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**The role of social networks in the life of modern youth**

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2021
Мурманск

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**Introduction**

The object of my research is social networks and the subject is the impact of these social networks and platforms on people.

The aim of my work is to characterize the impact of social networks on different age groups of people. In order to achieve my aim, I am to carry out the following tasks:
**1)** to reveal the meaning of social networks and platforms;
**2)** to analyze the advantages of social networks;
**3)** to examine disadvantages of social networks;
**4)** to suggest the ways out to get rid of negative impact of social networks.

The relevance of the theme is very high. Nowadays social networks are so popular with all age groups of people that we cannot imagine our life without them. They have become the way of our life.

I have chosen this issue because it is very interesting and useful to discover and analyze not only the advantages but also drawbacks of social networks and platforms as they have a part of our life.

**I. Social media as a part of modern life**

In recent years social media has become deeply integrated in our everyday lives. The concept of social media itself includes several categories: blogs, live journals, forums, chats, dating sites and, of course, social networking sites. Essentially, they are platforms for people’s remote communication, to be more detailed exchange of different types of information: text messages, music, photo and video content. The most popular with the young people are social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vkontakte and so.

So I conducted a survey among students between 16 and 18 years old, and it turned out in this way:

All 100% of teenagers use social networks every day. After that I was interested to know how many hours a day do they spend on social media?

Most people use social media for more than three hours a day, and fewer people use it for half an hour or an hour. For what purposes do they use social networks?

Most teenagers use social networks to communicate, watch movies and listen to music. Besides positive impact I would like to discover what negative experience people had on the Internet or if they had had it or not.

As we can see, not all teenagers have negative experiences in social networks.

**II. Advantages of social networks**

Thanks to social networks, people can keep in touch with friends or relatives who live in other cities. You can use them to create a group chat, send the necessary files, share photos and videos, and even start a video conference. And all this is absolutely free.

With the help of social networks you will never lose information about your friends and other important people. At any moment you can check any information about them on their social networks pages.

Social networks can become a great solution for people with disabilities or those who for some reason have to stay at home all the time. In some situations they can completely substitute a real- life communication and help such people not to feel lonely or socially isolated. Numerous special interest groups let them find friends and interesting dialogue partners.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Sometimes social networking sites help you find the right and useful information. People on the sites share their personal experiences, write comments and reviews about products and services. You in turn can ask any question and get an answer from different people. Also, social networks allow you to spread any information in the shortest possible time. Many people learn the news from social networks.

Also, thanks to social networks, you can promote your creativity or business. On social media, you can express yourself and what you do. You can promote your product or business there and find your first customers.

**III. Disadvantages of social networks**

This was one side of the coin. Unfortunately, there is another one, which is not so bright. For a great number of children and teenagers social networks today have almost completely substituted real life. Some of them spend so much time online that the distinction between life and virtual reality for them becomes blurred. As a result, children suffer from the lack of live communication, though they even don't realize it. It inevitably causes mental disorders, influences their health and spirits, and prevents their normal socialization.

Another major problem associated with social networking sites is leakage of information. Posting any personal information, you can never know for sure where it will reemerge. Anyone can use your personal photos, and in most cases you cannot prevent it. Even if you think that your personal page is protected with a safe password, you are mistaken, because good hackers can break it at one stroke.

Moreover, apart from useful content, any social network contains tons of useless, hazardous and dangerous information, which is easily accessible to children. Violence, erotic, propaganda of drugs and other forbidden content is regularly deleted by moderators, but it appears again too quickly for them to cope with it.

First of all, what is the danger of the Internet?
Fraud - when a user pays for purchases or services with a bank card on a malicious site, the creators of the resource can get access to the user's details

**IV. Recommendations to avoid negative impact of social networks**

 How to protect yourself and your loved ones from these dangers?
Use antivirus. This is a basic security application. The tasks of the antivirus include detecting spyware, viruses, phishing resources, dangerous servers and suspicious traffic. Popular antivirus programs cope with most of the threats that come to your computer from the network or removable media. But, they do not protect against user actions on sites. That is, if the resource did not cause the program to suspect and opened, clicking on links or actions with elements will no longer be protected.

Also, you can use VPN.[[2]](#footnote-2) It is a secure network that hides your IP address and location. It will securely encrypt all traffic and data transmitted from the device.
The technology works like this:
1. The information is encrypted on the device.
2. It is transmitted to the server of the VPN provider.
3. Decrypted on the server.
4. It is transmitted to the destination (to the site server).
So, personal information is protected from interception, it is completely encrypted, personal data is hidden

Especially for children, many resources have a "children's mode" that restricts their actions on the Internet. Thanks to this, children can safely watch cartoons, play games, and their parents can’t be afraid that their children can see what they do not need. To my mind, caring parents should limit their children's access to social media, and regularly check up their actions on the Internet. Otherwise, social networks can make a real harm to children's and teenagers' minds

With the help of my work, we learned what the benefits and harms of social networks are. Who uses it, how much, and for what purpose, also how to protect yourself online. As a result, we can say that social networks have two sides: light and dark. On the one hand, they bring us closer, make our lives easier, but on the other hand, they replace many moments of real life. What to do in social networks is everyone's choice. But the main thing is that you and your loved ones should be careful on the Internet, because, as we have learned, there are many dangers in it. In addition, it will be great if you take only the good from it and filter out the bad!

Conclusion

In recent years social media has become deeply integrated in our everyday lives. The concept of social media itself includes several categories: blogs, live journals, forums, chats, dating sites and, of course, social networking sites. Essentially, they are platforms for people’s remote communication, to be more detailed exchange of different types of information: text messages, music, photo and video content. The most popular with the young people are social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vkontakte and so on. On the one hand, a social network is a very convenient tool for a quick message exchange, searching for old friends and making new acquaintances, keeping important information and discussing pressing issues in groups, right in the comfort of one’s home. On the other hand, psychologists and psychiatrists of the world ring alarm bells: social networking addiction too often becomes the cause of serious mental and nervous disorders, such as depression, social isolation, autism, and even suicide attempts of teenagers and young people.

To my mind, social networking sites can be both useful and dangerous depending on who and how uses them. Grown up persons should control themselves the amount of time spent on usage of social media but caring parents should limit their children’s access to social media, and regularly check up their actions on the Internet. Otherwise, social networks can make a real harm to children’s and teenagers’ minds.

The theoretical importance of my survey is that all conclusions should be taken into account not only by teenagers but also by adults.

The practical importance of my work is that I have made a questionnaire which can be used at the lessons of Bases of Life Safety and also it is necessary to attract everyone’s attention to this burning matter.

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