean at the click of a mouse; we can exchange kind thoughts at any time of the day but on the other hand internet sucks people away from in-person contact, fostering alienation and real-world disconnection.

Internet seduces people into spending time online at the expense of time spent with friends and family. Instead of going out and talking to the neighbors, the internet has attracted the people towards it and people are there spending hours before it. Friends and relatives are now spatially dispersed rather than concentrated in neighborhoods.

With all the powerful social technologies at our fingertips, we are more connected – and potentially more disconnected than ever before.

One of the major concerns is that the relationships that exist in text or even screen-to-screen on flickering webcams are less satisfying than those in which people can really see, hear, smell, and touch each other.

People absorbed in their activities online tend to forget that there are real people in their surroundings who need their attention or have socialization needs. Social networking gives more importance to virtual friends than real ones.

People that are so involved in the internet, they have forgotten how to interact with their family, friends and coworkers, not to mention meeting strangers. Everyone seems to walk around staring at the cell phones not even noticing those around them. This alienates them from their peers and replaces real-life interaction with the virtual one.

Review of Literature

The number of people using internet are increasing rapidly and is really a matter of concern and also an important topic of research (Rotsztein, 2003)^[15].

The Internet is fast becoming a natural, background part of everyday life. In 2002, more than

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600 million people worldwide had access to it (Manasian 2003) ^[11]. Children now grow up with the Internet; they and future generations will take it for granted just as they now do television and the telephone (Turow & Kavanaugh 2003) ^[22]. The main reason people use the Internet is to communicate with other people over e-mail-and the principal reason why people send e-mail messages to others is to maintain interpersonal relationships (Hampton & Wellman 2001, Howard *et al.* 2001, McKenna & Bargh 2000, Stafford *et al.* 1999) ^[6, 19].

As Kang (2000, p. 1150) put it, “the ‘killer application’ of the internet turns out to be other human beings.”

Several scholars have contended that Internet communication is an impoverished and sterile form of social exchange compared to traditional face-to-face interaction, and will therefore produce negative outcomes (loneliness and depression) for its users as well as weaken neighborhood and community ties. Media reporting of the effects of Internet use over the years has consistently emphasized this negative view (see McKenna & Bargh 2000) to the point that, as a result, a substantial minority of (mainly older) adults refuses to use the Internet at all (Hafner 2003) ^[5].

Social media filters the complicated and profound amount of interaction that happens in person, down to validation, essentially. It is filtering one's emotional relationship with others through a corporation whose best interests are not aligned with user well-being, but with its own well-being, which is best served when people are the most numb/accustomed to rights violations and addicted. It is a socially-sanctioned addiction that allows us to ignore the castor in our real lives in favor of our "likes" and "retweets" in our fake ones.

The way we live and work has changed during the past few decades because of the internet and the developmental communication and information industry (Unsal, Ruzgar& Ruzgar, 2008) ^[18].

Wellman and Gulia (1999) ^[23] reported that online relationships can be strong and could strengthen real world relationships but later it could be faded.

Studies showed that 75.5% of respondents prefer to use the Internet when they feel isolated; 50% of respondents reported complaints from family members for being online for longer hours; less than 50% of respondents think that they were more effective online than offline (Shuhail & Bergees, 2006)

Since the 1990s Internet users rapidly increasing and it has become one of the most important topics for the research (Rotsztein, 2003) ^[15].

Some theorists have suggested that Internet use increases social interaction and support (Silverman, 1999, *American Psychologist* 54, 780–781) ^[17], while others have argued that it leads to decreased interaction and support (Kiesler & Kraut, 1999, *American Psychologist* 54, 783–784) ^[9]

Claude Fischer (2005) argued that the ferment of the 1960s was an unnatural high point of social involvement. Moreover, if people are not going to churches, the Lions Club, or scouting groups as much, has civic involvement died? Or, are they finding such group activity online, through chat rooms, listservs, and group email? And is the quality the same when people pray online rather than in churches (Campbell, 2005).

The relationships between excessive Internet usage and interpersonal problems are increasing rapidly. Li and Chung (2006) ^[12] stated that it is very important to know how Internet users formed their relationship with their friends through online or normal social life. According to them it is also necessary to check whether the people are missing their social

engagement, whether they are more comfortable with online friends and reduce the contact with the people in reality or not. In addition, interpersonal problems are also identifiable based on the family members' complaints toward excessive Internet users'. Furthermore, isolated feeling that leads to excessive Internet usage can also be used to determine interpersonal problems (Wellman & Gulia, 1999; Shuhail & Bergees, 2006) ^[23].

Due to the displacement of strong ties, virtual connections are of a lesser quality in comparison to face to face interactions and relations. When people are busy and indulged in a large number of virtual contacts, these may reduce the stronger face to face interaction and ties.

Kraut and his colleagues found out that too much internet usage was coupled with depressing impacts on individuals i.e. diminishing and reducing social circle and raising melancholy and isolation. Additionally, many quantitative researches reported that lonesomeness was coupled with amplified Internet usage. Flaherty LM, Pearce K, Rubin RB. (1998); Turkle S (1996) ^[21].

On the internet, everyone is speaking but fewer people are listening and very few of them are implementing the tips. It means 1 student and 1000 teachers. It's reducing the analysis power of people. And this is the biggest negative impact of the internet on society.

Relationships can rise and fall much quicker. Aside from expediting in developing and mainstream relationships, it is important to know the person for who they really are. By means of social media we will never ever be able to get an accurate representation of the reality of the person Granovetter M (1973) ^[3]

We create the image that we want to convey through our activity on social media. It's much easier for people to often put the best things about themselves on their social network; in fact many show the life they wish they had. This can be detrimental to relationships, because no one is ever transparent or honest. In considering relationships, “the truth is that the content and character of a person should be revealed in layers. The development of a fruitful relationship takes effort, and it is impossible to reach a level of depth with a person by meticulously parsing his Facebook self” (Curry, 2013). Real relationships and depth cannot be established when merely built online.

Twitter and Instagram has created an obsessive need to share our personal lives with the world and it opens the door for feelings of jealousy, judgment and neglect thus harming the relationships. M Chung. R.M. (2006) ^[12].

When compared to face-to-face communication, online communication is severely limited in the sense impressions it can convey (an estimated 60 to 70 percent of human communication takes place nonverbally), which can lead to misunderstandings and embarrassing situations no doubt quite a few relationships have floundered as a result.

Internet use can displace valuable time that people spend with family and friends (Nie Hillygus, & Erbring, 2002) ^[13].

The Internet is creating robotic societies. A society with hybrid skills like, comments and the fact is that it doesn't have feelings attached to it. The relationships in such cases are superficial and like white washed tombs.

What is internet?

The Internet (portmanteau of interconnected network) is the global system of interconnected computer networks that use the Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to link devices worldwide. It is a network of networks that consists of

private, public, academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope, linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless, and optical networking technologies.

Internet refers to the interconnection of various networks of computers through which information can be accessed from anywhere. Internet is one of the greatest inventions in the history of science and technology. It enables us to access and give out information of all kinds through large distances. It has made our lives extremely easier. Internet has various uses which include communication, exchanging information, learning and more. It has further led to the development of various new technologies which have contributed to making our lives more convenient.

What is relationship?

Particular type of connection between two or more entities or phenomena. A binding, usually continuous association between individuals wherein one has some influence on feelings or actions of the other.

Interpersonal relationships and the internet

Social scientists now call the interpersonal relationships and internet as social capital.

Following the dawn of the new millennium, research on relationships has increased dramatically, largely spurred on by the fact that people increasingly rate relationships and healthy relationships as a major life goal. For example, recent surveys have indicated that the strong majority of people across many countries rate relationships as more important than income and people rank the pursuit of happiness as one of their most cherished goals in life.

Internet destroys Interpersonal relationships as individuals nowadays are so caught up in their phones that they miss what's happening around them. They miss moments with loved ones, Watching their child play, and so many others.

Today as wealth and internet is playing a surprisingly huge role in society moving into a fast materialistic and techno savvy phase and where the pursuit of self-fulfillment becoming more important.

Finally, there are a number of studies that indicate that people who have healthy relationships in general, have a positive effect on society. For example, there is evidence that people who have healthy relationships are more successful and socially engaged.

But today the internet has taken over in such a way that that most of a person's friends do not know each other, and even more likely that neighbors do not know a person's friends or relatives.

Result

This study found that the major group of compulsive Internet usages is young adults. Therefore, their dependence on the Internet and problematic Internet use are the causes behind their Internet addiction disorder, i.e.; firstly, problems related to relationships which refers to spending an excessive amount of time starting and maintaining online friendships in chat rooms, which replace real life friends and family. Second, wasting of money by engaging in compulsively using the Internet for gambling online, trading and part-taking in online auctions. Third, dilemma associated with information searching by obsessive web surfing or database searches. Forth, habitual gaming practices such as computer game playing, including multi user games. Finally, sex addiction of young adults is a massive problem through adult chatrooms, cyber-sex or pornography on the Internet.

Thus it has been observed that internet sucks people away from in-person contact, fostering alienation and real-world disconnection.

It is also seducing people into spending time online at the expense of time spent with friends and family, thus harming Interpersonal relationships.

Conclusion

The highly connected world has become disconnected.

The rise of the internet has caused people to communicate differently in areas never dreamed of before the internet came into existence.

The internet "typhoon" sweeping the globe has become a way of life for many individuals all across the globe.

Internet addiction and its impact on interpersonal relationships, though it's subtle, yet alarming. Powerful psychological dynamics operates beneath its surface.

Fostering relationships online can hurt our relationships offline, but they can also make us less able to communicate.

Internet is decreasing physical interaction and essential quality time. People are depending more on the brightness of the screen instead of the real relationship and interaction with people who really matter and crucial for them. It is producing isolated generation and thereby damaging the social ability of the youth.

Society in general will need to brace itself for the explosion of online sex coming through devices. Additionally, those who exercise compulsive usages of the Internet are declining their school/college performance and as consequences, would turn down school/college results by getting poor performance and withdrawal from academic social activities and events as well. Subsequently, academic institutions such as universities, colleges and school campuses will need to regulate students' use of such kind of wireless devices to reduce the abuse of the Internet.

The current review of the literature has shown that it is time to focus on developing a more differentiated view of the Internet and its social outcomes. The Internet is a malleable and diverse technology, and its effects must differ, dependent on the purpose of its use.

It is up to man to be wise enough to use it as a tool of pacemaker and foster understanding and build healthy human relationships

Implications

- Users should limit themselves from the Internet and enjoy their real world relationships
- It's high time that one starts to worry less about what's going on in other people's lives and more of what's going on in theirs.
- Everyone should try to limit themselves to time on these sites and try to communicate more with people face to face.

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