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## **Revolution in Communication Technology Redefines Human Relationships.**

Writing this essay made me recall the bed time stories my grand mother told me when I barely knew what the word 'communication' means. I loved listening to stories about kings, war and mythology. Back in the ancient times, kings would have specially trained pigeons or other birds, which would carry message notes to the neighboring kingdoms. This form of message delivery was believed to be more secure than getting it delivered by hand from another person. As if these messenger birds know the geography of the whole kingdom, they would fly far off and deliver the letters to the right person.

Occasionally my grand father would spare some time to play with me and tell some of his childhood stories. He spoke to me about how he would write letters to his friends and other family members living from his hometown. During his time, it would take about two weeks for a letter to be delivered from the day of postage. Having a telephone connection was considered a luxury that was affordable only to a handful of people in his town. This was the scene 75 years back.

Among many inventions of our modern world, the Internet stands out as an amazing development with its effects on almost every aspect of social life. The Internet has greatly transformed the world in unimaginable ways, bringing different parts of the world into closer touch with one another than ever before.

The primary, and arguably most noble, intent of the Internet is to assist in mankind's pursuit of knowledge. The rapidly increasing information source, together with the ability to exchange knowledge faster than ever before is opening a whole new environment for learning and researching. Prior to the Internet, people might spend all day long on finding needed knowledge in a library. Today, with the assistance of the Internet, we can find what we need quickly and conveniently. The resources available in school or local libraries once limited students' knowledge; nowadays, they are able to access a nearly infinite number of resources via the Internet. Students also have chances to discuss what they have learned, share ideas, and exchange knowledge with other people all over the world by means of interaction through email or forums; and distance is no longer a concern.

Furthermore, the Internet provides people the equity that they do not have in real life. In a face-to-face encounter, people tend to judge others' characteristics based on their first impression of others' looks. On the contrary, the Internet helps us to understand a person through their ideas, their very own dispositions, but not the outward aspects. In the real world, many people who are shy rarely speak out and thus do not have opportunities for interaction. Via faceless online interaction, they will feel more

confident to contribute their ideas to the public. The Internet has created a virtual world where all people, no matter what their genders, ages, races, or statuses, are welcome to express their opinions, share ideas, and interact with each other.

The Internet has triggered many innovations in many aspects of life. With the Internet, trading, communication, finance, and so on, become more convenient than ever. With just a mouse click, customers can stay home and get their shipments delivered direct to them; emails take seconds to arrive; information flows of finance markets are kept updated. However, just as every aspect of life, the Internet does have some unhealthy sides. Today we sometimes hear about the technology's impacts on relationships and interpersonal communication. But the fault lies not with the technology itself, but rather with human's intentions to misuse the facilities that the modern technology has provided them with.

When a person says " I will get in touch with you soon", it can mean coming in contact in more than one way. It could be through an email, web conference, text message and easiest of all; a call from his cell phone.

Personal conversations and business conversations are intended for people on each end of the phone - not for a room full of people or those walking along the street, relaxing on a park bench, or waiting in a doctor's office. Nor should these conversations be inflicted on people relieving themselves in a public bathroom, enjoying a cup of tea in a restaurant, or deciding which bottle of juice or which shirt to buy inside a store, or locked in an elevator with no escape.

When did we get so promiscuous with our personal and business information that we spew it about? If there is no problem about privacy for the speaker, how about privacy for the unwitting listeners? How can telephone talkers not feel the publicness of their conversations? Perhaps they invent a bubble around themselves; they are so engrossed in their conversation they aren't aware of others. Maybe they believe themselves to be invisible to others.

In the past one week, I've been working on this essay and it made me more observant about people and the way they communicate. While walking to school I saw a man roller-skating while talking on the phone. Two days later later, I saw a woman spinning her wheel chair with a phone to her ear; later, a man was walking his dog and talking on the phone. I was struck by how extraordinary were the situations in which this new invention - the cell phone - was being used. That gave me a brain storm: to mark the turn of a new century, someone should publish a photography book showing how cell phones were invading our world and shaping a new life style.

Cell phones do make life easier; all calls can be received wherever you are, and no matter how busy you are, you can keep in touch with clients, family, and friends. How can one complain about technology that does that? The benefit of this technology should be to free up time, assured that no call will go unreceived, and all calls can be returned at the most convenient time. But, rather than turn off the phones when occupied, people keep them on at all times. They are never free. In effect, cell phones now burden, not free people.

You can't stop progress. Cell phones are with us; they are an integral part of our lives. My complaint is not about their existence; they can be helpful. My complaint isn't even about the danger of talking while driving. My complaint is that in addition to helping people keep in touch, cell phones interfere with personal relationships, pushing people away. It's wonderful to be able to call your honey from wherever you are (although lovers certainly have found ways to do that long before cell phones). But how often have you seen fiends walking down the street - with one talking on the phone? Or, families at a restaurant or social event, with everyone chatting but the father (or mother) separated by the cell? What is intended as a together activity gets interrupted when one of the people "goes away" via the cell phone.

This technology is now used to undermine relationships. There was a time when this issue would have been related to gender; women generally are more attuned to relationships, so they might have been more sensitive to someone pulling away from them. But women have become as much a victim of the cell phone rudeness and isolation as men. It's as if there is a status for not just having a cell phone but having it ring while out with others.

A far cry from the novelty of seeing someone on skates or in a wheel chair talking on a phone, there was a movie that again suggests the extraordinary may become ordinary. In *Jet Lag*, a woman is in the airport security line talking on her phone. In mid-sentence, she puts the phone on the conveyor belt, walks through the screening, picks up the phone on the other side and resumes her conversation - without missing a beat. The really best part though, is when she's on the toilet talking. She goes to flush, drops the phone, and watches in horror as it swirls down the drain.

I'm glad she was using her best friend to help with her crisis of the moment, but I applaud the flushing, feeling the relief of women in the other stalls; they could now sit in peace. Maybe I'm wrong, though. Maybe cell phones can bring people together since she then borrowed one from a stranger at the airport that ended up as her husband.

Instead of driving people apart, mobile phones and the net are helping them maintain social ties, says an article from BBC News network called "Hi-tech bring families together". It was found that traditional so-called "nuclear" families were more likely to have more hi-tech gadgetry in their home than almost any other group it measured. Multiple mobile phones were found in 89% of nuclear families and 66% had a high-speed net connection. The US national average for broadband is 52%. It also found that 58% of these types of families were likely to have more than two computers in the home.

This led to 53% of those questioned saying that new technologies had increased the quality of their contact with distant family members, while 47% said it improved interaction with those they live with. The growing use of cell phones, computers and the net meant that families no longer gathered round the TV for shared experiences but this did not mean, said the report that these communal times had vanished. Instead it found that 52% of net users who live with their spouse and have children go online in the company of someone else several times a week. For many, greater use of the net came at the expense of TV watching, with 25% saying they now spent less time watching television. Only 58% of 18-29 year olds said they watched TV every day.

Going by the saying “ Every coin as two sides; revolution in communication technology has good and bad shades to it. In the case of people living oceans apart, technology brings people closer; and in the case of people who live closer, technology drives people them apart. No matter how quick and efficient modern communication means are becoming; they can never stand as a replacement to in-person meeting.