Christina Swartzendruber

Mrs. Ippensen

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The Negative Effects of Technology

As the world changes and grows, technology has become an integral part of our lives. Everyone uses technology daily, but they don’t realize how much they depend on it. The prevalent use of technology these days has effects on people of all ages, such as bad health, less face-to-face interaction, and detrimental consequences for children.

Because of the technology boom, people of all ages have started to live less active lifestyles and therefore become unhealthy. As the amount of technology used on farms continues to grow, farmers are less active. One specific example, GPS, or global positioning system, allows farmers to sit in tractors for long periods of time while doing nothing active in contrast to the intense physical labor farmers use to have doing chores, shoveling grain, and rogueing fields. Long hours of sitting at work will increase people’s chances of getting diabetes and becoming overweight (“The Benefits”).

Also, technology may affect the health of young children. Kids that spend a lot of time in front of the television do not have any time for physical activity outside. The same goes for kids who get cell phones and other technological instruments at too young an age. When children get many devices they tend to spend too much time on them and may end up overweight. According to a study done by The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 16% of children between the ages of six and nineteen are overweight or obese. This number has tripled since 1980 mostly due to the increased use of electronics (qtd. in “Negative Effects”). Because of obesity, there is a chance for these kids to develop Type II Diabetes, asthma, sleep apnea, social discrimination, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure (“Negative Effects”). According to a different study done by Stanford University of Medicine, elementary students consume 20% of their daily food while watching television; ironically, they are not burning off any of these calories because they are sitting in front of the television (qtd. in “Negative Effects”).

Another effect of technology is that it has allowed people to communicate without face-to-face interaction. It seems that almost everyone has a cell phone or some way to communicate electronically. Texting has become a big way for teens to communicate with each other without even talking. This has made people less sociable and less able to talk to people in person. Technology is killing what we as humans love the most, connection with other human beings. Also, all this technology may cause cyberbullying. Many people will say destructive things online that they would never say in person. According to Suzanne Phillips, four in ten teens have experienced cyberbullying and the more people share on the internet, the more likely they are to be targeted. So, technology has negatively affected people’s social skills, and caused cyberbullying.

Lastly, technology has caused some negative long-term effects on children. Less than twenty years ago, children would be seen outside playing games and being active. But now that technology has rapidly grown, many children are seen sitting inside playing on electronic gadgets. Children rely on this technology for their play, therefore inhibiting their creativity. According to Cris Rowan, an average elementary student spends eight hours per day on entertainment technology. There are three factors for healthy development of a child: movement, touch, and connection (Rowan). When children are sitting in front of a television or other screen none of these factors are fulfilled. Technology is allowing our brain to scan information rapidly and efficiently, but there are many parts of the brain that technology negatively affects, like attention, information overload, decision-making, and memory/learning. Jim Taylor describes kids’ attentions as the “gateway to thinking,” and if their attentions are not fully developed, they may not be able to learn and focus effectively. Technology also has effects on teenagers like lack of sleep, depression, addiction, stress, isolation, and anxiety (Owen). A Swedish study found that teenagers who need to constantly have their phones were more likely to become depressed (qtd. in Owen). When children spend a great deal of time on electronics it may be harmful for them.

Technology affects our lives in many ways one wouldn’t expect. The prevalent use of technology these days has effects on people of all ages, such as bad health, less face-to-face communication, and long-term effects on children. Technology is not necessarily making people unintelligent, it’s just making them different. Because technology is here to stay, society must focus on ways for individuals to stay active and healthy, to restore human interaction, and to encourage creative play in children.

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