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Rhetoric and Composition (LR Draft)

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INTRO:

In this day and age it seems as though vast populations of people live in a very small space included in that space is their id card in the top corner of a screen with a description of themselves. At first this may sound confusing, but the space in which people live is not the space of their home or of this vast earth, it is in the fairly new smaller world of social media. It is a very small world in fact because thousands of friends on Facebook have hundred and hundred of “mutual” friends. This should imply that since one has such a vast collection of “friends” he or she must be very social, yet one may only regularly talk to a handful of those “friends”. From this my investigation appeals to my major, which is psychology, understanding the human element and how this topic is relevant and changing our society.

The purpose of this research and what I will be investigating which will answer is the societal change in response to the wealth of information that is readily available and the deterioration of humans ability to communicate with out the medium of a keyboard. As a student studying psychology this topic really piques my interest for the following reasons: Human behavior, reasoning, and thought processes interests me, and the fact that I feel connected to the topic. Personally I communicate for efficiently and effectively having in person conversations, because of this I feel like I am on this outside looking in. I have noticed around campus herds of students walk along the sidewalks or crosswalks with out a single look up from the cellphone screen.

I see a problem, I see this as not just physically dangerous but also intellectually dangerous. For example one does not have to get up and exchange words with anyone, ever… A few taps on a keyboard and thus a text is sent, or a full history of the world wars is in the palm of one’s hand, and food can be ordered, delivered and paid for with out so much as text message. The pursuit of convenience has brought about vast and deep isolation in a civilized world of more than seven billion people.

The questions that will continue this analysis are as follows:

1. What is human interaction
2. What is an information society
3. Technology dependence
4. Deterioration of communication skills

Analysis:

The work of Delvin and Rosenburg in a university research paper of communication and human interaction breaks down and analyzes and strips down the idea of human interaction. Delvin and Rosenburg use the following analogy to better illustrate the point being made. They instruct to imagine interaction in two variations. One as a tennis match, two as a wrestling match or fight. When the commentator is providing commentary there is a simple difference between the two. In a tennis match the commentary is less about what the player is doing physically and more of what the ball is doing. As for the fight or wrestling match the entire commentary is about the force one is exerting on the other. Tennis is the exchanging of effects of the ball, and fighting is the exchange of forces exerted on each other. Just as well is a conversation, through a keyboard one is only exchanging words back and forth, but when one is having a conversation in person they are getting much more physical. Including body language. In personal conversation there is an exchange of “utterances”[[1]](#footnote-1) there is a personally physical element that cannot be substituted. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that as in person interactions decrease so do communication skills. Communication like any another skill is perishable and will deteriorate if not used and practiced.

This first point made is substantiated by the idea and definition of an information society. Post-industrial society in which [information technology (IT)](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/information-technology-IT.html) is [transforming](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/transformer.html) every aspect of cultural, political, and social life and which is based on the [production](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/production.html) and [distribution](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/distribution.html) of [information](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/information.html). It is characterized by the [pervasive](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/pervasive.html) [influence](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/influence.html) of IT on home, [work](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/work.html), and recreational aspects of the [individuals](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/individual.html) [daily](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/daily.html) [routine](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/routine.html), [stratification](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/stratification.html) into new classes those who are information-rich and those who are information-poor, loosening of the [nation](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/nation.html) [state's](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/state.html) hold on the lives of individuals and the rise of highly sophisticated criminals who can steal [identities](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/identity.html) and vast [sums](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/sum.html) of [money](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/money.html) through information related [cyber](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/cyber.html) [crime](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/crime.html).”[[2]](#footnote-2)

This poses a new line of inquiry, how is it that that the world we live in is so advanced and masses of information are available yet the population is becoming simpler. One could say this is an anomaly where society is advancing yet the population is becoming increasingly more simple and ignorant. For being an information society the “society” is becoming less informed.

1. K. D., & D. R. (n.d.). Information in the Study of Human Interaction. *Information in the Study of Human Interaction*. Retrieved April 3, 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. What is information society? Definition and meaning. (n.d.). Retrieved April 06, 2016, from http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/information-society.html [↑](#footnote-ref-2)