

Does Technology Make Us More Alone? by Summer Wolf

Technology is a relatively new invention, but it's changing the way we converse. Electronics have mainly been part of the evolution of the way we communicate in life with friends and family. It used to be that we would send and receive letters and mail, but now we send each other five word texts. In many ways it makes us social, but in even more ways it's making us alone. By people being attached to their devices 24/7 instead of being attached to others, they become more alone.

Technology makes people think that they need their phones and that they can't live without it. Dr. Sherry Turkle, the author of *Alone Together*, said on a TED talk recently, "These days we expect more from technology than we expect from each other." We rely on our phones to let us share our opinions with others and let others tell us their opinions, as if we have a personal connection. Many people talk to friends that they know online but don't know in real life. A team of researchers at MIT have created a vest that hugs you every time someone likes your Facebook status. This is an example of how attached we are to technology, we feel happy when someone likes something we post about our lives.

People nowadays use their phones to get out of situations and put things off. For example, people avoid talking to others by pulling out their phones and pretending that there is no one else is standing there. "It makes me sad that there are moments in our lives where we are not present because we are looking at our phone." stated Ms. De Guzman. People today make dinner reservations on Opentable, check in on Foursquare when they arrive at the restaurant, take a picture of their food and post it on Instagram, Tweet something about their food, pay with IPay, give a review about the restaurant on Yelp, and finally get a car on Uber. It's amazing how much we avoid talking when we have our phones. I recently watched a video about a woman, feeling ignored, who woke up to her boyfriend on his phone. Through the day she barely talked to her friends due to them being involved on their phones. The video ended with the woman trying to go to sleep but getting distracted by her boyfriend who was going back on his phone.

People say technology helps us keep in touch with others, but that's not 100 percent true because many times the interactions are not quality conversations. It may help us keep connected, but it's often just a short text or a five to ten minute call. Technology has taught us bad habits of using short sentences when we talk, so when we communicate on the phone it can be weird when you have no idea what the person is talking about because they don't say enough about the topic. Some people meet other people online and just talk online and never actually meet the person face to face. How does that make us "social"? We often forget about them until we see their name, weeks later on a social media.

People nowadays can't even live without their phones because they care more about their phones than their friends. Phones do make people more alone, even if they don't know it, but to other people it's very obvious. So now, when you see someone with their phone at the dinner table, tell them to put it down and talk to you in person and not others online.