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Rhetorical Analysis

Technology is constantly evolving, for some it is a step closer to a brighter future while for others it is something that is diminishing important aspects of our everyday lives.

“Technology is Destroying the Quality of Human Interaction” is written by Melissa Nilles who is an arts and entertainment editor for a student run newspaper; *The Bottom Line*, at the University of California Santa Barbara. The focus of this text is to make people aware of how technology is affecting human interactions today. Her main point is that we need to start valuing the meaning of quality in our connections, not sheer quantity. Instead of spending time in person with friends, we just call, text or instant message them. It may seem simpler, but she states that we ultimately end up seeing our friends face to face a lot less, showing the reality of misusing technology to stay communicated with others. Her main audience is college students, to make them aware the true influence of technology in their everyday lives. Melissa Nilles relies heavily on pathos and logos and uses ethos effectively to convince her readers that technology is destroying the quality of human interactions.

She starts to build her argument with pathos. Stating that today's social reality has become a terrible nightmare not only to her but to many of her close friends. She admits that she spends far too much time on Facebook trying to catch up with her 1000+ friends, most of who

she rarely sees. The first introduction into the argument, she lures you in by painting a mental picture in your mind with all the things you can miss out on when you choose to use a screen to communicate rather than face to face interactions with others.

Instead of meeting for a quick cup of coffee, my friend and I spent 30 minutes texting back and forth about our day. After that, instead of going in to talk to my professor during his office hours, I emailed him from home with my question. Because of this, he never got to know who I was, even though he would have been a great source for a letter of recommendation if he had.

The author really tries to make you relate to the text, by putting herself as an example. The image she paints in your mind with words is effective because she wants to be able to relate on a certain level to the text.

One thing that she does is compares the emotional difference between virtual and reality interactions. When having a conversation, emotions play a major part in how you interact with others. There is something valuable about talking with someone face to face, whether it be your friends, partners, potential employers or other recurring people that make up your day. “A smiley face emoticon is cute, but it could never replace the ear-splitting grin and smiling eyes of one of your best friends”. On a time note, “Ten text messages can't even begin to equal an hour spent chatting with a friend over lunch”. She really wants her audience to know that although there are many ways to communicate, face to face communication stands above all the rest. An example where people fixed a lack of human contact, the author shares that the stores Albertsons in 2011 decided to take all the self-checkout lanes out of its stores due to the lack of human contact.

Additionally, she includes logos and ethos to continue building the credibility of her argument. She includes research done by a British anthropologist and psychologist; Robin Dunbar “revealed that people are actually limited to a certain number of stable, supportive connections with others in their social network: roughly 150”. Following that evidence, she presents research by Cornell University’s Bruno Goncalves who used Twitter data to present that although the ability to connect with vast amounts of people via the Internet. They discovered “a person can still only truly maintain a friendship with a maximum of 100 to 200 real friends in their social network”. With this evidence she hopes to prove that face to face interactions are still a necessity in our everyday lives. The relationships that we build should not just become a growing number. She explains that she asked one of her close friends that has over 2,241 friends on Facebook about the quality of those relationships. Her friend shared “she really has few friends that she can trust and spend time with happily”. Yes, she gets a lot of feedback on what she posts. Thus, proving the research conducted research by Cornell University’s Bruno Goncalves, that one can only truly maintain a friendship with a maximum of 100 to 200 friends on social media.

I believe that Melissa Nilles argument on technology destroying the quality of human interaction is persuasive to her chosen audience, college students, because we do not need 3000 friends on the Internet. We do not to be texting all the time. To her it is a big waste of time. She encourages us to spend more time together with our friends. As well as making relationships that will last, and not rely on technology to do the job for us. Technology is something that has evolved in the last couple of years, there was a period of time where it did not exist. If we lived without it once, we should not rely heavily on it interact with other today.

Works Cited

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