

Does social media create social isolation?

Turkle, Sherry. "Connected, but alone?" *Sherry Turkle: Connected, but alone?* | TED Talk, TED Conferences, www.ted.com/talks/sherry_turkle_alone_together/up-next

In the TED talk "Connected, but alone?", Sherry Turkle addresses that people want to be with each other, but also elsewhere. It is hard enough being in one place and giving our full attention to a single task. We try incorporating multitasking in our communication, but it only leads to miscommunication. A point that really stands out is the necessity of listening in our relationships with technology. Automatic listeners are what we get out of having a Facebook page or a Twitter feed. We feel as we have no one to listen to us in the world, so we set ourselves to be isolated with machines that we believe care about us. We are getting used to a new way of being alone. We think that being connected will make us less alone, but the reality is that not learning how to be alone will only lead us to feeling more alone. Overall in her TED talk you come to learn that social media is not the cause but a symptom.

Sherry Turkle builds her credibility majorly with the use of pathos and logos. She shares her knowledge based on her Sociology and Physiology background. "Over the past 15 years, I've studied technologies of mobile communication and I've interviewed hundreds and hundreds of people, young and old, about their plugged-in lives." She allows us to relate to the topic being discussed by incorporating her own experiences, "I'm a woman who loves getting texts who's going to tell you that too many of them can be a problem." By putting herself as one of the stakeholder she throughout her TED talk builds her credibility.

Sherry's TED talk addressed a wide variety of stakeholders compared to other arguments which are only directed towards young adults. I agree with Sherry on the point that we want to be with each other, but also elsewhere. We think that we can manage the life we have created for ourselves online and our life, but it is hard to be in two places at once without losing sight of who you really are. Overall when discussing isolation, Sherry takes a different angle compared to other sources. In which she includes that we don't have to be socially isolated if we learn to be alone, if we don't it only leads us to feeling lonelier.

Harris, Rebecca. "The loneliness epidemic: We're more connected than ever - but are we feeling more alone?" *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 30 Mar. 2015, www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/features/the-loneliness-epidemic-more-connected-than-ever-but-feeling-more-alone-10143206.html.

In the article "The loneliness epidemic: We're more connected than ever- but are we feeling more alone?", Rebecca Harris addresses that loneliness affects all of us at some point in our lives. No one can truly escape it, we tend to think that we can, but eventually we all have to face the inevitable. We are "social animals" that need to feel like we belong with others, social pain to us is as real as physical pain. "Research shows that loneliness and rejection activate the same parts of the brain as physical pain." With the growing reliance of social technology rather than having face to face interactions we are more inclined to become more isolated. Although being connected, relationships with others start to become superficial and less rewarding.

Dr. Rebecca Harris is a Psychology lecturer at the University of Bolton, she researches the effects of loneliness on physical and mental health. She heavily builds her credibility with the

use of logos. If a person is socially isolated, they can remain in loneliness state for many years. Research conducted by Mental Health Foundation, found that loneliness is linked to poor mental health. Loneliness affects all ages “Studies have shown that between 20 and 80 percent of adolescents report feeling lonely often, which is compared to 40 to 50 percent in an elderly population”. Each study and research she presents build her credibility throughout her discussion on the topic.

Compared to other sources that blame technology and social media for the cost of loneliness in humans, in this article it does not full out support that claim. Stakeholders are the same as other sources; people of all ages. No other sources share a solution, Rebecca includes that targeting negative thoughts has been the most successful in reducing loneliness. I agree with the points that Rebecca has made, I especially agree with the point that loneliness is about he quality rather than the quantity of relationships that we create. No matter the number of friends we might have, there is still a part of us that feel social contact has not been met.

Nelson, Randi. “Social Media Effects: It May Be Encouraging Social Isolation.” *Viewpoint*

Center, 09 Mar., www.viewpointcenter.com/blog/social-media-effects-social-isolation/.

In the article “Social Media Effects: It May Be Encouraging Social Isolation”, Randi Nelson discusses that social media has both positive and negative effects. Teens between the ages of 11 and 18, who do not have some sort of social media, is viewed as strange because of the society we live in today. Social media does not cause isolation, but it has the possibility of making isolation tendencies worse. Rather than having to go out and socialize with others face to

face, we can choose to isolate ourselves. We rely on the security blanket we like to call “social media” to avoid uncomfortable situations, it has become as way we can navigate the real world.

In this article credibility is built using logos and pathos, Randi Nelson presents a study by the University of Pittsburgh which shows that teens who heavily use social media are three times more likely to feel socially isolated. She addresses the problem with wanting her audience to see that social isolation is just the start, with teens isolating themselves it leads them to having a lower level of confidence as well as having few motivation to engage with other in a real time social interaction. Social media usage inflicts the feeling of being left out along with the feeling of jealousy. Using the analogy of social media being a safety blanket, is essential to building her credibility. Everyone at some point as turned to social media to avoid certain encounters with others.

Alike another source, Randi presents the claim that social media is not exactly the cause that leads teens to isolating themselves. I agree with this because social media is just one piece of the jigsaw puzzle, there are other factors that contribute to social isolation. With viewing two articles that state the same claim, it does not necessarily change my question, but it allows me to see the bigger picture. When deciding if isolation is created by social media, it can be answered “yes” and “no”. Yes, because everyone encounters social media differently and no because social media is just one factor of the many out there that can cause social isolation.