

THE INTERNET: A FRIEND OR A FOE?

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Currency of theme: The Internet has changed the world forever in both positive and negative ways. The Internet enables one to find information any time of the day, as well as provides convenience with regard to such activities as paying bills. On the other hand, the accessibility of false information, Internet theft and spamming, trafficking of human beings have negative effects. That's why we decided to consider this topic in more details.

Goal: To analyze the influence of the Internet and to identify its good and bad aspects.

There is no doubt that the Internet is one of the greatest humankind's inventions of the last century. It is a fast and easy way to get a lot of valuable information. The Internet serves as a source of information for almost any subject imaginable: science, technology, mathematics, history, countries, sociology, medicine, engineering, sports, games, music, movie, jobs or education. Using online encyclopedias and different sites to gather information about a topic is no longer a hard task to do. With the evolution of search engines such as Google and Yandex, you can simply open a web browser and find information at the click of the mouse. The medium is used for almost all purposes, even with important issues such as education and government organizations.

Undoubtedly the Internet makes our life easier, more comfortable and in some way happier. The Internet today is in many ways seen as an essential to life. It is used in the workplace, school and home.

The greatest merit of Internet is that it opens a world of information at the press of a key. It helps to gather information from storage areas of the servers called websites. Today we can get any information on any topic in a matter of seconds 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This can play a hugely important role in everything from social networking to worldwide stocks and currencies.

With just the click of a mouse you become connected to someone who is in another city or even halfway across the world. Distance is erased within seconds and spatial boundaries have come crashing down due to instant messaging services such as MSN, emails, video and voice chat programs such as Skype and the webcam. This is important for both social calls between friends and family to conference calls in multi-million dollar companies. The Internet has truly revolutionized the way that the world communicates.

Another advantage is that the Internet has completely changed entertainment. On demand channels now make it possible for you to watch any television programs that you missed, YouTube lets you search for music videos and you have the opportunity to watch different programs and films which are not available in your country, online newspapers and news websites keep you up to date with the latest global, national and international news.

Internet can also provide educational services. Students have the opportunity to speak to the professors from prestigious universities, ask their opinions and extend their range of interests. Users of the internet can watch online-lessons on economics, languages, dances, design and interior, oratory, etc. They can also search for scientific information and download different kinds of books.

Internet has also widened business opportunities. You can advertise your goods and products in the internet as well as seek jobs, place orders, meet with business magnates, attend international business conferences, deal with stock market, buy and exchange currencies, transact bank business, etc., and this is known as electronic commerce or E-Commerce.

But does the Internet have only positive aspects?

Of course, not. It also has negative aspects.

One of the negative effects of the Internet is that false information can be found, which can lead to lots of confusion. Any individual can upload information to the website and no one can be sure of articles accuracy unless you are already knowledgeable about the article. Also information from the internet may not be updated.

Another disadvantage to the internet is theft or spamming. The use of online banking, social networking and other services such as shopping or selling on EBay all contribute to possible theft. Virus threats are also prominent; it is so easy to click on a harmless link if your computer isn't sufficiently protected; this would result in the computer crashing and an expensive repair bill. Emails could lure internet users to websites that ask for passwords, credit card numbers, etc. With this information someone

can choose your name, credit card number, other personal information for his/her own use and this is what internet theft is - in short identity theft is when someone steals your personal information without your knowledge with intent to commit fraud or theft.

Plagiarism could be one of the drawback shapes on sources that are available on the Internet. A student finds it easier way just to “copy and paste” than working all night long for a paper that is due in week or so. Open sources for people in the Internet has two sides, one of them will boost the creativity of the human because they will see others work and that would be a motivation factor, and the other one it could be discouraging for some people as consequences for the copy and paste behavior. [1, p. 235]

The most horrible thing that can happen with you by using internet is to become a victim of trafficking of human being. Recruitment of people using social networks, such as Vkontakte and Facebook, let the human trafficker get all the necessary information about victims (their contacts, interests and preferences, the way of life, etc.) to create a plan of recruitment. Human traffickers can also place announcements on the Internet about working abroad. Accepting profitable offers people do not know what can happen with them in the future and that’s why they can become victims of human trafficking.

One more problem with the Internet is “virtual reality”. Spending hours in front of computer chatting in social networks and playing games make teens addicted. Moreover, computer and internet make people lazier. They stay at home instead of going out, they read less, they think less, and even talk less.

Having studied this topic we can make a conclusion that the Internet can be both a friend and a foe.

The internet is part of our daily life and we must learn to avoid the negatives so we can enjoy the positives to their full extent. That’s why people should keep their personal information private, be careful about online communications where one hides his true identity, use a secure browser, pay their bills online using credit cards rather than personal checks, defy any charges that they don't recognize, etc.

Excluding all these negative effects we can enjoy using the Internet and protect ourselves.

References

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