

Reading Passage (263 words): Problems with Social Networks

Social networks such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter are creating a more repressed American society. Ironically, social networks work against the very thing they are promoting which is community and socializing. Social networks are a false sense of community and friendships because they take away face-to-face interaction, create a false sense of friendship, and many users end up addicted.

Facial expressions, intonation, and sentence rhythm are all part of what we see and hear when we have face-to-face interaction with people. Going out for a cup of coffee or tea and having a conversation used to be the norm. Building friendships over time used to mean a friendship of discussion. Now, social networks have taken the place of face-to-face interaction and that takes away from much needed human interaction.

Some users have hundreds of "friends" or "followers" on Facebook and Twitter. The definition of friendship has changed negatively. According to social networks, friendship is simply looking at pictures, updates, and posting messages that can be read by many. If this trend continues, friendships will be made by simply logging on to a website and sending digital requests, rather than being built over time and interaction.

Many users of social networks have become addicted. They may have had good intentions when they started, but updating and posting pictures turned into an obsession. For many, a social network is the primary activity or action of the day. Along with video games, social networks have overtaken people's time which in time creates a more dormant and repressed society.

Writing Prompt: Summarize the main points in the lecture showing how they cast doubt on the main points in the reading passage?

Lecture (361 words): Are Social Networks as Bad as Some Claim?

Social networks are constantly being criticized because they are said to promote a false sense of celebrity or community. Many people do not understand or want to understand why people insist on joining a social network. In order to understand social networks like Facebook and Twitter, we have to look at technology and how it affects our daily lives.

The fundamental argument of social networks is that it takes away our face-to-face interaction because we are communicating through a computer. If we look back at communication before technological advancements like the internet, we will see that soldiers, housewives, even presidents, wrote letters to communicate. Social networks like Facebook work in the same way, but instead provide instant communication among people in towns, cities, and countries around the world.

One can argue that getting to know a friend or becoming friends with a person does not mean you have to meet. Traditional places of where to meet people have changed because of the internet. In the past, diners or drive-ins were places to socialize and meet people. When I was younger, we had the pen pal system. You wrote letters to a pen pal, and he or she would write back. The user is getting to know a friend or following a friend much in the same way that pen pals wrote letters to each other when I was young. Along with traditional ways of making friends, social networks are simply another way to make friends in a modern technological society.

If social online networks are the new norm of modern society, then "addicted to social networks" may not carry as much weight: "addiction" can be redefined as "routine" or "habitual" because social networks are now part of the social norm. To say someone is addicted to social networks is to say that the person is addicted to the social norms and every day customs of modern American society. Father, mother, teenagers, and even politicians use social networks to communicate and create friendships. Perhaps, those who do not participate in social networks can be viewed as repressed because they refuse to assimilate into the current technological and societal advancements.