

IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON COMMUNICATION

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Abstract. The influence of technology on our social lives is substantial, as discussed in detail in this manuscript. Specifically, it will focus on how digital means have enhanced and complicated the way in which we interact, provide new methods of communication, change the nature of relationships, and present some of the challenges arising from digital communication. The purpose of this paper is to examine the overall impact of technology on the communications and functioning of social relationships. By reviewing recent research findings, we will demonstrate the extent to which technology has affected our social behaviour, both positively and negatively.

Introduction

Our world becomes more connected, we more rely on technology that help us to communicate with one another. Technology has changed how we communicate, interact and build our connections with one another. From sending messages back and forth around the globe in a matter of seconds, to posting narrative representations of ourselves on various digital platforms, our interactions with one another have been drastically impacted by technological advancements. This research paper will explore this significant alteration to our communicative behaviors by answering the question, "How has technology changed the way people communicate and maintain their relationships with each other?" We will investigate the multiple ways that technology has both enhanced and complicated our communication patterns, including the emergence of new ways to connect, evolve and develop relationships, and the challenges that accompany the digital environment we currently live in. Through our research of recent studies, we will provide a comprehensive view of the impact that technology has had on our social relationships.

Methods

Design A review of the literature and research on technology, communication, and maintaining relationships is the focus of this paper; therefore, a systematic review was conducted based on published research studies (academic journals) and existing literature on the relationship among technology, communication, and maintaining relationships. Literature and research studies that were included in this systematic review were found by searching a variety of academic websites using a range of key search terms such as "technologies and communications," "impact of digital communications," "social media and relationships," "keeping up with relationships by means of the internet" and "interpersonal communication technologies" and "social interaction in the digital age." Then, each category of literature/research was qualitatively evaluated by identifying larger themes, identifying major trends and changes in how we communicate, and identifying the perceived advantages and disadvantages associated with technology's role in maintaining relationships between people. Additionally, attention was paid to literature that examined how technology has improved or disrupted pursuing relationships through technology.

Results

Technology's Transformative Influence on Communication

Technology has undeniably ushered in a new era of communication, marked by several significant shifts:

1.) The evolution of our methods of communicating with others over the years has changed from primarily speaking face-to-face or via telephone to communicating via text or asynchronous channels (instant messaging, e-mail, and social media), which have become the predominant methods for communicating with others. These methods allow us to communicate without being there at the same time to experience or participate in it [1]. Although the ability to express our message through these venues is easier for many reasons, including being able to craft our message to better fit the receiver's needs, they limit the use of non-verbal cues in order to fully convey the message to the receiver.

2.) The advancement of digital communication tools/platforms has allowed us to remove the barriers that distance placed on our ability to connect with others. Digital tools enable us to develop relationships and communities with those who live a long way away from us, meaning that we can maintain those relationships/communities. Social networking also enables individuals with the same beliefs and values to build a connection with one another, regardless of where they are located geographically [2]. For many individuals from marginalised groups, these connections enable them to create support systems and find others similar to themselves, thus providing them with a sense of belonging through these supports/resources.

3.) The increased use of technology has made it easier for us to participate in what is referred to as "phatic communication," which, essentially, is communicating simply to establish social presence rather than delivering meaningful or significant information to each other. Examples of this are replying to a friend's Facebook post with just "like" and sending out a tweet to say, "having coffee," are both examples of this type of communication. Although these types of interactions via digital medium may occur frequently and for very short periods of time, they can allow individuals to maintain connections to one another, without the need to have lengthy, meaningful conversations with one another [3].

4. "Always-On" Culture : With the increased use of smartphones and constant availability of internet services, we have created an "Always-On" culture. This culture reflects being in a state of connection with others at all times, and it has eroded some of the lines that once separated public from private life, making communication with people almost continual [2].

Relationship Maintenance Impact

Technological changes have had significant impacts on how we maintain our relationships:

1. Distant Connections: Digital capabilities have been especially valuable for maintaining weak ties (e.g. former classmates, distant relatives, or co-workers). Because these connections would most likely fade over time without technology, the use of social media and messaging apps allows us to remain in touch with these people [2].

2. Romantic Relationships : Technology has drastically changed how we develop and maintain romantic relationships. Online dating sites have replaced the traditional method of meeting potential partners and are commonly used to find partners. For couples already in established romantic relationships, texting and other forms of digital communication are such a regular part of their lives that they now are used for coordinating schedules, sharing feelings, and planning [4].

Conclusion

The impact of technology on the way we communicate and relate to one another is huge – it's a double edged sword with fantastic opportunities and huge challenges. Technology has significantly increased our ability to communicate, enabling instant communication over tremendous distances and the ability to maintain a relationship that might have otherwise dissipated very easily over time. Through technology, the formation of new types of communities, new ways to provide support to marginalized persons, and fundamentally changing how romantic relationships are initiated and maintained have occurred. We have never before experienced such a high level of accessibility (ability to use), efficiency (speed of use), and global connectivity through communications than we do today. However, along with these opportunities come new and complicated issues that will need to be managed going forward. One major way technology has impacted us is through its reliance on text-based communication. The nature of the communication medium makes it more difficult for us to communicate the subtlety and nuances associated with face-to-face communications. A second major issue with texting and all of the other forms of digital communication is the "always on" culture that has developed; this creates blurred boundaries around interpersonal relationships and social pressures that are difficult to identify and understand. These two issues (texting vs. face to face communication and it being "always on") raise considerable questions about how many relationships we are developing vs. how well developed our relationships are, how digital distractions impact face-to-face communication, and what are the larger societal implications of the discourse that occurs through online communities. Those who want to effectively utilize technology and have successful interpersonal relationships will need to develop a balanced and thoughtful approach to their use, which will consist of a priority placed on genuine connections, engaging in critical thought concerning the use of technology, and thoughtfully integrating technology into day-to-day social interactions. Only by studying, understanding and managing the intricacies of developing relationships that are both supported by technology and remain very human can we hope to be successful in building those types of relationships.

References

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