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Facebook Mini Research Essay

Almost every person I know has a Facebook account. Facebook has an average of 1.6 billion users every month with an increase of 14% every single year. The majority of these users are within an age group that relies heavily on social acceptance. The time spent online trying to win the “cyber love” of otherwise nonexistent friends can be a taxing endeavor for many, but does it cause depression?

Envy and the number of friends a person has on Facebook are large contributors to depression. Maria Konnikova in the article, “How Facebook Make Us Unhappy,” states, “The more time people spent browsing the site, as opposed to actively creating content and engaging with it, the more envious they felt.” Only reading of your friends’ success while not sharing your own can make some people feel like they are not as successful in their own lives. Early on in almost all Facebook users’ journeys is the race to get as many friends as they can. Having lots of friends means you are more popular and must be cool, but after all the friends are added, the status updates can get depressing. For instance, the article, “Facebook with Care,” discusses how having a few friends makes it more unlikely to see unwanted posts of showing off, but having more friends gives the user a greater ability to become bombarded with happy posts (Ballenger 393). It is the goal of many users to rack up a high friend count, but it can really have an adverse effect on how they see the world. Happy post after happy post while one’s life may be at a standstill may have a negative effect on a person’s morale.

However, Facebook can also be a great way for young adults to perform positive tasks that will help them offline, as well as creating supportive relationships that are not a part of their everyday lives. Gwenn Schurgin O'Keefe, Kathleen Clark-Pearson, and Council on Communications and Media in the article, "The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families," says it can help teens create community events, call to action blogs, expand creativity through sharing of art or music, and help establish a personal identity. It can also provide students with the ability to work together on homework or group projects. It makes it easier to get together outside of class to go over ideas and make a plan to complete the work (397). With the world changing more everyday to an internet based society, it is important that teens are learning to use Facebook as a powerful tool to help them in their everyday lives. John Grobel in the article, "Pediatrics Gets It Wrong About "Facebook Depression," argues, "Research has shown that college students'-who are often older teens- Internet use was directly and indirectly related to less depression. Furthermore, studies have revealed that Internet use can lead to online relationship formation, and thereby to more social support." Having friends online gives you more opportunity to express yourself and receive support from many different sources.

Facebook, like most things in life, is good in moderation. It is a great platform to connect and share ideas, but it also needs to be understood that it does not give a full picture of others lives. Using it wisely can enhance your online experience, and I personally feel that users that allow it to create a sense of depression need to step back, take a deep breath, and concentrate a little bit more on the life not on the screen in front of them.