Digitally Captive Society

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Digital devices impact our society’s interpersonal communication in a negative way. Our face-to-face communication is on decline because we choose to communicate through digital communication rather than interpersonal communication.

The purpose of this research paper is to identify the negative impacts that digital devices have on society’s interpersonal communication skills.

I chose this topic because I see people on their phones at restaurants and in coffee shops. They are glued to their screens, instead of being presents in the conversation. I wanted to find out what research had to say about digital devices and communication.

I have identified and researched three major points that have negative effects on interpersonal communication. The decline of face-to-face communication amongst friends and family. How the lack of face-to-face communication affects the work place. Lastly, how communication through digital devices affects the younger generation, the future of our society.

# Face-to-face communication amongst friends and family is degrading due to digital devices.

Iris Adler, the executive director for programming, podcasts and special projects, wrote an article in which she points to research from JSPR that has shown the presence of a cellphone in face to face communication really effects the way a person’s relationships develops with whoever they are communicating with. It can hinder the development of trust and reduced the empathy we feel for one another. Its not just young adults that use their cellphones during family time, it’s parents too. Children have pointed out that their parents will miss out on important times during sporting events, because they were on the phones. Texting or using social medial to communicate instead of face to face conversations also has its negative impact. In additions, she interviewed Boston University student Ciera Wade who would rather text than have face to face conversation. Wade says that a text message will mask your true feelings. If she is feeling sad, no one will know because they can’t see her or hear her on a text message. This is also creating an issue for her socially because she gets nervous when she must have a face to face conversation (Adler, 2013). She is like many young people who would rather text then engage in a in person conversation. Digital communication takes the humanity out of communicating. Emotional exchange such a laughter, or being sad when telling someone bad news, or apologizing will not translate in a text message or email the same way it does when you are face to face. There is a bond that is formed through face-to-face communication that gets lost in the digital space.

# Communication in the work place is degrading due to digital devices just as it is between family and friends.

Problems with face to face communication at work can negatively affect the ability of future and currents employees to meet each other’s needs. Research conducted on the reliance on digital communication point to how digital communication can hinder employee’s ability to communicate in a professional setting which will ultimately affect the organization. If supervisors and employees do not engage in effective communication, then performance will suffer, and conflicts can arise. (Kick, Contacos-Sawyer, & Thomas, 2015, p. 217). Currently, many employers are noticing that newer generations of employees are using email and texting instead of calling or communicating face to face. This hinders the ability for employees and managers to create a bond and a trust that is developed through face to face communication. Additionally, this research has shown that important skills that are gained through years of previous generations on the job training and experience are not being shared and transferred to new employees. This is because this tacit knowledge and skills are best transferred through face-to-face communication (Kick, Contacos-Sawyer, & Thomas, 2015, p. 218). Employee’s dependence on communication through digital social networks, has limited their ability to gain the knowledge and skills gained through personal development. This has become apparent to companies that have to consistently retrain employees on interpersonal and communication skills that were previously learned through day to day interactions. Interpersonal communication is required in almost every position of employment.

# Our future generations are choosing to communicate through digital devices instead of interpersonal communication.

Replacing interpersonal communication with texting can keep teens from learning how to read facial expressions, body language or nuances in speech and develop empathy. Studies by the Pew Research center indicate that the “typical American teen is sending and receiving a greater number of texts… Overall, 75% of all teens text” (Lenhart, 2012). With more teens relying on texting and not communicating face to face, there is a stunt in emotional growth. A skill learned by observing behavior in other people. Self-confidence also might be underdeveloped due to constant texting and use of social media. Teens use cell phones anywhere from 4-8 hours per day. This means when they are not in class or in extra curricular activities they are on their phones. (Lenhart, 2012) The use of digital devices has limited our youth’s ability to develop interpersonal communication skills. Which will limit their future interactions with the world as they age and enter the workforce and society in general.

# Conclusion

After conducting research Digital devices impact our societies interpersonal communication in a negative way. Our face-to-face communication is on a decline due to choosing digital communication instead of interpersonal communication.

Interpersonal communication is on decline due to the constant use of digital devices. Face-to-face communication between family, friends and coworkers is declining, resulting in a loss of quality in communication. Interpersonal communication is in jeopardy, teenagers prefer to use digital devices for communication, businesses and families are relying on social media to communicate. All these factors combined demonstrate that digital devices are impacting interpersonal communication in a negative way.

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