
Technology Make Us More Alone

Does technology make us more alone? At first, the question seems silly. Why would it be making us more alone? It is connecting us so we can communicate with people all over the world. We can be close to friends without physically being there. This is all true, but technology can also create loneliness. The definition of loneliness is "Sadness because one has no friends or company" according to the Oxford dictionary. Also to clarify, when I'm talking about "technology", I mean the internet, phones, computers iPad etc. Here are three reasons how technology makes us lonelier.

Firstly, social media can cause loneliness. Novelist and columnist Stephen Marche wrote about this in an article in the Atlantic, an American magazine. "From Facebook to Twitter," he notes, "social media have made us more densely networked than ever. Yet for all this connectivity, new research suggests that we have never been lonelier and that this loneliness is making us mentally and physically ill". A study conducted by the University of Pittsburgh found that if you spend over two hours a day on social networks, your chances of getting socially isolated are twice as high. They also found that people who visit social networks over 58 times a week are three times more likely to feel lonely than those who use the sites under nine times. People spend so much time in the virtual world creating a profile to show to the public that they forget who they are and that they have friends and family that they can talk face to face to. With technology advancing faster than ever, our reliance on social media connections has deprived us from real life social interactions. Many people also use social media as a substitute for face to face interactions. Particularly for those who suffer from social anxiety, (the fear of interacting with other people,) social media seems like a safe alternative. A thousand Instagram likes or Facebook friends aren't necessarily representative of an audience that truly knows you. Nowadays, it only takes a few minute clicks to become "friends" with someone. Your real friends don't see you through digital filters. People that only have digital friends might also feel lonely because they don't have real friends that like them for who they really are. There is also that expectation of being perfect that makes people feel that they are not good enough and can drop their self-esteem. Time invested in creating an alternate persona will reduce the opportunity for making a real connection.

Secondly, technology provides easy, anonymous access to bullying, and in turn, this can result in loneliness. While better connecting the world, the internet has also allowed individuals to hide their profile anonymously. In the internet age, the opportunity to bully others has only increased. Prior to the internet, a physical presence was usually needed to spread rumours and tease. It would usually happen at school. But now bullying can occur immediately, from anywhere, to a much larger audience, and can spread much faster. Additionally, those who choose to bully others can get more immediate satisfaction from likes, shares, retweets, and the adding effect that often occurs when others add to an already negative situations. A 2007 Pew Research Study found that 32% of teens have been victims of some sort of cyber bullying. Almost a decade later in 2016, the National Crime Prevention Council found that it increased to 43%. The psychological effects on cyberbullying can lead to isolation, depression and in extreme cases, suicide.

Finally, technology has made our generation less sociable. A recent study done by University of

California, Los Angeles (UCLA) found that the growing use of smartphones, computers and video games in a child's life damages their ability to understand and recognize other people's emotions. Researchers conducted a social experiment that involved two groups of sixth-graders from a California public school. One group of preteens spent five days at a nature and science camp, where they had no access to digital media of any kind. The other group did not attend the camp, and continued spending hours each day interacting with their electronic devices. All of the participants were shown videos and pictures of faces that were happy, sad, angry or scared. Researchers found that the participants who had spent five days at the outdoor camp were significantly better at being able to correctly identify the emotions being expressed in the images and videos, as compared to the others. This study has let us realize that technology is affecting our generation's ability to do a simple task, recognize emotions. This will make it harder for them to make friends which could lead to loneliness.

So overall, technology has become a part of our everyday life, and is connecting people from all over the world. However, it changes the basic nature of human interaction and relationships. Technology is making our generation lonelier because of social media, bullying and damage to our ability for social interaction. I'm not telling you that you shouldn't use technology or that it is bad, but it should be used in moderation or it can make us lonely.

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