

Technology & Adolescents

May 29, 2019



Technology Advantages and Disadvantages

- Technology allows for greater student autonomy and collaboration, for more student-directed or self-directed learning
- Because technology is used so much in everyday life, educators must be aware of the influence it has on the social and cognitive functions of adolescents and young adults.
- Social media use affects social connectedness in terms of three elements of adolescent development:
 - sense of belonging
 - psychosocial wellbeing
 - identity development

Social Media advantages and disadvantages

Social media can be both a benefit to building community and an obstacle to building identity.

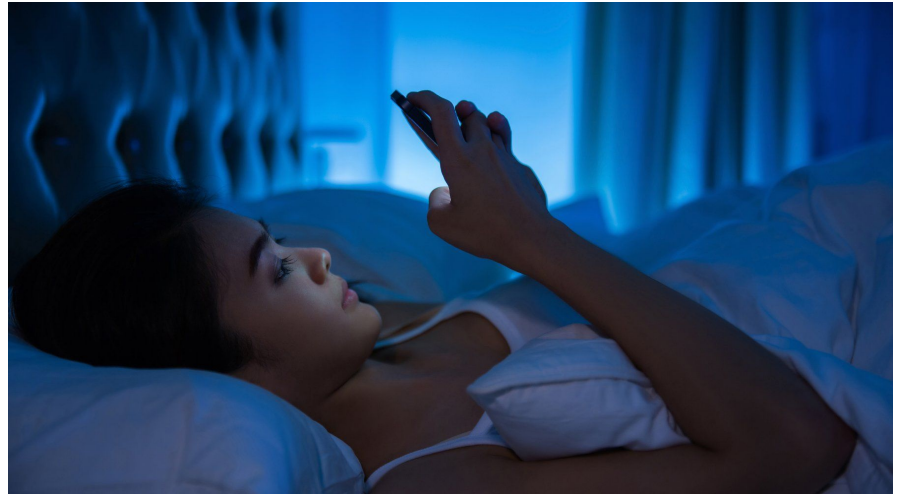
Social media has also created a false sense of identity and unrealistic reward system by triggering the dopamine (the reward & motivation chemical) in the brain, which can encourage goal setting but can also lead to addiction and unhealthy expectations (Jenson, 2015; Crossman, 2016).

How technology affects sleep

- The number of U.S. teens who reported sleeping less than seven hours a night jumped 22 percent between 2012 and 2015.
- Teens need at least 9 hours of sleep a night. But by 2015, 43 percent of teens reported sleeping less than 7 hours a night on most nights
- The amount of time teens spent working, doing homework and participating in extracurricular activities held steady during those years
- But there was one large change in teens' lives between 2012 and 2015: More owned smartphones.

How technology affects sleep

- Unlike other electronic devices such as TVs and desktop computers, smartphones (and tablets) are easily carried into the bedroom and held by hand in bed.
- The blue light emitted by smartphones and tablets simulates daylight, slowing the brain's production of melatonin, the hormone that helps us fall asleep and stay asleep.



Common Sense Media Survey

- o **Addiction:** one out of every two teens feels addicted to his or her device, and the majority of parents (59 percent) feel that their kids are addicted

- o **Frequency:** 72 percent of teens and 48 percent of parents feel the need to immediately respond to texts, social media messages and other notifications.

69 percent of parents and 78 percent of teens check their devices at least hourly.

- Teenage girls are twice as likely as boys to show depressive symptoms linked to social media use - mainly due to online harassment and disturbed sleep, as well as poor body image and lower self-esteem (World Economic Forum)

Sleep Deprivation

Sleep deprivation can have serious consequences for teens. Those who don't sleep enough perform more poorly in school and are at greater risk of developing obesity.

Sleep deprivation is also linked to mental health issues including depression and anxiety among both teens and adults.



Video Game Addiction

- Most parents of video game addicts are afraid to take away their child's games for fear of what the child might do.
- Many of the preteens and teens that I counsel are well aware of their gaming addiction and the impact it is having on their lives, yet they still cannot get themselves to stop playing

(Thomas Kersting, nationally renowned psychotherapist and author)



Need for face-to-face communication

- “Our children need to communicate with other children, face-to-face, and they need to do it a lot because it is critical to their social and emotional development.”
- Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand the emotions of others as well as the ability to understand and regulate one’s own emotions. It can only be learned and developed through face-to-face interaction with other people, not screen-to-screen interactions.

(Thomas Kersting, nationally renowned psychotherapist and author)

What can be done?

- Limiting smartphone use before bed is a strategy that can be immediately implemented (ideally for the whole family, adults included). A “no phones in the bedroom after bedtime” rule can work. If your family uses phones as alarm clocks, buy inexpensive alarm clocks.
- Put an app on phones that shuts them down during certain hours, or leave phones and tablets in another room overnight.
- Suggest reading a book, taking a bath, or writing in a journal in the hour before bed.