Impacts of the Internet

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Throughout the last century the world has seen unprecedented advancements in technology. The television changed the way the world perceived entertainment. The microwave revolutionized the food industry. Cell phones increased our accessibility and productivity in our personal and professional lives. However, no modern technology has had as large an influence on our lives as the Internet. The Internet has effectively revolutionized every aspect of our modern lives like nothing else in history. It has changed the social, legal, political, and economic structures in America and around the world.

With social media companies like facebook, twitter, and LinkedIn, our personal and professional lives have become fairly public. Although the social benefits of facebook are made evident every time we login into our account, the negative impacts can often present themselves in subtle ways. At the beginning of 2015 facebook had 1.44 billion active users (statista.com). Not only does this present a massive economic opportunity, it presents many ethical questions. Economically facebook has opened the doors to half of the worlds online market. According to a United Nations report, they expected that 3 billion people would have access to the Internet by the end of 2014 (latimes.com). This means that nearly half the population of the world with access to the Internet is on facebook.   So theoretically facebook potentially has more access to half the worlds personal information than any government agency could ever hope to have. Google processes over 40,000 search queries per second (internetlivestats.com). We give google potential information that we wouldn't give our closest friends. This has revolutionized the way companies do business. These days, if your company doesn't have an operational online presence, you aren't taken very seriously. So what risks does this present? Social media has

presented new ways for people to commit crimes. One that we have all heard of, "facebook stalking", which in general isn't a crime but opens the door to many criminals looking to commit serious offenses. Often photos are stamped with geographical and time data that can be easily seen by someone with little knowledge of computers and data. Criminals can use this to physically stalk someone and take advantage of them.

The music industry has also been completely changed from the advent of the Internet. The Internet made it possible for us to buy those one or two songs on the album without having to buy the whole album. It has made many musicians who would have never made it thirty years ago get the exposure needed to catapult their careers. However, it has also had a negative effect on the financial structure of the industry. Since mp3s came to be, there has been a problem with illegally downloading music, and a constant discussion on what is "legally downloaded." It has hurt the musicians and record labels financially. In order to prevent the piracy of music, they have had to make special concessions with companies like Pandora and Apple. Doug gross stated in a recent CNN article that, "in a three-month span 6.5 million people listened to Bon-Jovi's 'Livin' on a Prayer' on Pandora and he and his co-writers split $110"(cnn.com). Recently, Taylor swift was able to stand up to Apple's decision not to pay artists for the first three months of a users new account and tell them no, I am not going to give you access to my music. She did it through social media and got a lot of attention for it. Apple immediately changed their decision to do that (nypost.com). This effectively shows the impact of social media on todays businesses. Something that would have been done behind closed doors in the past quickly became a public scorning of Apple.

Print newspaper is another industry that has been buried by the Internet. No longer do we gather our news source from the morning or afternoon papers. We stream it, or read local news

articles online. Newspapers have been forced to evolve into Internet based companies. Their

competition is no longer other newspapers; it is more often freelance bloggers and major news

networks that they must compete with. As Leo Babauta expressed, "Your main asset is

credibility, not money or size." It has negatively impacted the credibility of news. I am

surprised at how often I hear during a major news report that "this information has not been

independently verified by our organization" or something along those lines. The Internet has

made the world so fast paced that news agency's don't have time to verify what they are

reporting before they air it. To be at all confident with what you are reading or hearing on the

Internet you must do some independent research from credible sources.

     The Internet is often being called another utility these days like gas or electricity. It has

become a necessity for work, education, entertainment, and a social life. Its influence grows

every day by presenting new ways to help make our lives easier and more productive. We are

however, presented with the burden of its negative impacts as well. With time there will come

solutions, the Internet is a very dynamic world.

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Leo Babauta(8 Valuable Lessons Newspapers Must Learn From Bloggers to Survive**)**