Opinions

The Digital Age and Childhood. Social Media Affecting Social Development.

**By:**Brittany WilliamsJuly 19, 2018 9:30pm

*The Digital Age is a time where technology and social media is used every day and is a part of our daily lives.*

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Social media is popularly spreading throughout the nation and affecting everyone’s social development in positive and negative ways. It is crazy how advance social media and technology is getting and not slowing down. Social media is known for interacting with people and brings more power to those who use it. Many of these social media sites include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Myspace, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and many others. It is said that almost a quarter of the world uses or is on Facebook. It is from these social media sites, that people feel like they are connecting with or related to one another and do not feel alone. You can take a person and get to know them, and they’ll join a group of people too who all share the same views and interests that can benefit you and your views. It is easy to search topics and find groups who think and see your way on things. Thanks to the internet, the growth of technology for purposes such as education, learning, exploring, interacting, and more is making the new age turn into a digital age. This whole new approach is also affecting our social developments and the way we are in the world. It affects our social development by teaching us to not know how to interact with people in public and to socialize or how to be around people. It is changing the world. We live in a world that is trying to replace pencil and paper with tablets and mac books.

As social media keeps progressing I can’t help but wonder why we keep pushing forward knowing how much it is taking away from physical interaction and physical learning. People love to bury their noses into these machines and ignore the world around them. The use of technology and social media has got so bad you cannot travel anywhere and not see phones out during dinner, vacations, etc. We may have more self-esteem interacting behind a screen, but we also can get bullied and mistreated by ways such as cyberbullying. This technology with social media also has had some benefits to our social development. Being on social media and getting praise from our followers has really impacted how we interact and how we deal with people behind the screens.

The benefits of social media include getting to have a way to interact with distant friends, family, help make new friends, share pictures, share adventures, share ideas and thoughts. There is many who reach out with petitions and charities to raise money for causes. Many different learning opportunities and chances to express yourself in a way that sometimes is not possible in person. Learning from programs and educating yourself is also a big benefit. Getting on all these sites gives people more opportunities to get noticed and get looked at in a way that sometimes is harder in life to do. Posting a singing video, for instance, and getting a million likes can draw the attention for a record deal or just could be a blessing in disguise. There is really no way to state just the positive impacts without looking also at the negatives.

Social media has so much good to give but also has a negative side. While you may post an expressive post on social media someone can turn it into something inappropriate or make very mean remarks. Praise is amazing but getting cyberbullied on the other end of things can cause a person to be depressed, angry, anxious, and turn into a bully as well. The lack of physical interaction can make you more uncomfortable in a setting around others and can make things awkward. No one wants to feel weird around people regardless of if they know them or not. Young children also learn better through social interaction than on a screen. The more screen time a young child gets the less interactive they become and lack the social skills needed to socialize which is vital for young children. Being able to physically see a person and read their emotions can help people learn better and understand. The increased amount of screen time on social media can cause risky behavior. As we become more familiar with technology it becomes easy to find ways to break through parental controls. By going on risky sites, we get exposed to profanity or worse content that can also enable you to join in risky or dangerous behavior.

It is clear, social media is without a doubt not going anywhere and I think it is going to just keep growing. There really is no proof whether social media plays a role in depression or really does much for our self-esteem, but it is impacting the world. The way our children are brought up with keep changing and their social development will also change. Will we have a world where we only communicate through technology and keep straying away from physical interaction? No one really knows. All we know is that without social media, social, ethical, environmental and political ills would have very little visibility and the world would not be the way it is today. Welcome to what will soon be, if it is not already, the digital age.