

Kelly Ann Vasquez

Professor Chris Andrews

English 101

9 April 2019

Communication through the Ages

We humans have always craved interaction with one another. The way we have has constantly evolved as technology progresses. The way we communicate has given us many opportunities to grow with one another. It has created many jobs and given us new ways to interact with the world around us. Social media platforms have allowed us to share things instantly for the world to see. We have the ability to communicate with someone across the globe in just mere seconds as well as the ability to get information instantly. We can simply ask an Amazon Echo device, “Alexa, what is the weather tomorrow?” without having to even physically check yourself. Cell phones have advanced greatly with the ability to text message someone or to FaceTime (video chat) with anyone. We can also email professors or coworkers instantly from smart phones. These improvements can be seen positively but there are also some negatives when it comes to how we communicate. In fact, most of our communicating is done through cell phones or laptops, rather than face to face interaction. We may be too dependent on technology helping us and not having the proper skills to function through life, such as cooking or for directions. The way technology has shaped communication is affecting us both positively and negatively as we progress through time.

Technology has spawned many different forms of communication throughout most recent decades and is showing no signs of stopping. Back in the 1990s, big brick cellphones and the use

of emailing were seen as groundbreaking. Emailing was a huge phenomenon and helped humans talk to each other without having to see them. For instance in the movie, *You've Got Mail* with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan, the two leads were able to constantly talk to one another through the use of email without ever identifying their true selves. As the internet started to grow, so did social media platforms. Another big platform that helped spawn many other platforms was MySpace. MySpace allowed users to customize their own profile with music, pictures and blog posts as well as have personal friends to communicate online with. It was extremely popular with teenagers and adults. MySpace ultimately died down, but led to the birth of Facebook which is still huge form of communication today. Facebook is very similar to MySpace, allowing users too also have their own profiles and the ability to post pictures, life updates, videos and so on. It also allows user to request friends and communicate with them through direct messaging. Facebook is a very big social media platform that is used for communicating with family and friends as well using it for work. I personally use Facebook a lot so I can trade my shifts with my coworkers in our work group page. Instagram is another social platform that is owned by Facebook, that many people use. The biggest use of instagram is for posting pictures and videos. Users have their own profile where they can post pictures and videos to their profile with captions or through a story which will disappear in 24 hours. People can follow you and see what you post in their feed. It has also helped spawn the term "social media influencer" where people become popular on instagram with hundreds of thousands of followers and help promote company products to their followers. Lastly, the social media platform Twitter is used by millions. On Twitters, users have their own profile where they can send a "tweet" which is a post that only allows you to type up to 140 characters. Many celebrities and even politicians use

Twitter to speak up about issues. Twitter also allows information to spread instantly. These social media platforms have made communicating easier than ever, but that is both good and bad.

There are many positives with how we communicate. As I said earlier, Facebook has allowed me to trade shifts with my coworkers at Disneyland. There are many of us in our department and many you don't see for weeks on end, but with the help of Facebook, it has allowed my coworkers and I to trade or give away shifts that may not work with our schedules to anyone in the group. The trade is all done online and is instant. A big positive for me personally is the use of Instagram. I've always been a big lover of all things Disney and would post my weekly trips to Disneyland on Instagram. I followed many cool Disney themed Instagram accounts, one of them being my boyfriend. We met up at Disneyland because we communicated with one another through Instagram and have been dating since that summer four years ago. If it wasn't for Instagram, I wouldn't have found a really cool guy that has the same interests as me. Instagram has allowed me to also interact with other Disney Instagramers that have become such close friends of mine. Just recently for my birthday last week, I invited many Disney Instagramers, many I had never even met, to celebrate my birthday with and now we're all really good friends. It amazes me everyday how many wonderful friendships I have gained thanks to social media platforms. Not only has it helped me gain these friends, but it also has helped me maintain my relationships with many other friends and family. Beyond social media platforms are the functions of cell phones. Many cell phones have become smart phones which have the ability to hold all of our social media platforms as well as the ability to text or "FaceTime" with people. These functions have allowed me to maintain my relationship with my family. I recently moved out from home last year, and the use of texting and FacetTime has helped me

communicate with my mom and little sister especially. I love that although I am not there anymore, I can still feel I am through the use of FaceTime. I am so fortunate that I can talk to my mom and sister instantly. While there are so many good ways that technology has shaped our communication, there are also some troubling aspects of it.

Sometimes too much of a good thing may be bad for us. We spend so much time on our cell phones nowadays that it limits the time we spend with one another face to face. We see this especially in the film *Wall-E*. In *Wall-E* the humans interact with one another strictly through the technology they are seated on. The seats were designed with the ability to video chat with each other, even if they were seated next to each other. I will admit, sometimes my boyfriend will text me something even though I may be in the room right next door. Later in the film, when Wall-E distracts two of the humans, they are seen to be enjoying things they had never seen on the spaceship they have been on for several years. What is even more profound is seeing how the two interact with each other without the use of technology. The film specifically points out the way the two humans touch each others hand, indicating they've never had that type of interaction with another human before. They learn how to enjoy the company of another without relying on the technology they have consumed all their lives. Another negative aspect of our communication, is the way some people communicate online. It is incredibly easy to make an account on social media platforms that you can use to harass someone anonymously. The term cyberbullying was coined a couple of years ago because of how easy it was to bully someone online, especially with young teens. Many found suicide was better for them than having to endure the hate they received online. Celebrities are a prime target of this kind of hate as well. Many receive awful comments and messages. For instance, Kelly Marie Tran, the first female

Asian American lead in a Star Wars film received so much hate and death threats on her Instagram posts, that she decided to just all together quit because it became too overwhelming for her. Lastly, technology has allowed us to receive news instantly but because it is instant, it may not be so accurate. Many news outlets are pressured to be the first to break stories and may not be the most factual in reporting. On Twitter, something may spread fast and start trending but it also may be fake or twisted. Many fake news stories spread fast on Facebook as well. People on Facebook mainly pay attention to headlines rather than clicking to read the article itself. You can share a post in just seconds and then that fake news spreads. At one point last year, one fake news outlet reported that a *Friends* reunion show was happening, but it was fake and you found that out once clicking on the article. Many people believed it though, because of the headline alone. Even though the technology of communicating can be bad, there is always room for growth.

Technology is improving rapidly. Every other year, an iPhone comes out that is better than the previous one. It's packed with new and faster ways to communicate with people around the world. There are several movies and television shows that show how our technology may affect our communication such as *Her*, *Wall-E*, or *Black Mirror*. They dive into how communication through technology may be good and bad for us. Many studies are done to prove how it may be hurting us. If we perhaps pay more attention to how our technology may be affecting us and our communication skills, then we can save ourselves from deteriorating. Yes, so many wonderful things have sprouted from these technological advances, we just need to be careful with it before it consumes us to the point where we forget how to communicate to each other in person.

