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Opening Your Eyes to the Future

An alarm rings loudly from your phone, from where it charges at your nightstand, waking

you up. You push yourself up, grab it, unplug it and check your notifications. 17 unread text

messages, 20 Instagram notifications, and 2 missed calls. You spend the first hour of your day, in

bed on your phone, checking emails, looking at social media, and getting your news from

Twitter. In 2020, the average person spent about 3 hours on their phone, 5 hours on their

computer and checked their phone almost 100 times a day. Humanity is more reliant on the

internet than ever, and we are more connected than ever. It's hard to go through the day without

seeing a screen, by mid-day, you've probably had contact with several. Especially now, as Covid

spreads faster than ever and people must stay farther apart than ever. If you can't communicate

through screens, you can't communicate at all. Many studies have been conducted on the effects

that social media and phones can have on us physically and mentally, yet people still can't seem

to agree on a conclusion. Screen addiction has become a problem, especially in younger

generations and the effect it has had is shown every day.

There have always been two sides to the argument about screen time. Half believe that

social media and the internet have been great for us as a society and have connected us in ways

we could never have dreams of years ago. The other side of this argument is that social media

can lead to anxiety, stress, and depression. The reality is that social media will always have its

assets and liabilities. Waking up and immediately being able to communicate with friends and family and make plans for the day is a great way to stay social and to make sure you're not isolating yourself. On the other hand, waking up and checking your social media to immediately see everything bad happening in the world and all the fun things your friends are doing without you can lead to depression and isolation. Having all the information in the world at your fingertips is a great privilege that many people take advantage of. Having all the information in the world at your fingertips can be overwhelming and you can get stuck in a hole, going deeper and deeper until it's hard to get out. Being able to meet friends online can lead to great friendships that you wouldn't normally get the chance to make. Being able to meet strangers online can be dangerous and can help predators find victims. Online gaming is an immersive experience that can lead to making friends and good life skills. Online gaming can be addictive and take over someone's life, till they spend all their time inside, on it. There are two sides to every story. The statement "all social media is bad" is reductive and takes away from the great achievements that it has led to. It's easier than ever to communicate with people from all around the world and news can spread from people faster than ever. Technology has lead to thousands of new job opportunities. New of injustice and how to help take a stand against it can reach a much wider audience. If Covid had happened ten or twenty years ago, our world would have been at an even bigger standstill, without the use of newer technology such as Zoom and FaceTime. But we should still be cautious. Everything is better in moderation and social media is a very good example of this. Social media is like coffee, smaller doses can be great and help you with your day but too much can have bad side effects and it's easy to get addicted.

In the future, technology should be used to move us forward. We should focus on making the internet a safer place for everyone. There are infinite possibilities with technology and who

knows what we will be able to do with it, even just five or ten years down the road. If we focus on the ways we can use it to move humanity forward and bring us closer, technology can bring us farther than ever. Covid has shown us just how much of an asset technology can be to our society. It has made it easier than ever for people to work from home and this can be of tremendous use for people who can't work in a normal work environment such as people with chronic illness or for mothers who have to stay home with children. Without the internet school would have completely shut down during Covid, leaving many kids behind on education. The use of things like Zoom and Google Classroom has made it so it could continue on through these hard times. Covid has fundamentally changed how our world runs, and from now on we will always be more reliant on technology than pre-covid. But this doesn't have to be a bad thing. Technology can give us a brighter future if we let it and we must keep our eyes open to the possibilities.