

Argumentative Essay Prompt and Readings

Prompt:

Write an essay arguing whether social media sites help or hurt our society.

Are social networking sites good for our society?

By: ProCon.org on 11.29.16

Supporters of social networking sites say that these online communities help increase communication with friends and family. They say that the sites offer access to educational materials and allow useful information to spread rapidly. Opponents of social networking sites argue that the sites prevent face-to-face communication and negatively alter children's behavior. They say the sites help spread false or dangerous information, and can even expose users to harm.

Who Uses Social Media and How?

As the social media has become more popular, the user base has expanded. The first users were teenagers and young adults. Now, more people over the age of 50 are using social network sites, too. Two in 5 Americans admit that they have used social media at work. One in 5 admits having logged into social media while in the bathroom. Social media's largest source of revenue is advertising. The revenue from social media ad sales is expected to reach \$32.9 billion by the end of 2016. It could reach about \$41 billion by 2017.

Social Media and Politics

Social networking sites play a large role in shaping the political landscape. In the 2016 presidential race, candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump consistently campaigned via social network sites. The first presidential election to be significantly affected by social media was the 2008 presidential race between Barack Obama and John McCain. More than a quarter of U.S. voters younger than 30 reported that they obtained information about the election from social media.

Ongoing Social Media Feud Between Teens Ended in Fatal Stabbing

By Madalyn Mendoza - mySanAntonio Updated: 1:21 PM PST Mar 2, 2019

A 16-year-old girl was arrested Friday after she stabbed two teenagers, one fatally, who attacked her in the driveway of her San Antonio home, police said.

Officials identified the 18-year-old killed as Kaitlin Leonor Castilleja. She graduated from high school last year, according to a school district spokeswoman. Authorities have not identified the suspect because she's a minor. She has been booked into a juvenile detention facility. Castilleja's



aunt, Marie Fernandez, said the two girls had been arguing on social media long before their confrontation Friday morning.

"She isn't able to give you her side of the story, but it's been ongoing bullying on both sides," she said. "It's social media. There's so many factors that have contributed to this, and at the end of the day, whether it was wrong, in all aspects my niece had no intentions of hurting anyone."

According to a preliminary police report, Castilleja and Vivian Foster, 18, went to the suspect's house at about 1 a.m. Friday. During the fight, the suspect stabbed both of the girls, causing superficial cuts to Foster but mortal wounds to Castilleja, police said. The suspect then called police to "report she had been assaulted in her driveway when she arrived home from work" and that the two alleged victims had been messaging her on social media "stating they want to fight her," authorities said.

According to Live Oak police Lt. Matt Malone, the victims went to Northeast Methodist Hospital. They told officers they had been "stabbed after 'jumping' a girl at her house," according to a police report. Paramedics took Castilleja to San Antonio Military Medical Center, where she was pronounced dead at 2 a.m. Friday. Officers went to the suspect's home and found the crime scene in the driveway. They discovered the "murder weapon" at the scene, according to the preliminary report. The 16-year-old suspect was then arrested in connection with the stabbings and charged with homicide.

Six Ways Social Media Marketing Can Help Grow Your Business

Constant Contact Blog - By Azure Collier

If you're a business owner, chances are you've already considered using social media marketing to help get the word out about your business. In fact, many small business owners are using sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Instagram to help grow their businesses. And if you are still standing on the social sidelines, there's never been a better time to get started.

1. Social media helps get the word out

First and foremost — social media does, in fact, help get the word out about your business. But even more important than the exposure, it provides you with the opportunity to grow relationships with your target audience. Your fans, followers, and connections are people who know your organization, have likely done business with you in the past, and will be most likely to tell their friends about you.

2. Social media is popular — really, really, popular

You don't need to be a dedicated reader of tech blogs or an expert in online marketing to know that social media is really popular among consumers. According to the Pew Research Center, 69 percent of American adults use social networks, which means that social media will touch nearly every customer that walks through your door.

3. Social media is cost-effective

As more social networks add algorithms that filter what users see in their news feeds, your organic content may get lost in the shuffle. Take advantage of the low-cost advertising features offered by the social networks to promote your content and special offers.

4. Social media reaches all ages and demographics

Social media defies age barriers. While the majority of that percentage are aged 18-29, a substantial amount is attributed to other ages that use social media as well, including 34% of Americans 65 and older.

5. Social media encourages two-way communication

Social media gives you the power to learn more about your audience, their interests, and collect feedback. Ask your customers to share their thoughts, questions, and ideas to get to know them better. You can respond just as fast, without having to pick up the phone or worry the customer isn't seeing your response.

6. Social media users are active

One thing you have to know about social media users is that when they say they are on social media, they are really on social media. Social media users in the US check their accounts 17 times a day, according to an Informatel Mobile Intelligence report. While a customer may visit your store once a week, they could see your social media posts in their feed multiple times during the week.

Three Risks of Too Much Screen Time for Teens

The Greater Good Magazine By CHRISTINE CARTER | NOVEMBER 27, 2018

We understand that smartphone and social media overuse can be toxic for teens (and, frankly, for all of us). But do we understand why? When we know what it is about smartphones and social media that may be hurtful, we can better help our teens use their devices in healthy, nonharmful ways.

1. More screen time means more time alone

Teenagers make an interesting case study in loneliness. Although they seem fantastically connected socially—my teens are constantly communicating with literally hundreds of kids through text and social media and video chat—more teenagers now feel left out and lonely than ever before (or at least since we started measuring these things). A surprising 48 percent more girls and 27 percent more boys felt left out in 2015 compared to 2010.

Why are they so lonely, even though they're super-connected online? One reason may be that they have the ability to see what everyone else is doing at any given moment—so they know when they are being left out of something. When one of my kids was in eighth grade, she was invited to a lot of bat mitzvahs and 13th birthday parties—it seemed like there was one every weekend. But what our whole family remembers are not the parties she went to, but the very few she did not. Every middle school party played itself out on Instagram and Snapchat. All the kids in attendance documented who was hanging out with whom and posted it for public consumption on social media. My daughter couldn't help but sit back and watch, compulsively checking her phone to see what she was missing.

Illustrating the blazingly obvious, research documents that the more time kids spend online and on their devices, the less time they tend to spend interacting with their peers (or adults, for that matter) in face-to-face encounters. Screen time is a zero-sum game: Social media, video games, online browsing, and other new media take the place of playing sports, going to parties, or just hanging out with their friends. So today's teenagers feel lonely because they actually are alone more. "The number of teens who get together with their friends every day has been cut in half in just 15 years, with especially steep declines recently," writes research

psychologist and demographer Jean Twenge. Over the course of a week, they see their friends an hour less a day than their parents' generation did, or than the early millennials did.

2. Social media and materialism go hand in hand

Although we talk about the 1980s and 1990s as a time of extreme materialism, entering college students today are more likely than ever before to say it's important to them to be wealthy. They are also less likely to value intrinsic goals, like finding meaning.

New media and new technologies may be largely to blame here, too. The data are uncompromising: "Teens who spend more time on social media are more likely to value individualistic attitudes and less likely to value community involvement," writes Twenge. Surprisingly, they are less likely to think about or be engaged in social issues, even though social media can be a great way to spread ideas and information related to the issues teens care about. And heavy users of social media are far more likely to want material things like new cars and vacation homes (and to believe these things are important in life).

This is not surprising. Social media (and media in general) lets kids peer into the lives of the rich and famous. Celebrity YouTubers display in exquisite detail what to covet; these people are teaching our kids values more explicitly than many parents, schools, and churches are. And that's saying nothing of the celebrities who are being paid by advertisers, or actual advertisers kids are exposed to through media, who are, of course, actively and successfully cultivating materialism in them.

3. Social media invites insecurity and comparison

Every peek at social media allows teenagers, unconsciously, to compare themselves to others, and they rarely come out ahead. They open Snapchat and learn from the curated "stories" that the people who count are moneyed and beautiful celebrities. A one-minute scroll through Instagram—filled with photoshopped selfies taken painstakingly from an angle that makes someone look her thinnest—can easily make even a secure and self-confident teen feel her normal body is disgusting and aberrant. Uber-wealthy teens and young celebrities, who on some level seem like peers, post "wealthies" (selfies that display their wealth) while flying around the world in their family's private jets.

If teens were seeing people like them, or worse off than them, then they wouldn't feel so insecure. But they are seeing people who are thinner, richer, more popular, more successful, more privileged. Even wealthy and middle-class kids can frequently feel, on some level, humiliated. And beyond the bubble of social media, there actually is cause for their worry.

And feeling low in social status, or feeling that you don't have the respect of others, is a core cause of depression. Here's something surprising: Worse than having a low social status is feeling like your status is insecure or threatened, like you might be losing social status. Just a momentary shift in how we perceive our own social status—prompted by even a quick glance at Instagram or a friend's Snapchat story—can dramatically change how we function and feel.

The antidote: Real-life social connection

What is the opposite of loneliness, materialism, and insecurity: It's having a large breadth and depth of real-life social connections. Fortunately, social connection is something that we can easily foster in families, and this time of year is ripe with opportunities to do so. The toxicity of social media and smartphone overuse can be scary, but we needn't worry. We just need to remember what really matters, and teach that to our teens.