

Virtual Crisis: Interpersonal relations and new social media

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Abstract

A large part of social interaction is taking place online with Computer mediated technology becoming the most common form of communication today replacing face to face communication. The usage of social networking sites amongst youngsters is on a rise today with the advances in technology. Tablets, smartphones, laptops are ubiquitous by their presence. Technology today offers myriad ways to communicate effectively with the advent of Skype, webcams, Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp etc. As a hub for communication, entertainment and information, social networking sites have grown in popularity. The usage of social networking sites has tremendous influence on the youngsters especially on their interpersonal relations. Emoticons, as new mode of communication, have largely replaced face to face communication today and are equivalent of nonverbal cues. They have worked well with both old and young alike, although their usage is more among the younger generation whose constant companions are the smart phones and tablets. The present paper is based on the research conducted on 242 undergraduate college going students in the age group of 17-20 years to ascertain the usage pattern of social networking sites, their purpose of using it, the use of emoticons and the effect on interpersonal relations. For the purpose of study questionnaire was administered and focused group discussions were held to know the impact of social networking sites on interpersonal relations at the personal level with regards to identity formation and social level – with regards to their relations with family and peers.

Keywords: social media, computer mediated technology, identity, emoticons

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