

Social Media Against the World

Social media has given people a stage to freely express their thoughts and ideas to the public. Fueled with controversy, social media has become a battlefield. Each individual battle is a game of tug and war and as society shifts to the far left and far right, soon the rope will be split in two halves. As we are on our last threads, the question arises, is peace amongst the people a thing of the past? Social media has become a household name, being the nations host of depression, misinformation, and internet banging. What is this platform that took our nation by storm, causing modern-day issues and controversies, how have we allowed for this relevantly new platform hijack our society!? Attracting the masses social media is only seen giving its condolences to its users. But social media isn't all as bad as it may seem, social media saved the people of my home country. Egypt witnessed dictatorship for over 30 years with helpless Egyptians, the problem couldn't be resolved. However, with the help of social media the Egyptian people were able to unite and regain power.

To start off, social media has made its users victims of endless mental illnesses, starting with cyberbullying to downright depression, the list is endless. This equates to the majority of people being hunchbacked social media addicts. Jordyn Young, the co-author of the Paper states, "if you use less social media, you are actually less depressed and less lonely, meaning that the decreased social media use is what causes that qualitative shift in your well-being." When you combine Youngs findings with that of Melinda Wenner Moyer, a researcher and author for the New York Times, you find that much of the population is suffering from some type of mental illness. Melinda states, "On average, daily screen use went up among teens (ages 8 to 12) to five hours and 33 minutes from four hours and 44 minutes, and to eight hours and 39 minutes from seven hours and 22 minutes for teens (ages 13 to 18)." The average time spent on social media

by the average teen is downright scary. Teens are finding a way of incorporating social media use in their everyday lives. What's even scarier is that these same social media addicts will be leaders of our towns, countries, and cities.

In addition, social media has allowed for its users to be constantly misinformed. With experts describing this endless cycle as "rabbit holes of misinformation". My mother always warned me of the bitter-sweet truth of things saying that, "they (social media platforms) put the poison in the honey." In similar thought is Ms. Graber, the founder of Cyberwise, a company dedicated in trying to help adults monitor children's use of social media. Graber most notably discusses her concerns for the use of YouTube and its worrying algorithm, the article indicates, "She (Graber) noted that YouTube in particular had a worrying algorithm that was designed to expose viewers to more extreme content over time. (Regarding content with misinformation)" Switching between social media platforms teens and users will always be in a case of self-contradiction. For example, YouTube with its algorithm won't match the ideas indicated by Ticktocks algorithm. When contradicting thoughts and ideas are conveyed to minors, they won't be able to differentiate between what's right and wrong. This delays the development of young brains to be able to generate their own opinions on topics.

Furthermore, just as critical to self-contradiction or internal battles are physical warfare's. Scientists describe these physical fights and actions taken by social media influence as "internet banging". Caitlin Elsaesser, a social researcher for the University of Connecticut indicates, "Social media isn't just mirroring conflicts happening in schools and on streets - it's intensifying and triggering new conflicts." Elsaesser through her survey among teens also found that one student added, "On social media, when you argue, something so small can turn into something so big so fast." Social media users are like a firepit waiting for fire to touch one of their many

branches, and once it does, they physically dump all their inner rage onto their target. How can this society maintain a peaceful environment without social interaction and mutual understanding between one another?

On the other hand, social media has revolutionized ways of communication, collaboration, and political organization. Social media across all its various platforms has allowed for my home country Egypt, overcome dictatorship and cruelty that took place for 30 years. Muhammad Hosni El Sayed Mubarak lost his position in government after enraged Egyptians took to Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to spread awareness and organize a 13-day protest. Or in other words Fawaz Rashed, one of the millions of protestors on Twitter posted, “We use Facebook to schedule the protest, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world.” Social media was the Egyptian people’s last string, and the Egyptian people took advantage of every resource in their hands. Social media is powerful, it gives a voice to the weak and unites people to stop the villains of this world.

To end off, just like every coin, there are two sides of social media. Social media can be an asset for communities, and peacemakers but it can also be a force that degrades society. With that being said, the negatives of social media heavily outweigh the positives. ‘heads’ argues the platform is revolutionary, life changing, a piece of art never witnessed by mankind. While ‘Tails’ rebuttals that the platform is life threatening, misinforming, and depressing. It seems this coin only lands on ‘tails’ the last time it landed on ‘heads’ was in 2011 during the Egyptian revolution. If social media can fix its coin to landing on ‘heads’ instead of ‘tails’ the platform will only rise from there, with the true togetherness of people and communities of different backgrounds peace can be established in every homeland.

