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ENG 160 - 08

Argument Research Essay Final

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Is Social Media Beneficial Or Damaging?

General Opening: Have you ever thought about how teens and adults use social media, however have you thought about how social media affects us? Probably not. Even today people believe that social media could have a major effect on people either positive or negative depending on how they use it. It's still debatable whether social media is beneficial or harmful to people.

Background: What is social media? According to the website *Social Media* by Margaret Rouse, "Social media is a collective term for websites and applications which focus on communication, community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration." Basically, social media can be used in more than one way to communicate.

In the early 2000's, social media started to become popular with MySpace, a social media forum. According to *The Rise of Social media*, "The first social media site to reach a million monthly active users was MySpace – it achieved this milestone around 2004. This is arguably the beginning of social media as we know it." This is what started to make social media popular. Today more than 3.5 billion social media users, which equates to about 45% of the population, use social media. According to *10 Social Media Statistics*, that's a huge number of people who use social media. Popular social media sites are Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and many more. **Thesis:** People can say social media could be both beneficial and toxic, yet social media lends itself to having a more toxic effect on individuals. **Points:** Social media is toxic because it affects people mentally and physically because we focus on the wrong things, there's no privacy and it could be addicting.

To begin with, people are way too focused on the wrong things, such as being acknowledged through social media platforms. For example, people are obsessed with getting “likes” and this can harm people's mental health. Like with anything else too much of anything is not good and can have a negative impact on you. According to an article “Social media and Mental Health,” featured on the website (*Include the name of the website*) it talks about how social media can cause depression and anxiety. It says

Human beings need face-to-face contact to be mentally healthy. Nothing reduces stress and boosts your mood faster or more effectively than eye-to-eye contact with someone who cares about you. The more you prioritize social media interaction over in-person relationships, the more you're at risk for developing or exacerbating mood disorders such as anxiety and depression.

As well, In the article When Self-Worth Depends on Social Media Feedback: Associations With Psychological Well Being it explains about how people depend on social social media to have self worth for themselves. In the study they asked individuals questions relating to social media and involving self worth.

“Items were averaged, with higher scores reflecting self-worth being more contingent on social media feedback. In the present sample, Cronbach's alpha was .88. Data were also collected on the original measure, and analysis showed that having self-worth dependent on social media was positively correlated with a related subscale from the original measure assessing whether one's self-worth is dependent on approval from others.” This is implying, that social media is toxic because the affects people to need to get a dependance or approval from others, to be “accepted” cause of Social media.

This can affect people because when they prioritize social media over human interaction, this can cause depression or anxiety which can be toxic for their well being. This can also result in low self-esteem by comparing yourself to others. It says in **“Social Media and Teens: How does social media affect teenager’s Mental Health”** it says “One study out of the University of Pittsburgh, for example, found a correlation between time spent scrolling through social media apps and negative body image feedback. Those who spent more time on social media had 2.2 times the risk of reporting eating and body image concerns, compared to their peers who spent less time on social media. The participants who spent the most time on social media had 2.6 times the risk.” This is implying that people who spend more time on social media can cause them to develop low self-esteem, and this can cause people to think negatively about their body and want to change themselves. This can negatively impact a person's mentality which could be damaging because of social media. As well in the article, “Multimodal Mental Health Analysis In Social Media” it says that “Several efforts have attempted to automatically detect depression from social media content utilizing machine learning, deep learning, and natural language processing approaches. From conducting a retrospective study of tweets, De Choudhury et al., (2013) characterizes depression based on factors such as language, emotion, style, ego-network, and user engagement. They built a classifier to predict the likelihood of depression from a written post [30] or an individual’s profile.” This is illustrating how Social media could be linked to depression and other mental problems as well this is proving how social media could have a negative impact on one’s mental state because of how people are using it to influence others.

In addition, social media has no privacy, and if not careful it could cause damage. One questionable photo posted can either make or break your reputation. Let's say you are trying to get the job you always wanted. One photo might cause you to be rejected for that job or position. In general, once something is posted, it stays on the internet forever. In the article, "Can Social Media Get You Fired?" It explains how many potential employers reject job seekers just based on their profile photo on their social media. The article says "One in 10 job seekers between the ages of 16 and 34 have been rejected for a job because of something posted on their profile, according to a recent survey from London-based mobile research firm On Device Research." This proves that social media can be harmful because one photo can ruin your image and ruin the chances of you getting hired for that position or job. Also, "In Think Before You Post: Your Online Presence Can Cost You Your Job" the article explains that many employers will not hire someone if they have any drug-related photos or photos they show provocative revealing clothing. "Forty-six percent of employers say they'll pass on candidates who posted provocative or inappropriate photographs or information, and 41 percent will reject job seekers who posted information about drinking or using drugs." This illustrates that social media could negatively affect you, because of the lack of privacy. Once something is posted, it stays forever, and if you are hired for a position, you are a representative of the company and inappropriate postings could get you fired or not hired for the position. To continue on, In the article "Sharing Privately: The Effect Publication On Social Media Has On Expectations Of Privacy" it explains how social media could be dangerous because of how fast something can be shared and reposted. "The story of Justine Sacco, a publicist who in December 2013, whilst about to board a plane to South Africa, tweeted, 'Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!' to her 170 followers. By the time she landed in Cape Town the hashtag #hasjustinelandedyet was the

number one worldwide trend on Twitter.” basically on her experience, on one tweet on twitter it got reposted and shared this was a negative impact on her because originally it was a joke, yet this ruin her reputation because of social media. This supports how social media could be damaging because of the lack of privacy of social media and one tweet or picture could ruin opportunities for yourself because of what you posted.

Furthermore, social media can be addictive, and we can get stuck on social media when we should be involved in more important pursuits. In the article “What Students Are Saying About How Much They Use Their Phones and Whether We Should Be Worried,” it explains how many people lose sleep from being on their phones too much. A girl was talking about her experience with the amount of hours being on her phone she said “ My average screen time is probably about 12 hours a day. I worry a lot about how much time I spend on my phone. But the way I socialize is through my phone. I use social media to communicate, and I have to use my phone to make calls and text. But whenever I have to study, I pull out my phone and go on it for about an hour ...When it is time to go to sleep, I go on my phone in the dark with dark mode on. My bed has my charger connected to it so I can easily stay up all night. I want to remove it but because I am so addicted to my phone, I do not. One time I fell asleep at 2 am because I was on my phone, and it made me extremely tired (this was on a school night).” This Explains how social media could negatively affect people because it could be addicting and a habit for people to spend time on their phones and lose focus on what they have to get done instead of stay on task because they are distracted on their phone. As well, another person felt when he was on his phone it took up much of his time to do other things. It says “On average, I spend about 6 hours a day on my phone. It is spent with me going on social media, playing games, or watching Netflix. Every weekend, a notification pops up showing me how much time I have spent and each week it

has gone up. I am starting to become a lot more cautious about how much time I spend on my phone because it is starting to worry me. My phone has become something that I always have to have and it never leaves my side. It has gotten in the way of me studying and spending time with my family which has started to worry me. I believe that parents should know how much time their kid is using their phone but I don't think that they should act upon it." This is proving that social media could be pessimistic because social media can take up most of your time if you do not know how to manage your time where you can get everything done first and this could lead into you not being able to stay focused because you are struck on your phone.

Social media can be toxic for individuals because people are way to focused on getting likes and attention, Social media has no privacy whatsoever, and social media could be addicting because people do not know how to get off their phones. This connects to the real world because everyday social media is being used instagram, snapchat, facebook, twitter and many more although social media you could make connections with people and stay in touch with friends and family. Yet, too much social media could be toxic and harmful to not only yourself but to others as well if not being used in the right way.

Works Cited

Rouse, Margaret. "What Is Social Media?" *WhatIs.com*, TechTarget, 7 Apr. 2020, whatis.techtarget.com/definition/social-media.

Ortiz-Ospina, Esteban. "The Rise of Social Media." *Our World in Data*, Sept. 2019, ourworldindata.org/rise-of-social-media.

Mohsin, Maryam. "10 Social Media Statistics You Need to Know in 2020 [Infographic]."

Oberlo, Oberlo, 28 Aug. 2020, www.oberlo.com/blog/social-media-marketing-statistics.

ADD: At least 3 academic sources for the points in the paper

Point 1: mentally and physically

Databases: Psychology database

Health and nutrition database

Mental Health database

Point 2: Privacy

Databases: Psychology database

Laws / database concerning people's privacy when using social forums

Technology database: how digital communication impacts privacy

Communication database (look for theories on Privacy Management - keeping your information private)

Business database: what employers expect from employees

Point 3 Addiction

Databases: Psychology database / behavioral issues like addiction

Mental Health database

Sociology database: that human trends in society like becoming addicted to a way of life - like using technology

Technology database

