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Technology and Teens

By Caie Kelley



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These days, one does not have to go far to register a growing concern about teenagers' addiction to technology. "Text, text, text, all you ever do is text," says my mom. "The Internet is turning high-schoolers into useless, unsociable blobs," a substitute teacher once declared. Even strangers at Safeway chime in on the complaints: "A computer is a distraction. I see no reason why somebody needs access to Facebook and Twitter all the time, much less a kid."

In many people's eyes, technology undermines teens' productivity and decreases social interaction. If the Internet truly does limit our meaningful conversations, what is the appeal of popular social networking sites for Lamorinda teens?

One student, a freshman at Miramonte, said, "Well, Facebook is nice to stay updated with your friends and an easy form of communication. Many clubs at school have Facebook groups, so I know when the meetings are, classes have groups so that we can ask each other about homework, and school events are posted here, so it does help me stay connected to school. I know usage can be excessive, but it's helpful!"

Another sophomore chimed in, "Blogging sites like Pinterest and Tumblr serve as inspiration and a distraction, and distractions aren't always negative. High school, sports, and all the extracurriculars can be overwhelming. My Tumblr's dashboard has funny quotes and awesome places from all parts of the world, so I can momentarily escape the boring day-to-day with images of all the places I'd like to go

and all the beautiful parts of this world. It reminds me of the potential for beauty in life, even when I'm swamped with a million tests and I don't have time to dream about what could be."

A Miramonte senior summed it up: "Look. Technology is here to stay, and I think people who continue to talk about limiting it for young people or that kids these days are way too addicted are getting the wrong idea. It's key that we learn to use it to our benefit when we are young, because it does serve an important purpose."

Overall, the message was clear: there is certainly still value in face-to-face interaction, but the Internet can be a welcome distraction and a means of quick communication. Moving forward, the trick will be to find a way to balance technology with the old-fashioned methods, for teenagers and adults alike.

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