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Abstract

Texting, what is now consider a main form of communication was once a brand new ground breaking technology, and social media broke barriers by connecting millions and millions of people. These are tremendous leaps but are fairly new considering the invention of the telephone was more than a century ago. Communication has been changing ever since the beginning of mankind these new technologies are merely a new step in human evolution. It is only recently that communication technology has spread to all corners of the world. Events happening in China can broadcast in America within minutes. Social media and telecommunications allow for information to be spread across the globe at the blink of an eye. The Purpose of this review is to define human interaction, and a focus on the human change. While these advances make life convenient, the research shows that technology has become a huge distraction.

**Introduction**

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”.

The purpose of this research is to delve into 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. Clearly there is a problem, not just physically dangerous but also intellectually dangerous. The problem being convenience. The questions that will be answered are as follows:

1. What is human interaction?
2. What is an information society?
3. How is society-becoming technology dependent?
4. How have communication skills deteriorated?

**Analysis: Question 1: What is human interaction?**

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. “Tennis is the exchanging of effect, suppose we want to study a wrestling match between two people. Then we would most naturally analyze the interaction in terms of the forces each exerts on the other. In contrast, if we want to examine a game of tennis between the two individuals, it is more appropriate (and surely more productive) to look at the way the ball is batted from one to the 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. “In a typical human linguistic interaction (such as a conversation), for instance, there is something physical passed from one participant to another at each stage, namely the individual utterances (tokens); but these are not the information, rather they (can be said to) carry the information.”

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.

**Question 2: What is an information society?**

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)

“Technological changes have made a lot of face-to-face interaction unnecessary. I’m talking about voice mail and e-mail mainly—modes of communication that are one-way and electronic. “Face-to-face interaction has also fallen victim to “virtuality”—many people work at home or are otherwise off-site.”

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. “And indeed, no one planned on reducing face-to-face meetings; this is simply happening naturally, with the inevitability of water flowing downhill. We have the technology, so we are using it.” One could say this is an anomaly where society is advancing yet the population is becoming increasingly more simple and ignorant. “That’s because electronic communications remove many of the cues that typically mitigate worry. Those cues—body language, tone of voice, and facial expression—are especially important among sophisticated people who are prone to using subtle language, irony, and wit.”

**Question 3: How is society-becoming technology dependent?**

Technology has been used to make life easier and in fact it has.

“No one planned on reducing face-to-face meetings; this is simply happening naturally, with the inevitability of water flowing downhill. We have the technology, so we are using it.” This quote by Edward Hallowell is actually a very observable occurrence. Without thinking about it people constantly cut out interaction by instead send an email or text. This is not completely their fault, but rather the fault of technology. The technology was invented for a purpose just because it is widely used doesn’t necessarily mean it is the fault of the user for using what is available.

Aside from this there is another degree of usage, which is addiction. As far back as two decades ago this addiction was already being studied and researched. “Internet addiction was first researched in 1996 and findings were presented at the American Psychological Association”

There were hundreds of cases early on and as this addiction spread more and more countries made efforts to study the predicament. “The study reviewed over 600 cases of heavy internet users who exhibited clinical signs of addiction…” Earlier this topic or subject included being referred to as an epidemic. Rightfully so because of its prevalence many nations have been studying the matter. “This examined the impact of computer-mediated communication… Initial studies from the United States spread to countries such as Taiwan, Russia, China, and the United Kingdom.”

Diagnosing this addiction or dependency is not a simple task due to various factors but the main reason being that the issue is very new. ”Early studies attempted to define Internet addiction and examined behavior patterns that differentiate compulsive from normal Internet usage.” The reason for this differentiation is because heavy use doesn’t always mean addiction, what does constitute and addiction is compulsive usage and inability to function normally with out it. This addiction is much different than any other and because so little is known and the lines are very blurry. “ Unlike chemical dependency and substance abuse, the internet offers several direct benefits as a technological advancement in our society and not a device to be criticized as addictive. Individuals can conduct research, perform business transactions, access libraries, and communicate. Books have been written outlining the psychological as well as functional benefits of the Internet in our lives.”

**Question 4: How have communication skills deteriorated?**

“International experts feel that reliance on technology could be doing much more harm than the current generation of young people realizes.

These specialists contend that the instant communication through technology can encourage bad behaviors and even stunt young peoples’ abilities to interact with others when they enter the real world.”

Communication like any other skill is perishable with out use or practice it is inevitable that it will deteriorate. People use social media not daily but hourly, and yet have very few actual conversations. At the West London Mental Health Trust, psychiatrist Dr. Tyagi was quoted saying “students entering collage have developed a dangerous reliance on the internet and other recent advances in technology.”

**Conclusion**

Technology can be an insidious factor of life causing dependency detracting from individual everyday normal functionality. The continued use of technology is absolutely the solvent of communication skills, which can be observed by the way the current generation has a hard time speaking. In the world there is constant communication whether it be in person or electronic communication is an integral part of life therefore an interruption of this can be a great danger to society. At the same time neither technology nor humans are to blame for this. Each bit of technology has a purpose humans are simply using what is available therefore it is up to the individual to decipher and to create a balance of technology usage and personal verbal communication skills.

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1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)