Amy Schmitt

Professor K. Todd Goulding

CSIS 1430

July 4, 2016

<p style="text-align:center">The Effects of the Internet on Our Society</p>

The internet has undoubtedly affected our society but has it been a positive or negative affect? The use of internet can be seen in multiple facets of life. We use it to get caught up on news, check in with family, make plans with friends, book hotels, research for vacations and even check what time it is. The list goes on. At the same time the internet is also to blame for cutting into family time, fueling gambling and porn addictions, and causing us to spend more time indoors than outside.

There are definitely downsides to internet use and how it can impact people's daily lives. In an article by Quentin Fottrell; "Does Facebook break up marriages?", it is sited that research by National Center for Health Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey has noted the connection between the use of social media and divorce. The same article also cites that "Over 80% of divorce attorneys have seen a rise in cases using social networking, according to the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers."

It is evident that the internet has affected our daily lives and how we socially interact. Parents will often complain about their kids giving their phone too much attention and not participating at the dinner table. You might not be listening 100% to a conversation in front of you when you are in the middle of three more on your phone. This all makes the internet out to be a negative influence on how we interact with each other socially.

Time and time again people have feared the effects of social change. Clay Shirky, a teacher of "theory and practice of social media at NYU in the Interactive Telecommunications Program and in the Journalism Department" points this out in an interview titled "Who Really Runs the Internet" that "whenever a new medium comes along people wring their hands about the effects on youth". That is to say how will it affect the most vulnerable? He also points out that "people worried about the moral effect of the Internet, which is to say it would be impossible to create an environment in which children only learn their parents' view of the world". These statements suggest the fear people have for social change and its negative impact. But have these changes really brought our society down or helped us to naturally evolve.   I think we could say that we are more globally conscious, we know more about what's going on in the world than we ever did and we have resource to voice our opinions and share ideas.   There is also more diversity in our social interactions.

Stephen J. Dubner mentioned in the same article the implications the internet has on our daily activities. He says about computers and internet; "Anything that you want to write you can immediately publish to anyone else who owns one. Anything you want to sell, create, think up, draw, steal, invent, et cetera, and anybody can communicate with anybody else, pretty much for free." The era of the internet is an era of giving and receiving mass amounts of information. Richard Alleyen of the Telegraph says that we are living in the "Information Age". He says that "a new study shows everyone is bombarded by the equivalent of 174 newspapers of data a day." Dr. Hilbert, who was interviewed for the same article said "100 years ago people were lucky to read the equivalent of 50 books in a lifetime".   Alleyen goes on to examine the findings of researchers at the Science journal, stating that their findings show that

there is "now 295 exabytes of data floating around the world – that's

29,500,000,000,000,000,000,000 pieces of information."

These numbers and findings help us to see that the effects of the internet on our society

are undeniable and needless to say immense. These effects can be said to be positive and

negative. This is no different than any other technology that we have been faced with over the

existence of humanity. We are experts at adapting and harnessing the energy around us to

make our lives easier. It is in our nature to want to be more efficient and faster. It is also in our

nature to fear change. Perhaps this is part of our instinct of survival. After all this being said I

believe that the internet has indeed affected our lives but it's invention and presence is as

natural as the invention of the wheel.

Fottrell, Quentin "Does Facebook break up marriages?" MarketWatch. July 13, 2014. July, 1

2016.

Freakonomics "Who Runs the Internet?." Freakonomics. November 14, 2013. July, 04, 2016.

Alleyne, Richard "Welcome to the information age – 174 newspapers a day" *The Telegraph*

Telegraph Media Group Limited, February 11, 2011. July 4, 2016.