

An Essay on Social Media

Fall 2018

Hikari Mine IHRTLHC

As an 8th grader without a phone, I have felt curious about what other students were doing while they were not at school. Were they studying, having dinner or watching TV? I did not have any means to know about their lives beyond school and, I still remember the uneasiness I had for not knowing how other students, especially those who got better grades on exams than I did, spent time outside classes. After I got my phone, thanks to social media, I did come to know how others usually spend their lives, which has been interesting and fun for me. Getting to know other ways to spend time and applying some of them to my life is helpful in developing a more enjoyable life. However, it is also true that social media can affect me in a bad way. Social media is called “social” because people use it for social connection. Some people built social networking websites for the purpose of letting people connect with each other online. Then, people start using social media for that purpose. However, now social media is beyond that. People use social media for reading articles posted by journalism websites. This use of social media changed the whole purpose of social media. Consumers used to look for connection, now they look for information, not just connection. There are issues with how information is distributed through social media and what kind of information is distributed there. That is how social media can affect users in a bad way and that is why I hope to not look for information there and instead stick to social networking, the original usage of social media.

I have two reasons why people better not use social media for collecting news. The first reason is that those words you see are not something you are forced to see, rather something you choose to see. For example, you need to positively follow news outlets' social media accounts, say CNN, to get news provided by CNN on social media, say on Twitter or on Facebook. This is like you are going to a buffet restaurant and picking only the food you want to eat, cakes. However, either for food or news, it is not always good for you to consume only things you like. This is because you need to see some news that does not line well with your thoughts at first, you need to get questioned about your opinion, and you need to think with your head and always try to get to the very truth. Lanier says that "if you choose not to notice that you're experiencing, you can negate your own consciousness "(138) and "you should not accept what I say without thinking about it critically"(49). If you keep eating just cakes, you will be sick. If you keep feeding yourself with information that does not challenge your thoughts, you are losing the ability to think on your own and perceive the truth. Therefore, you may try to look for news outside social media and explore wider views of information.

The second reason is that the information spread on social media may not be the one with the best quality. Major news outlets utilize social media platforms to spread their news among people and try to let them navigate to the articles on their original websites. In order to lead the social media users to their journalism websites, the news media attempts to catch readers' eyes by using attention-grabbing clickbait, headlines, pictures, and descriptions. These things are made for the purpose of getting people's attention and not for the purpose of

describing the accurate facts. Lanier says “when Facebook emphasized “news” in its feed, the entire world of journalism had to reformulate itself to BUMMER standards”(33). News outlets “are forced to become components of the BUMMER machine”(66). Although the cakes at the buffet have pink-colored frost and look tasty, the look does not exactly display how good they actually taste. Therefore, as a person who looks for the most accurate details, I would avoid getting information from social media.

I will keep using social media that I currently use. However, I will change the way of how I will use them. I will not follow any news outlets there. To think straight about the news and this world, it is necessary for me to actively try to consume good quality of information from a wide range of views outside social media. As Lanier mentions in the book, “ In order for the news to regain context, people will have to discover news through non-BUMMER systems”(66). I will look for my social connection on social media, and if there comes up any other uses of social media, I would think before using in that ways right away.

Works Cited

Lanier, Jaron. Ten Arguments for Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now. *Henry Holt and Company*, 2018.