

Technology in Control

Mostly anywhere I go, I see someone glued to their phone or tablet. Whether it's walking around campus at school or sitting in a restaurant having dinner with their family. Communications technology has had a very big impact in most people's lives. I'm sure if I asked someone to give communications technology up for one day, they could not do it. Although communications technology is ruining some people's lives and disconnecting people, it can be useful when it is being used the proper way. It's distracting people from everyday activities like eating dinner as a family, going on a date, studying, and even while out with friends.

As I was sitting in a restaurant one night eating dinner with my family, I looked around and noticed another family sitting at the table next to ours. I saw what looked to be two five year old's playing on an iPad while the two parents scrolling through their phones on Facebook while they waited for their food. I observed for a few minutes and noticed that the family hadn't said a word to each other in a while. I thought to myself, "Why isn't this family talking? The parents should be asking their kids how their day went or be involved in some type of conversation." When I was younger, my dad used to take me to dinner, and we would play "I spy" just to keep some form of talking going and to keep us off our electronics. I think the parents should have been trying to do the same thing as my dad. The family got their food and ate in silence. When they finished, they payed the check and left. Not a word was said at the dinner table. Eating dinner with your family is supposed to be a time to talk about how your day went and relax, not sit in silence scrolling through your phones.

Not only have I noticed families not paying attention to each other at dinner, but couples doing the same thing. I went to lunch with some friends, and we noticed a couple on a date a few table away from us. The worker seated them, and they both instantly took their phones out upon sitting down. They scrolled through their phones for about five minutes, and then looked

through the menu and discussed what they were going to get to eat. The waitress took their order and they went right back to their phones. My friends and I talked about how the couple hadn't even really acknowledged each other for more than five minutes. Their phones seemed to be more important than starting a conversation. They weren't connecting because of the electronics being held right in front of their faces. They both should have put their phones on "Do not disturb" and in their pockets.

Communications technology has seemed to find its way into studying as well. I had about 20 minutes before my next class started so I sat in the library at Sauk to waste time. I noticed a girl, sitting at the table across from me, on her phone. She had all her books and notes laid out like she was trying to study. I thought to myself, "Is she trying to study while scrolling through her phone? All her phone is doing is distracting her." I was so confused because the library isn't supposed to be a place to be social. It's meant for studying, reading, or concentrating in a quiet environment. It occurred to me that this girl's phone seemed to be more important than her school work. I continued to watch her for a few more minutes before she finally put her phone down, except now she kept checking it every couple minutes. I watched her read something in her book and then look up and press the button on her phone to see if she had any notifications. Her phone was a distraction to something that should have been put first. She should have turned her phone off until she was done with her school work.

I've even noticed laptops being a distraction to students getting their school work done. I watched a student try to type a paper, but the games on his laptop were getting in the way. He would type a sentence and then go to the tab with the game on it and play that for five minutes and then go back to typing his paper. As he repeated this for a while, I just thought about how he spent so much time going back and forth between his paper and the game. He was spending more time on the game when he could have been using that time on his paper. Laptops are useful items to have for school, but students need to learn to not abuse them.

I have also witnessed technology take over within a group of friends. Three of my friends and I planned a night to go bowling and hang out, expecting to have a fun time, but we had just the opposite of that. On the car ride to the bowling alley one of my friends was glued to her phone, so I instantly knew how this night was going to turn out. We got to the bowling alley and sat down at the table area where you bowl at. I asked the group, "What weight of ball are you guys going to get?" All but one of my friends answered. Of course, she was too busy glued to her phone again to listen to what we were talking about. The only time she put her phone down was when it was her time to bowl, but then she would go right back to her phone. My two friends and I got tired of it, but we thought maybe once we got back to my house she would get off her phone. Sure enough, we were wrong. Her phone had died on the way to my house so she was very anxious to get her phone on a charger. She ran inside when we arrived and instantly plugged her phone in. My two friends and I sat on my bed, and she sat across the room alone because that was the only place with an outlet. She missed out on a lot of conversations and bonding with us because of electronics. I wish she would've kept her phone in the car while we bowled and went to my house so she wasn't so distracted.

From what I've noticed, communications technology has become a very big part in people's lives, and it's not always so positive. It's disconnecting people from their loved ones and making it hard for people to focus on their school work. Not a day goes by when I don't see someone scrolling through their phone during times when it isn't appropriate. Cell phones, tablets, iPads, etc. need to be powered down during certain activities like eating dinner as a family, going on a date, studying, and going out with friends.