Effects of Social Media

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ABSTRACT

Using social media web sites is among the most common activity of today's children and adolescents. Any web site that allows social interaction is considered a social media site, including social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter; gaming sites and virtual worlds such as Club Penguin, Second Life, and the Sims; video sites such as YouTube; and blogs. Such sites offer today's youth a portal for entertainment and communication and have grown exponentially in recent years. For this reason, it is important that parents become aware of the nature of social media sites, given that not all of them are healthy environments for children and adolescents. Social networks have removed all the communication and interaction barriers, and now one can communicate his perception and thoughts over a variety of topics. Students and experts are able to share and communicate with like-minded people and can ask for the input and opinion on a particular topic. Another positive impact of social networking sites is to unite people on a huge platform for the achievement of some specific objective. This is very important to bring the positive change in society.

INTRODUCTION

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, microblogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media.

Here are some prominent examples of social media:

- Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.
- Twitter is a free microblogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.
- Google+ is Google's social networking project, designed to replicate the way people interact offline more closely than is the case in other social networking services. The project’s slogan is “Real-life sharing rethought for the web.”
- Wikipedia is a free, open content online encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community of users known as Wikipedians. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication; registration is not required to edit articles.
- LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.
• Reddit is a social news website and forum where stories are socially curated and promoted by site members. The site is composed of hundreds of sub-communities, known as "subreddits." Each subreddit has a specific topic such as technology, politics or music. Reddit site members, also known as, "redditors," submit content which is then voted upon by other members. The goal is to send well-regarded stories to the top of the site's main thread page.

• Pinterest is a social curation website for sharing and categorizing images found online. Pinterest requires brief descriptions but the main focus of the site is visual. Clicking on an image will take to the original source.

Social media use
Engaging in various forms of social media is a routine activity that research has shown to benefit children and adolescents by enhancing communication, social connection, and even technical skills (Ito M, et.al.2010). Social media sites such as Facebook and MySpace offer multiple daily opportunities for connecting with friends, classmates, and people with shared interests. During the last 5 years, the number of preadolescents and adolescents using such sites has increased dramatically. According to a recent poll, 22% of teenagers log on to their favorite social media site more than 10 times a day, and more than half of adolescents log on to a social media site more than once a day (Hinduja S, Patchin J.2007). Seventy-five percent of teenagers now own cell phones, and 25% use them for social media, 54% use them for texting, and 24% use them for instant messaging (Lenhart A 2010). Thus, a large part of this generation's social and emotional development is occurring while on the Internet and on cell phones. Because of their limited capacity for self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure, children and adolescents are at some risk as they navigate and experiment with social media. Recent research indicates that there are frequent online expressions of offline behaviors, such as bullying, clique-forming, and sexual experimentation (Patchin JW, Hinduja S.2006 ) that have introduced problems such as cyberbullying (Christakis DA, Moreno MA.2009) privacy issues, and “sexting” (Palfrey J, Gasser U, Boyd D.2010) Other problems that merit awareness include Internet addiction and concurrent sleep deprivation (Jenkins H, et.al,2006).

Many parents today use technology incredibly well and feel comfortable and capable with the programs and online venues that their children and adolescents are using. Nevertheless, some parents may find it difficult to relate to their digitally savvy youngsters online for several reasons. Such parents may lack a basic understanding of these new forms of socialization, which are integral to their children's lives (Boyd D .2010). They frequently do not have the technical abilities or time needed to keep pace with their children in the ever-changing internet landscape. In addition, these parents often lack a basic understanding that kids' online lives are an extension of their offline lives. The end result is often a knowledge and technical skill gap between parents and youth, which creates a disconnect in how these parents and youth participate in the online world together (Boyd D,2010).

BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA
Socialization and Communication
Social media sites allow teens to accomplish online many of the tasks that are important to them offline: staying connected with friends and family, making new friends, sharing pictures, and exchanging ideas. Social media participation also can offer adolescents deeper benefits that extend into their view of self, community, and the world, including

1. opportunities for community engagement through raising money for charity and volunteering for local events, including political and philanthropic events;
2. enhancement of individual and collective creativity through development and sharing of artistic and musical endeavors;
3. growth of ideas from the creation of blogs, podcasts, videos, and gaming sites;
4. expansion of one's online connections through shared interests to include others from more diverse backgrounds (such communication is an important step for all adolescents and affords the opportunity for respect, tolerance, and increased discourse about personal and global issues); and

5. fostering of one's individual identity and unique social skills.

Enhanced Learning Opportunities
Middle and high school students are using social media to connect with one another on homework and group projects (Borja RR. 2005). For example, Facebook and similar social media programs allow students to gather outside of class to collaborate and exchange ideas about assignments. Some schools successfully use blogs as teaching tools, which has the benefit of reinforcing skills in English, written expression, and creativity.

Impact of Social Media
Print media (Newspapers, Journals and others), Radio, Electronic Media Television) and the cinema which immensely affect the moral and social aspects of children’s personality bear the act of these mass media. During the present times, it is the television and the cinema which has the strongest impact. In every house there is a television set, and to even a baby younger than two, being attracted towards it, is not surprising. As its appeal is very attractive, and it involves the greatest possible number of senses, therefore its impact is strong. Parents may be heard complaining against the obsession of their school-going children with this electronic media. What is true of the television, is also true of the cinema. They are the most stimulating means of entertainment. As the television and the cinema make so strong an impact upon growing child, their educative value is also very high. If television serials which are both highly interesting and educative, are produced, keeping consideration the physical and mental maturity levels of the child no teaching aid can surpass these. For the teaching of both physical social sciences, the electronic media would prove very interesting and effective. Good manners may effectively be taught through demonstration in serials on the television screen. Short stories, teaching lessons in co-operation, truthfulness, service and so on, may be the themes of serials to help in inculcating these moral or social qualities. Almost in all developed, and in many developing countries, video cassettes have become an indispensable material in the system of distance education. Other educational organisations of higher national and even regional levels, prepare their educational programmes for the interested television viewers. We, in India, are well-acquainted with the UGC programmes which serve the educational interests of students and scholars related to different faculties or branches of learning. Now, important scientific experiments can be telecast for a number of people. Knowledge of many researches can effectively be spread among the masses. Especially, since the beginning of the latter half of the twentieth century, we have been experiencing explosion in knowledge. The electronic media, and also other means of mass communications, the latest being internet, have immensely boosted this explosion. If too much attachment to the television continues through adolescence, it proves highly detrimental to the moral development of the child as the television serials, generally, happen to be full of sex and violence. Crime pictures may suggest an undesirable type of behaviour pattern by which the innocent children are more likely to be affected. The delinquents, may like to escape to that screen-world for the time-being. The more unpleasant, non-stimulating and unhappy situation a child has to live in, the more likely he would be inclined to escape into the screen-world for temporary relief. Such a child may grow too weak to boldly face the hard realities of the world. Increase of violence in the child’s games, is also a result of serials and pictures suggesting aggressive behaviour pattern. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that movies have tremendous educational utilities—what the children would not like to listen when taught by their teachers or elders of the family, would pay utmost heed when taught through a television programme or a movie. The television programmes and cinema pictures can stir the feeling of the viewers, more so of the youngsters, and broaden their outlook in such a way that they may start thinking more of their society rather that of their own self. These programmes may awaken the adolescents to the burning problems of the society. Serials or pictures based on life-stories of the great personalities of the past or present, may prove very stimulating and...
set in the process of identification or emulating. Thus, the spirit of social service, patriotism or love for the widest society of the entire world may be inculcated. The children and adolescents are more impressionable; and the impressions created upon their mind happen to be more enduring. The songs, dances and other forms of artistic expressions, sweeten our life, and may greatly help in the inculcation of aesthetic sense, and in sublimating us to a higher level of living. It is a strongly effective means of sublimation, and hence, of making society more cultured. But, the cumulative effect of serials and films the dominance of sex in them, may result in the laxity of character in our youth.

Children’s interest in magazines, journals and newspapers, is first stirred because of pictures and cartoons, only when they have developed practice in reading the newspaper and magazine, they can be interested in reading them. The other way round is also correct—good and attractively illustrated newspapers may make the children feel interested in attempting to read the same. However, the newspaper is an effective mass media only for adolescents and youngsters, not so much for the young children. Up to the age of 12, a child, in general, prefers to read comics. By the time he attains the age of 14, he is inclined more towards sports news. It is, generally, not before 16 or so that an adolescent starts showing keen interest in general knowledge. Now, he would like to know news of different sorts related to politics, diplomacy, peace and war, science and explorations or inventions, and of course, those related to sports, television programmes and films, and other matters of interest. It is the time by which some develop a keen penchant for arts. It is a little later that news related to economics attract the youth. Thus, for the adolescents and youth, the print media serves as an effective means to widen the horizons of thinking. As a result of the media’s impact on them, they would start thinking of issues in a wider, social perspective. The print media can keep their knowledge abreast with the latest social developments, and, hence they should be expected to be in a better position to address to the social and moral problems that our society may be facing. Thus, the regular reading of the newspaper is very much likely to develop such social qualities as objectivity, sympathy, empathy, co-operation in the solution of social problems, leadership and so on. Due to these, and such other qualities, one’s moral standard would also rise. Thus, surfing porno sites on the web, puts a new and serious onus or the guardians, and on the society as a whole, to develop a strongly effective agency, which may successfully counter the misuse of such a beneficial scientific technology.

CONCLUSION:

Social media extends the number of people we can interact with, and the number of people we can call “friends”. Young people have grown up with this new technology, and are increasingly dependent on social media because their built environment makes it impossible to participate in face-to-face social interaction. Are their social interaction skills being “amputated” in the process? There are disturbing indications that, in the absence of real social life, technologically mediated interaction does not teach healthy social skills, but may indeed facilitate inappropriate, predatory or damaging exchanges.

REFERENCES