**GP Flipside – Positive and Negative Effects of Social Media**

**1. Positive Effects of Social Media**

**1.1 Social perspective**

**TS:** One positive effect of social media is that it will enhance social relationships which will expand their social circle and give individuals a sense of belonging in the society.

**EL:** This is because most social media networks are usually built, directed and sustained by users themselves. As a result, it will lead to the formation and development of a community. The community concepts are tangible concepts like common beliefs, hobbies and commonalities that draw people closer together. Since social media will give the ability to interact with anyone around the world, it will be easy for individuals to discover new friends within these interest-based communities. Therefore, the community-driven mindset of social media networks ensures individuals do not feel left out or alone knowing that there are others around the world who share similar interest.

**EG:** Social networking sites, like Facebook, provide many opportunities to bring communities of people with similar interest together → According to a Facebook research blog post, over 800,000 Americans updated their profiles to express same-gender attraction or custom gender in 2015.

<https://research.fb.com/americas-coming-out-on-facebook/>

**1.2 Political Perspective**

**TS:** From a political perspective, social media promotes democratic development as it facilitates political democratization through equal access to information and the ability to voice out their opinions that can easily reach the masses.

**EL:** Social media has become a useful communication channel for people to express their opinions regarding issues that their country is facing as these users populate the network with their views and discontent. This encourages people to express themselves politically which will give them some form of political influence as we see how the public opinions has become the fifth estate, which is the fifth institution that regulate the government. (public vigilantism)

**EG 1:** Social media played a pivotal role in the 2011 Arab Spring since youths began to air their grievance through social media which gradually turned into a platform to connect and organize a political revolution which toppled the Egyptian government.

<http://www.journalism.org/2012/11/28/role-social-media-arab-uprisings/>

**EG 2:** Social media also contributed to the recent change of the Malaysian government in the watershed elections in 2018 as the issue of 1MDB (1Malaysian Development Berhad) saga has angered citizens, who expressed their resentment towards the UMNO-led government.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/social-media-war-hots-up-as-malaysian-polls-inch-closer>

**1.3 Economic Perspective**

**TS:** From an economic angle, social media has a positive effect as it creates employment opportunities for users when they take advantage of ability of social media to reach the mass easily.

**EL:** Social media platform has increasingly become a place for people to run their business as the ability to reach the mass easily can be seen as an effective marketing tool for merchants to use. Furthermore, the convenience for people to look and buy things online with just a click of button has made online shopping a more preferable option for people to purchase items they want.

**EG 1:** In 2016, Facebook reported that there are more than 60 million businesses have a Facebook with 4 million of them are actively advertising on Facebook → show how merchants value having their business online.

<https://venturebeat.com/2016/09/27/facebook-60-million-businesses-have-pages-4-million-actively-advertise/>

**EG 2:** According to the Ministry of Commerce in China, more Chinese consumers are shopping online in 2017, resulting in the e-retail sales to past $1 trillion of the first time in the world. This shows the vast potential of the online market for businesses.

<https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/2018/02/08/online-retail-sales-china-soar-past-1-trillion-2017/>

**1.4 Family**

**TS:** Lastly, social media has a positive effect on the relationship of families as it strengthens social ties amongst family members by promoting social interaction.

**EL:** Social media provides users multiple modes of communication, which transcends geographical boundaries, thus enabling bilateral and multilateral communication. As a result, family members can frequently interact with one another since they no longer require to be physically present to engage in communication and social interaction. Moreover, social media allows family members to keep in loop with what is going on with each other through photos or videos posted online.

**EG 1:** For instance, WhatsApp allows people to communicate everywhere and even have video call function to make the interaction feels more realistic and authentic.

<https://gadgets.ndtv.com/apps/features/whatsapp-video-calling-is-here-how-to-make-your-first-video-call-via-whatsapp-1625449>

**EG 2:** In January 2018, CEO of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg announced that there will be changes in the Facebook settings, where users will start to see more posts from their family and friends and fewer post from publishers and brands. This change can help to keep user updated on their family members.

<https://qz.com/1178186/facebook-fb-will-now-show-you-more-posts-from-friends-and-family-than-news-in-an-update-to-its-algorithm/>

**2. Negative Effect of Social Media**

**2.1 Crime**

**TS:** Social media can potentially increase crime rates as it increases the vulnerability to cyber threats as much of our personal information is left accessible on social media platforms.

**EL:** By piecing the information together from various social media sites that we use, cyber criminals can obtain important personal data and engage in cyber extortion, bank fraud, theft of classified information or identity theft. As technology advances, cyber criminals are able to find ways to hack through the security in check to protect our data such that cyber-crimes become more frequent.

**EG 1:** In February 2017, a security breach in the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) system resulted in 850 national servicemen and staff data to be stolen.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/personal-data-of-850-mindef-servicemen-and-staff-leaked-due-targeted-planned-cyber-attack>

Similarly, Gemalto, an international digital security company, revealed that at least 2.6 billion data records were breached or compromised in 2017.

<https://www.gemalto.com/press/pages/more-than-2-5-billion-records-stolen-or-compromised-in-2017.aspx>

**2.2 Cultural Deprivation**

**TS:** From a cultural perspective, social media has a negative impact on the society as individuals become more vulnerable to cultural subversion.

**EL:** The prevalence of social media has exposed us to foreign values. It can contribute to the clash of cultures, leading to the emergence of dominant western cultures such as foreign cultures are exhibited to be interesting, exotic and superior and thus undermining our traditional value as irrelevant and archaic.

**EG 1:** During Chinese New Year celebrations, fewer youths don traditional clothing. Instead, their preferred option is Western-designed attire.

<https://www.youth.sg/Our-Voice/Opinions/2016/2/Too-cool-for-traditional-ethnic-costumes>

**EG 2:** According to the Minister of State in Singapore, more Singaporeans are speaking  English rather than their mother tongues at home → worsening standards of mother tongue → led to the Singapore education system to have Basic Mother Tongue language programme for students who are poor with their mother tongue language not to let mother tongue affect their grades.

<https://www.nie.edu.sg/news-detail/mother-tongue-proficiency-affected-as-more-speak-english-at-home-sim-ann>

**2.3 Political Perspective**

**TS:** From a political perspective, social media has a negative impact as it makes individual susceptible to political indoctrinations of religious fundamentalism and extremism.

**EL:** Social media has become a platform for terrorist organization to spread extremist ideologies which promotes negative values such as hatred of other religion. This can result in undermine safety as the radicalisation of individuals that may cause them committing terrorist acts brought about by the hatred indoctrinated in them. This will lead to social unrest as individuals build up social dissatisfaction against other religious group.

**EG 1:** Terrorist organizations, such as Islamic State of the Iraq (ISIS) and Jemaah Islamiya (JI), capitalize on the ubiquity of information to spread extremist ideologies to indoctrinate users, so as to rally more people to join their cause (self-indoctrination, enticing hatred among social groups

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/05/islamic-state-trains-purer-child-killers-in-doctrine-of-hate>

**EG 2:** Statistics from Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) showed that hate crimes against Muslims has increased dramatically after 9/11.

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/15/assaults-against-muslims-in-u-s-surpass-2001-level/>

**2.4 Undermines mental well-being of users (psychological category)**

**TS:** Lastly, social media can have a negative effect on the well-being of the individuals as it promotes narcissistic behaviour as users are encouraged to share and publish personal content with friends or even the public.

**EL:** The extensive usage of social media contributed to the obsession with recognition, as exemplified by garnering ‘likes’ on your personal post. Also, the display of posts by our friends and acquaintances can be misleading as only the desirable parts or their lives are displayed, whereas the unpleasant experiences are hidden from view. Consequently, a sense of envy and jealousy develops, which can lead to growing dissatisfaction, loss of self-esteem or depression.

**EG 1:** A study done by Researchers from San Diego University on over one million teens found that excessive internet and social media usage was linked to unhappiness.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/01/180122091249.htm>

**EG 2:** In 2014, researchers in Austria found that participants reported lower moods after using Facebook for 20 minutes compared to those who just browsed the Internet.

<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20180104-is-social-media-bad-for-you-the-evidence-and-the-unknowns>

(rise of a disenfranchised society – depicting their grievances and unhappiness