Relationships Through the Screen

Sahara A. Smith

Ivy Tech Community College

INFM 109: Informatics Fundamentals

Mr. Todd Wideman

July 21, 2024

Relationships Through the Screen

When it comes to technology, most will agree that it has drastically changed the world, even the last 10 years. For example, the creation of self-driving electric cars, chat GPT, and the many methods of communication. While technology has its advantages, it comes with disadvantages as well. Many people could say that while technology has changed the world in different ways, it is not always for the better. Although global communication encourages worldwide relationships, the dependency of a phone, or some sort of electronic device, has risen over the years. Social media addiction, lack of social/communication skills, and the inability to keep relationships are all byproducts of phone addiction. To combat the problem of constantly being on a phone people, people should learn how to get rid of them, and that is a hard task.. With the increased connectivity, it may be harder to lower, if not eliminate, the use of a cellphone, but the effects of doing so are worthwhile because it will improve relationships.

**Connectivity Through the Internet**

It is evident that technology has improved the way that the world operates. Some examples are the healthcare, education, and information systems. One way this works is when patients call for an ambulance so it will quickly pick them up. Then the paramedic will be able to contact the hospital to get the doctors ready for the patient. Using this example proves that the use of technology improves all areas of life. In addition to this, internet connectivity is important because it makes it easier for people to communicate, no matter where they are. A blog by Stanford University (Stanford, *The internet: Bringing people together virtually or pushing them away physically,* n.d.) says, “The internet has the unique ability to connect any user with any other user, according to any quality possible – relationships, beliefs, viewpoints, goals, problems, identity, or interests.” Being able to communicate has improved relationships around the world. People can text, call, or email their friends in family with one click of a button. This form of communication eliminated the use of hand-written letters that take a long time to be delivered. Also, being able to reach a family member or friend is very important, especially when there is an emergency.

## Internet and Relationships

Although there are many plus sides to the creation of technology, the way that people use the internet not only affect themselves, but the people around them. For instance, constantly using a phone, or any type of electronic, can badly affect relationships. Ilana Simmons, a student at the University of Miami (University of Miami News and Events, *The internet’s connectivity brings positives and negatives,* 2022) states, “We have lost the ability to form meaningful connections with people because using the internet is not like being face-to-face. You must develop different skills, so I feel like the strength of personal relationships has been lost.” This tells the reader that the act of texting or calling does not hold the same power that talking in-person does. A person’s tone and facial/body expressions are seen but over the phone, people are not able to recognize tone, or the true intentions of others. For example, if something is typed and the person receiving the text reads it in a sarcastic or mean tone it can create conflict between the two. Hannah Hippe explains how miscommunication can occur over the phone, she says, “For example, when we rely on texting or messaging to communicating with our partners, it can be easy to misinterpret tone or intent. This can lead to miscommunications and misunderstandings that can strain the relationship.” (“How Phones Impact Relationships - Nystrom & Associates”) Talking in person creates a deep connection between the people that are interacting. Rather than texting and risking a misinterpreted text that causes arguments, anxiety, and unnecessary overthinking, opt for an in-person (or Facetime) conversation. This could be better for all types of relationships and decrease confusion Being able to communicate with others and connect with them on a deeper level can improve our mental health. It is hard to achieve this type of relationship when it is through the screen.

Limiting Phone Use

In this day in age, a phone is a necessity. Managing phone use can be a hard task, but it is something that everyone needs to try. According to Chocolate Ibarra (n.d.), one could cut screentime by setting limits, using apps that specialize in time management, and setting goals. Creating limits through the phone’s settings, causes the phone to automatically shut off after meeting the set time limit. It will not allow you to continue using the limited app unless the set password is put in. When deciding to set limits it forces the user to take a mental break so that they have time to do other activities like reading, hanging out with friends/family, or doing a hobby. Although quitting anything, even a cellphone, is a hard task, it is proven to be good for a person’s mental health. Hamish Johnson (Medium, *How I quit my smartphone addiction and reclaimed 7 years of my life,* 2022) quit his cellphone and explained how it improved his mental health, and his relationships with others. Constantly using an electronic distracts a person from the things around them. It is reported that the average American will use up twelve years of their life on their phone (News Release, *Black Mirror or Black Hole? American Phone Screen Time Statistics*, 2024). Imagine using a phone for twelve years straight with no breaks! This is a shocking statistic, and it is for the average of four hours per day. To enjoy the people around us and not waste a life away, it is important to practice mindfulness.

Limiting the use of a cellphone important for mental health. It is also good so that a person does not have a strong dependency on technology. The global technology outage of 2024 is an example of this. In July 2024, there was an IT outage that affected airlines and businesses. These businesses had to shut down for many hours because they were dependent on the computers, and without them they were unable to operate properly. Although this example pertains to businesses, this could be a great lesson to those who rely on their phones for homework, relationships, and everything else in their life. If one day the internet shuts down some people will not know how to do simple things without the help of a device. It is important for people to lower the dependency now, just in case.

**Conclusion**

Technology is a great resource that is used every day. With the benefits of having a cellphone for communications and emergencies, it is important to not let that run our lives. Setting limits, creating goals, and finding a hobby (outside of technology) can improve the way that we interact with others and ourselves. It is good practice to not rely on our electronic devices for our entire lives. Although the increased connectivity is important, it is good to know our personal limits and to be able to easily lower usage of a smartphone.

To answer the question of whether I can stop using a cellphone, my answer is yes. My parents have decided to add limits on my phone to be sure that I do not spend many hours on the phone. During the week I have a limit of two hours, and on the weekends three. This has taught me to not be dependent on electronics. For instance, I use a physical planner and alarm clock. Overall, I can quit my smartphone because over the years I have learned how to responsibly use it.

References

5 effective tips to reduce screen time and find balance | Ibarra chocolate. (n.d.). https://chocolateibarra.com/eng/5-effective-tips-to-reduce-screen-time-and-find-balance/

Gutierrez, B. (n.d.). *The internet’s connectivity brings positives and negatives*. University of Miami News and Events. https://news.miami.edu/stories/2022/01/the-internets-connectivity-brings-positives-and-negatives.html#:~:text=Every%20facet%20of%20people’s%20lives,with%20anyone%20near%20or%20far

Hippe, H. (2023, March 20). *How phones impact relationships*. Nystrom & Associates. https://www.nystromcounseling.com/relationships/how-phones-impact-relationships/

The internet: Bringing people together virtually or pushing them away physically. (n.d.). https://cs.stanford.edu/people/eroberts/cs201/projects/personal-lives/debate.html

Johnson, H. (2022, March 22). *How I quit my smartphone addiction and reclaimed 7 years of my life*. Medium. https://betterhumans.pub/how-i-quit-my-smartphone-addiction-and-reclaimed-10-years-of-my-life-57f4bfb1bbab

Release, N. (n.d.). *Black Mirror or Black Hole? American phone screen time statistics*. OKW News. https://okwnews.com/news/lifestyle/health-wellness/black-mirror-or-black-hole-american-phone-screen-time-statistics#:~:text=The%20average%20American%20spends%204,and%2070%20days%20every%20year.&text=the%20average%20American%20will%20spend,phone%20screens%20over%20their%20lifespan.

Abstract

With the creation of the smartphone in 1992, the world jumped into a new era, known as the digital age. The creation of this and the internet has improved many aspects of society. But with the different versions of cellphones, the many apps, and updates, this has led to many people using some sort of cellphone daily. The constant use of cellphones can badly affect relationships and a person’s mental and physical health. Relationships could be affected because of shallow comments on social media, jealously, lack of face-to-face contact, and miscommunication. This all leads to a lower self-esteem and a lonely feeling for those who are constantly scrolling online. In order to combat this, people must actively use their phone as a tool, and not a way to entertain themselves every second of the day. The overall purpose of a cellphone was created for good communication, but any other misuse of it needs to be stopped.