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Social Media: More Harm than Good

Have you ever been out to dinner with a friend – only to look up and see them browsing on Instagram? It seems nowadays that people are addicted to social media. It doesn’t help that the options are numerous; Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Tumblr, Twitter, and YouTube are all available at the push of a button. What, then, are the effects of these platforms? Some feel that social media is a great way to stay connected. Others feel that these platforms are nothing more than a distraction. Social media in fact has a negative impact because it causes anxiety and often leads to cyberbullying.

One reason social media can have a negative influence on its users is because it habitually provokes anxiety. Chuck Hadad from Article 2, for instance, explains, “The heaviest social media users admitted to checking their social media feeds more than 100 times a day.” This illustrates the dependence on social media that some users have developed – namely, teens. Many do not check regularly, but constantly, rather like an addiction. Those that don’t become “distressed.” Thus, it is clear that high levels of anxiety can develop due to social media use; social media does more harm than good.

Additionally, social media can have a negative effect on its users because of online bullying – or cyberbullying. Article 2 quotes one teenage user: “Go die. Stop tryin to be popular. Omg your ugly.” This, too, highlights the damaging impact social media can have on users. As shown, teens sometimes feel compelled to use language that bullies others online. Anonymity, or lack of face-to-face contact, allows them the chance to belittle others with no consequences; you don’t have to see the person you’ve hurt. Therefore, social media can prove a negative influence due to the threat of cyberbullying.

Although many agree that the impact of social media is alarming, others feel it can have a positive impact. Article 1, for example, states that social media “enhances teenager’s romantic relationships, helping them feel closer and more connected.” However, these researchers forget that constant connection can also lead to jealousy. Teens often use social media to keep tabs on their friends and romantic partners – and thus develop distrust. Many feel a need to know where their friends or partners are at all times just to ensure that they aren’t left out. Article 1 even addresses this fear, more commonly referred to as “FOMO” (fear of missing out). Consequently, because of this constant connection, social media indeed has a negative impact on its users.

As you can see, though some argue social media can be a positive platform, it is clear that its impact is, in fact, harmful. This is an issue about which all users should be aware – particularly teen users. Social media leads to high levels of anxiety and, in many cases, to cyberbullying. Is constant access to this kind of content mere entertainment, or is it a gateway to something much more damaging? The latter is obvious; social media’s impact is undoubtedly negative.