# Annotated Bibliography for Technology and Social Isolation

# Anthony Meunier

DeVry University

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Technology is a part of almost everything a majority of us do on a daily basis. Its widespread integration has really become more of an intrusion that is prying us away from reality. Technology has made its users more socially isolated due to their dependence on it and has cultivated a loss of social interaction skills that negatively impacts the health of the persons and the society as whole. People have become preoccupied and distracted by their preference for communication via technologies, which has caused a change for the worse in the way users choose to form relationships and conduct their daily lives.

Cenameri, M. (2013). Internet, Child and Adolescence Social Development. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, *4*(2), 571-578. doi:10.5901/mjss.2013.v4n2p571

Cenameri’s article is focused on technologies, particularly the Internet, being very powerful and interactive tools that have become a huge part in shaping the way adolescents learn to perceive the world around them. It is stressed that we must also include technologies in the overall spectrum of how we assess a child’s developmental tendencies, because technologies and interactions that occur through them are important factors in shaping and influencing the “microsystem” (emotional, social, home, communication, etc.) that is used to help determine their personal development. The technologies that surround adolescents are inescapable and this is why it is becoming an integral part in their growth as individuals and members of a society. There are risks such as addiction, changes in mood, and suffering performance associated with this overabundance, and when an adolescent cannot determine on their own how to limit and control their use of technologies, then it is the job of the parent to step in and help regulate use in order to help their child use these technologies more efficiently.

My assessment: This article does not necessarily aim to take a stance on whether technologies are in fact helpful or hurtful to one’s development and contribution to society. It simply states that technologies are a part of life, especially in the development of adolescents nowadays. It alludes to the potential harmful impacts of excessive technology use and reliance, but it also claims that this behavior is preventable if monitored correctly. If parents are aware and active in the process, they can help their children more effectively use the technologies that are all around them for beneficial purposes more often than allowing the technologies to consume them. This article highlights the fact that Internet use is so prevalent all around the world. It can be used in order to tie in my argument that technology is all around us and can be distracting, habit-forming and destructive if we let it be. On the other hand, it can also show that technology is now an important part in development of communication skills and preferences. This provides the opportunity for interpretation of how it can impact a society as a whole. Being that the article analyzes usage patterns mainly from Albania, this also helps to show that this issue is world-wide and is not merely confined to one country or one group of people.

Cutchen, M. T. (2009). Parenting: Taking the Easy Way Out. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, *66*(1), 10-11.

In this letter to the editor, the author addresses the article which he is responding to and acknowledges the concept that technology can unite us. However, Cutchen feels that technology has instead got to the point that it requires us to be completely immersed in and consumed by its use. In the past, technologies were only secondary and still allowed for you to have some capacity for social interactions. Now, technology, especially in the form of videogames, requires you to be completely preoccupied and isolated from all that is around you. What’s worse is the fact that people knowingly choose to partake in the use of these technologies that distracts them from other potential social opportunities. The author recalls a personal experience in which he witnessed a father shrug off his son’s attempts to have an actual conversation with him, and instead of being an active participant in that conversation the father chose to give his son an iPod to preoccupy him. This is troubling because it is a sign of the times in which good, old-fashioned family interactions are becoming forgotten.

My assessment: Cutchen provides a short and simple retort to the notion that technologies can be uniting. He feels that they are in fact the opposite, and addresses this largely with his personal experiences as a child in which he did not actively have or use technologies, and instead focused on family-orientated social activities. The way he perceives technologies now are as an easy way out from having to deal with the effort that goes into interacting with other people. This article will be used as another means to show the distracting nature of technologies and how they require you to be too invested in them, thus distracting you from other opportunities for social interaction. This lack of opportunities leads to a deteriorating development of social skills in the person, and again this contributes to the overall capabilities of a society.

Gordon, M. (1990, July). High-Tech Loneliness: How Our Inventions Keep Us Apart. *Futurist*. p. 60.

In this July 1990 article of *The Futurist* magazine, the author explores how potential new technologies could impact and hinder social interactions of people who choose to use them, and how this changes a society. These new opportunities presented by technologies develop “cocooning” among families in which they choose to stay close to home and interact very little with anything outside. Gordon indicates that technology is meant to bring us more of the world, more easily. But rather it is causing us to lessen our social interactions. Our time should be distributed evenly between interacting with others and enjoying new technologies, rather than these technologies completely replacing our need as a society to have meaningful social experiences.

My assessment: This article does not directly mention most of the types ICT I am concerned with for my paper. But it is a remarkable indication of how any technologies in general can contribute to a lessening of social interactions. It was ahead of its time, being that it is from 1990 and came before the advent of *common* personal computers or the Internet. The author mentions that technology is paradoxical in a sense because it is supposed to lead to more opportunities for us to explore and connect to the world, but instead people choose to “cocoon” in regards to use of their technologies, and this is a concept that applies directly to the issue I have with technologies. The way that people choose to use them directly causes an isolating aspect, and as immersion in technology grows, which it undoubtedly has since this issue was published, so deteriorates development of social skills and platforms for social interactions.

Massimini, M. & Peterson, M. (2009). Information and Communication Technology: Affects on U.S. College Students. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 3*(1), 1-12.

The authors of this article suggest that U.S. college students prefer communication via information and communication technologies that are largely impersonal. The use of these ICTs among students often alters and gives them a false sense of the stresses they encounter in their college lives and can also attribute to even more use of ICT as an outlet in order to try and alleviate stress, which in turn creates a vicious and repetitive cycle. Aside from an altered sense of stress levels, this cycle hinders and deters their social skills and attitudes. It is also believed that the use of information and communication technologies and the stresses they can create can also contribute to loss of sleep and lateness to class, which of course affects the students’ chances at success in an educational capacity.

My assessment: Massimini and Peterson are both scholars and teachers in the field of Health Promotion. The authors are forthcoming of the potential benefits that technologies can offer, but aim to educate and make people aware of the potential perils they are creating for themselves by relying on and preferring methods of communication via these technologies. They also realize the limitations of their research due to the ever-changing and quickly updating nature of modern technologies and peoples' rapidly developing habits in regards to use of technologies. Their study of a couple hundred U.S. college students is a small sample size, but they have presented a good platform for health promotion and awareness of this habit-forming use of technologies while it is still fairly early on. I can incorporate this study and its findings into my own paper in order to help support the argument that technology has negative, habit-forming effects on its users. Since it also addresses some of the potential benefits of technology, this can help make my own presentation not so entirely one-sided, which can help gain some objective respect from my audience.

Vroon, D. (2009). The Distracted Generation Victims of Technology. *American Record Guide*, *72*(3), 53-54.

This article suggests that technologies are used in the manner that we make of them. It is human nature that is causing us to become so obsessed and consumed by technology. Technology is so vastly intrusive and is thrown in your face everywhere you go that it has become distracting from real, everyday life. Technologies are a general waste of time and also limit the opportunities for conversation and create isolation in its users. Instead of being helpful tools, technologies are instead cancerous to a user and thus a society and anyone that wishes to do well for themselves and the world will make an effort to stay away from technologies.

My assessment: The article indicates that technologies are deeply unsettling to the makeup of a functional society. The author discourages anyone from using technologies, period, because he feels that due to human nature we can never simply use them for strictly beneficial purposes. Instead we let them consume us and alter the way we interact with others. Although the author does not make it apparent anywhere that he is a scholar on the matter, he does provide very sound, logical points that help to add some aid to the notion that technologies are consuming to an individual, and the societies they live in. This can be incorporated into my paper because it helps provide a basis and theme that relates to my own personal ideas about technologies being distracting and isolating.