The effects of Social Media on American Culture

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Technology has progressed very rapidly during the 20th century. Social Media is becoming more advanced and sophisticated with its new inventions every day. In the past, the only source of communication were letters. Though getting one’s message across took a whole lot of time, but nevertheless, the wait was worth it. It made life a little complicated, but simpler at the same time.

The gradual invention of telephone, computers, mobile phones, laptops, and smartphones in past couple of decades have made communication possible by just clicking a button. The growth of social media has spread vastly during the past few years. There is a large number of social networking sites on Internet, which have made this world a global village. Social media has its advantages and disadvantages. However, the negative impact of social media on the American culture is quite larger than its positive impact. Mobile technology has a major role in shaping the influence of social media on our culture. Mobile phones have a real impact on the daily lives of people. They obtain and share information, communicate, and socialize anytime and anywhere through the device present in their hands. (“How Do Americans Perceive the Role of Social Media & Technology in Their Lives?,” 2018)

About a quarter of the world’s population uses smartphones now days. All activities of people from young kids to adults are associated to the social media. Social media is highly overwhelming the lives of Americans. People are very much addicted to their social lives that is making their lives stressful and problematic. They are becoming more reliant on social media regardless of the negative affects it is producing on their lives. The activism is gradually being replaced by ‘slacktivism.’ The social media activism emphasizes on increasing awareness about the issues related to society, and the ways to solve those issues. Nevertheless, slacktivism encourages people to share their personal lives on social media and their dependence on this gift of technology. Social media also affects the mental and psychological health of people. Stress, anxiety, loss of sleep, depression, and dissatisfaction are all caused due to the excessive use of social media.

Social media has become a dominant way of communication in the lives of people as it has removed all the barriers in the way of communication. Before social media, the communication of people was extremely limited but there has been a drastic change in the ways people communicate to each other. People prefer artificial bonds now days as they are used to making friends on social media to whom they hardly interact face to face. In the past, people used to be introduced to new people on parties or other social events, but now individuals are being introduced in Facebook or WhatsApp groups. Online interactions have become so common that people develop relationships using social media (“What Is the Major Impact of Social Media?,” 2019). The physical interactions between people has been lost and replaced by social interactions, which are non-verbal. The teenagers get involved into illicit activities by making friends with strangers on social platforms and sharing their personal data such as pictures or videos. This data, if gets in the wrong hands, ruins their privacy and becomes a source of stress and anxiety for them.

Filter bubbles are the algorithm results that create a unique information about each of us according to our online activities. Many sites ask for the personalization of our friend list, profile, age, gender, browsing history, location or any other data. They use the information to dictate the content that we search or encounter online. These filter bubbles have greatly changed the ways developers develop social media platforms. People are no longer concerned about their privacy, as they have no issue talking to strangers of sharing their data with an unknown site. People have formed groups based on their interests, employment, location, and affiliations where they follow their own rules, conventions, and even vocabulary. They lose interest in people that are not according to their interests or community. According to a research, around forty-seven percent of the Americans have unfriended, unfollowed, and even blocked others due to differences in their views about society and politics. They invest a lot of time and energy to their status and other social media activities. The members of a family are sitting around the same table but all are busy on their phones having a lot of time for social media but no time for the people surrounding them.

A personal brand is a combination of skills that make a person what he is. The founder of Amazon, Jeff Bezos quotes, “Your brand is what people say about you when you’re not in the room.” Personal branding is the way of presenting ourselves to others. Effective personal branding leads a person to build trust and interact with customers and clients. It builds important connections to boost development and growth. Social media has a great influence on the personal branding as it provides opportunities to the people to promote themselves. Even if a person has less followers on any social account, his average is increasing as the communication channels are becoming more wide and open.

The digital world is transformed into a great marketplace due to social media impact. People are not only displaying their personal brands on social media but also developing them. With the help of interest focused sites or groups, they can locate suitable collaborators and employees, which helps them develop their business and engage with others. From blogging to tweeting to uploading status to posting pictures and videos, social media has opened new ways of opportunities for both customers and clients. How do we promote our business and with whom we do our business are the valuable aspects of branding through social media (Kerpen, 2016). The impact of social media on business and branding is no more an exception and wonder.

Culture and societies go through a lot of changes in every era; new technologies are invented, new behaviors are adopted, and new attitudes are developed. Social media is influencing our lives and will continue affecting our society and lives. It has many advantages as well as disadvantages. With its advancement, it has made many things easier for the human beings such as getting latest news, entertainment, sharing data, communication, etc. However, the negative impacts of social media can only affect human if they use it excessively. Using social media in an appropriate and positive way and limiting the time spent online can prove to be fruitful.

While technology is accompanied with its very own set of pros, there are cons, that can, in some manner, greatly outweigh the cons. While filter bubbles are incredibly useful for business in an effort to promote themselves, it presents data concerns for individuals which compromises their identity and puts their private data in hands of corporations, without most of them realizing it.

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