



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

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TEXTING MANIA - A SOCIAL DILEMMA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to find out the extent youth has been crazy about usage of new gadgets like cell phones, iPod, MP3 players etc. The major focus has been on usage of cell phones for texting. Technological change is occurring all around us every-day. This is a challenging situation. Youth have been witnessing the change in technology as against their life style. However this change in technology is not without a cost, and the major cost being waste of time on irresponsible texting. With the evolution of the internet, a special innovation came into being known as social networking. Basically social networking is a way in which one can keep himself connected to his near and dear ones in some way or the other. Social networking has enabled us today to connect easily. The objective of this research includes observing & ascertaining the habits of texting & its impact on the youth. Also the purpose of the research is to provide tips for responsible parenting. The exercise is likely to be just an initiative to put forth social evils erupting among youth due to too much texting addictions. It tries to provide workable pointers to successfully tackle such real life situations.

KEYWORDS

Addictions, Communities, Semantics, Service Provider, Social networking.

INTRODUCTION

With the evolution of the internet, a special innovation came into being known as social networking. Basically social networking is a way in which one can keep himself connected to his near and dear ones in some way or the other. In the early 19th century social networking involved media like letter, mails, telegrams, phone calls, but today it includes media like SMSs(Texting), e-mails, blogs, MMSs, scraps and many more. Social networking has enabled us today to connect easily and the best part of it is that most of the online services like chatting, emailing, texting etc are totally free. This has helped even the middle and the lower classes to enjoy the services. It is therefore a big merit of this feature that cuts on the expenditure of ISD call rates. We can easily get connected to our peers or family members, in case they are living in some other city or country. Social networking is one of the hottest trends today and corporate world and even end-users are equally scrambling to leverage this technology. To build their brands, tap new customers, engage deeply with existing ones, creating new friends and relationships and cultivate a sense of community.

Social networking is emerging as a powerful tool these days. Events which happen around the world appear first on websites such as Orkut, LinkedIn, Facebook, Flickr etc before appearing on newspaper or news channels. Indians spend most of their time on such websites or even on mobile handsets texting SMSs to their peers continuously and instantly. These websites / communities are easily accessible on mobile phones making it easy to stay connected while people are on the go.

End-users have undoubtedly chosen mobile phones as a best tool to be able to be in close (?) affinity between the friends and peers creating bondage actually at a cost. The key to building such relationship is communication. Now even corporate have a chance to break down the walls of complex, ineffective hierarchies and to empower employees to get things done.

These tools are simple, fun, engaging and inspirational. These tools have brought fresh winds of change. Social networks are being used by one and all seeking new ways in which to communicate and engage (?) with one another.

When people hear from the term Web2.0 they think it's only about social networking, sharing personal updates on twitter or facebook or watching funny (?) videos on YouTube. Sometimes social networker shares too much of his personal data which creates avenues for security concerns.

FIG. 1.1 ELEMENTS/ TOOLS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

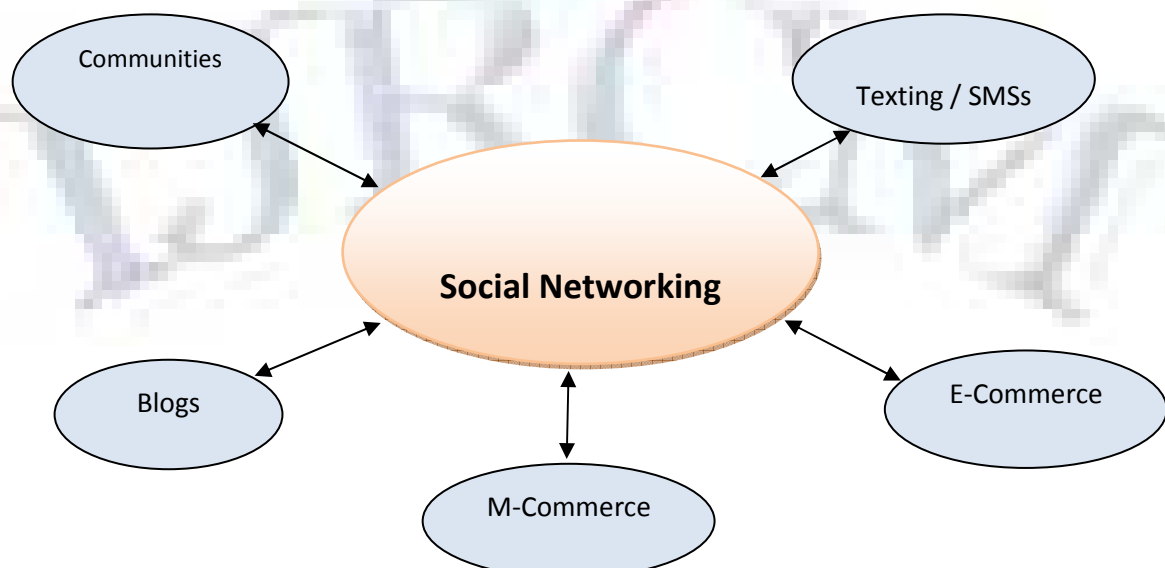
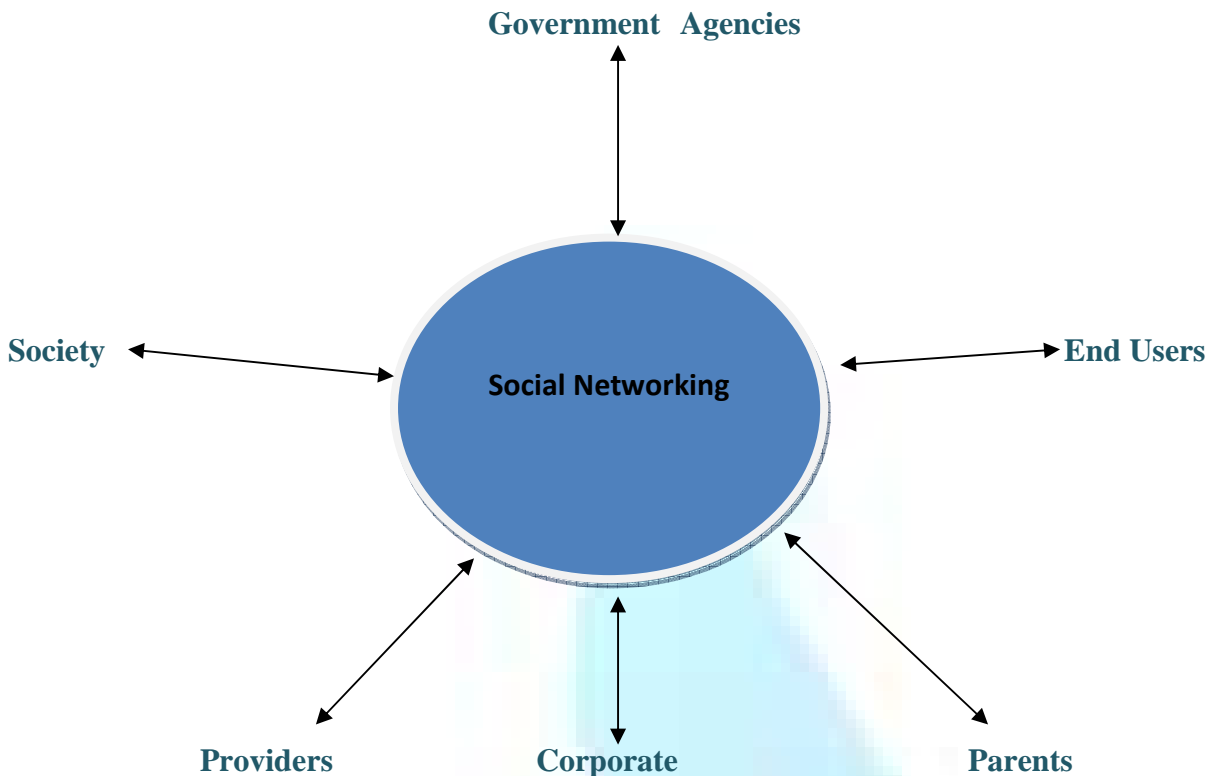


FIG. 1.2 STAKE HOLDERS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

**TEXTING****WESTERN WORLD PERSPECTIVE**

With the proliferation and widespread adoption of SMS technology comes problems unheard of "Thumbs down for text messages - they are officially addictive. - The Telegraph

"Scandinavian treated in clinic for SMS addiction" - The Register

The number of texting addicts is on the rise. A internet therapy center in Scandinavia has treated around 60 addicts since 1998 and this number is believed to be under reported.

ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

Asia has not been spared either. According to Telecoms Korea, 3 out of 10 Korean high school students who carry mobile phones are reported to be addicted to mobile phones. The report also added, a big 21% of 270 high school students carrying cell phones responded that they feel anxious when their handsets are not in their hands and 8% of them said that they feel very frustrated without mobile phones. 10% of the respondents already reported of pain in the shoulder or wrist. This is repetitive strain injury - pressing small keyboards of cell phones that cause poor blood circulation and pain in the shoulder.

HABIT- I- COMPULSIVE MESSAGING

The immediate effect of SMS text addiction, called by some as compulsive text messaging, is repetitive strain injury. This dries out the lubricating fluid between tendons of your hands, shoulders and wrists. Those exhibiting this type of addiction are also prone to depression, anxiousness and sleep disorder, aside from the monetary effects to the person and his/her family.

HABIT- II- DENIAL PHASE

Many people affected by this technology addiction are still on their denial stage claiming there is no such thing as SMS texting addiction. In the early days of marijuana and cocaine, addiction also went unrecognized until people realized they were addicted into it and it was already too late for them to respond rationally.

HABIT-III- WORSE THAN ALCOHOLICS & DRUGS

Why are people quick to look down on alcoholics or drug addicts, but then go out and spend 12 hours in Internet chat-rooms? Compulsive text messaging are sending people to clinics for treating their technology addictions. And this number is rising.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S TAKE ON TEXTING

The World Health Organization has defined addiction as a pathological relationship with a mood-altering substance or experience that has life damaging consequences. So this means an addiction need not be with a mood-altering substance like marijuana or alcohol but it could also be an experience or an activity like Internet chatting or SMS text messaging.

SYMPTOMS AND PERCEPTIONS

People should start getting serious about this problem. Somebody close to you may be into it but you refuse to recognize that it exists. Learn to recognize the common signs like –

- Denial
- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Obsession
- Compulsion
- Isolation

These signs are common symptoms in almost all addictions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of research was to find out the extent youth has been crazy about usage of new gadgets like cell phones, iPod, MP3 players etc. The major focus has been on usage of cell phones for texting. The researchers being from a reputed educational institution from Pune, found it easier to collect data from both the sources viz. Primary and Secondary.

The type of methodology adopted for this piece of research is on the basis of explorative type.

The data collection methods were as follows:

- Questionnaire
- Interviews
- Record review
- Observations

PRIMARY DATA

Data that has been compiled for a specific purpose, and has not been collated or merged with others is called a primary data. In this research researchers have collected responses through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to students from undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The profile of the respondents was representative enough on the following parameters:

- Age
- Gender
- Locality
- Employment status
- Marital status
- Education
- Class

SOURCE, VOLUME & SAMPLE

Since the researchers work in one of the reputed educational institution in the city which has multi-disciplinary courses, it was possible to collect information from about 1% of the population in the institution viz. about 30,000 students (Universe) out of which survey was conducted in two out of five colleges from the educational campus, the strength of whose is around 6,000 (population). Hence questionnaire was distributed to 60 students from both the colleges together.

JUSTIFICATION OF SAMPLE

Since the purpose of research was to articulate representativeness of the social dilemma, researchers found it necessary to collect data only from accessible no. of students who would quickly record their responses. The matter is documented only to put up food for thought for responsible parenting.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data is data collected by someone other than the user. Common sources of secondary data for social science include censuses, surveys, organizational records and data collected through qualitative methodologies or qualitative research.

In this research data was collected also through:

- Magazines & periodicals
- Websites & blogs
- Articles of social activists on Bad Habits and Social Vices
- Interviews of certain categories of respondents

HYPOTHESIS

- "Texting has caught up as a fever among the youth."
- "Texting is invariably amounting to wasteful expenditure."
- "Texting rarely derives pleasure."

Researchers collected information through qualitative and quantitative data to test the above three hypothesis. It was found that :

- First hypothesis is acceptable on the basis of data collected through the answer of question no 1. of the questionnaire without any exception it was summarily accepted that extensive messaging is an IN thing.
- Second hypothesis was also put to test by putting up different questions to the respondents and unstructured interviews conducted by the researchers. It was accepted that messaging amounts to wasteful expenditure.
- While testing the third hypothesis a few emotional questions were posed before the respondents. It was astonishing to find that, they derived pleasure (?) of strange genre.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

After carefully scrutinizing the set of responses received from all types of respondents researchers could summarize their views as detailed below:

- 68.3% respondents entirely agree that cell phones are extensively used for messaging (Texting)
- 88.3% respondents send messages mostly to friends & peers, however remaining categories of respondents include parents (8.3%) and others(3.3%)
- It is found that no. of messages sent per day is put to 100. However a few respondents have crossed the limit of 100 SMSs per day. This means the fever of texting is slowly catching up with the Indian youth.
- However it surprising to note that the users for MMS service is negligible. Almost 98% respondents do not use it. Reason could be charges payable on such service are substantially high.
- It is generally found internet on cell phone is not popular among the student because of the cost associated with it.
- During this research it was observed that online chat communities are popular among respondents. However in the order of preferences Orkut is one of the most popular and frequently used portals. Respondents mostly access these portals on their home PCs, WIFI in college and Net Cafes.
- Majority of the respondents are pre-paid subscribers and also have free SMS packs.
- It is observed that the respondents under enquiry moderately spend up to Rs. 100/- on messaging. However it is also not very heartening to note that parents do not monitor this expenditure closely enough.
- It is also observed that the messaging has been extensively used for exchanging jokes. Therefore even though it lightens the atmosphere and reduces stress the expenditure on such messaging should always be considered as a luxury and not a need.
- As regards usage of coding method in messaging, it is really surprising to find that almost majority of respondents do make use of coding for conveying messages. It can be inferred that usage of coding denotes secretive attitude of the sender as well as the receiver of the messages. It could also lead to unpleasant situation.
- It is heartening to reveal that only handful of 2% respondents feel insulted when asked by parents. At the same time about 21% respondents sometimes react to the parents when asked.
- When asked about what is achieved out of messaging, almost 85% of respondents said that:
 - It is convenient
 - It gives them pleasure(?)

- It is a medium of expression
- Question was also asked about language or semantic used in messaging; it was stunning to find that most the messaging uses friendly & motivational language. However to a certain degree language used is also found to be either arousing or abusive.
- 27% respondents are in favour of restrictions imposed by parents on messaging. However remaining 73% respondents have either denied such restrictions or could not make up their mind for the same.
- It is astonishing that the set of responses were equally divided into two different groups viz. Uncomfortable and angry on one side and No difference on the other. This was the response to question asked – What if your asked to keep your cell phone away ?

OBSERVATION

All though it is apparent that there are various elements of social networking such as blogs, e-commerce, m-commerce, communities and texting/ SMSs, it is the responsibility of every stake holder to see to it that candle in not burnt from both the sides. It therefore follows that the stake holders such as Government, Service Providers, Society etc tend to over look social evils of the media of texting. It may ruin the social fabric and will have dent to the family system in India. Therefore it calls for responsible parenting. It is the duty of the elders in the family not only worn the juniors but also protect them from habituating the evil practices. The suggestive majors are covered here in after. (Plz. see diagrams 1.1 & 1.2)

TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILDREN TO OVERCOME THEIR TEXT ADDICTION

Put the Phone Down and Put your Thumbs in the Air. How parents can help their children overcome their text addiction.

- Text messaging at the dinner table, in the classroom, at the beach, while driving, and everywhere else has become common practice for children now-a-days.
- Face to face conversations have become a chore and more parents are growing concerned that not only are their child's grades suffering, but they are also missing out on valuable real-world experiences.
- Understanding the need to educate these children on texting responsibly has become immensely important.

Here are few tips for parents looking to stage an intervention with their text-addicted children.

1. Have "the talk" – Opening the doors of face to face communication is a big step. Sit with them and express your concerns about the negative effects, constant texting has on them.
2. Help them find a hobby – Many children use texting as their default solution to boredom. Instead, encourage your child to pursue other activities that they may enjoy, like painting, acting, reading, or athletics.
3. Limited Text Plans – By limiting the number of texts your cellular plan has, you reduce the number of texts your child will be able to send. Limited plans do run the risk of overage charges so make sure your child knows the repercussions of over-texting. **If not...**
4. Let them pay the bill – If your child texts so much that you end up with thousands of rupees in cell phone charges, having them help pay for part of the bill will teach them responsibility. Texts don't grow on trees.
5. Film them in the act – Bust out the video camera and film your child every time you catch them with their heads down and their thumbs a blaze. Once you gather enough 'evidence,' play them the tape. Allowing them to see how much they are missing may be enough to open their eyes.
6. Text-free zone – Allow certain times where phones aren't allowed, such as dinner or family outings. This will help them to control how much time they put into texting and when.
7. Avoid the extras – Call your service provider to block third-party applications on your child's handset. Explain to your children – ringtones, games, apps – they all cost money and can contain explicit content. If an explanation doesn't cut it, take control and limit the programs and features your child can and cannot access with their phone.

CONCLUSION

Daily, we've seen new SMS applications introduced into the market. The market for SMS texting is getting more lucrative intended to make people absorb as much of this technology in their daily lives. The more SMS texting becomes a part of us, the more addicting it will become, the more problems we will have to deal with in the future. Simply, treat technology as a tool and never an extension of our lives. As long as we keep on that perspective, chances of being manipulated by these latest gadgets, gizmos and applications will be slim.

REFERENCE

Facedesk Corp. (USA)' blog

REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK

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I am sure that your feedback and deliberations would make future issues better – a result of our joint effort.

Looking forward an appropriate consideration.

With sincere regards

Thanking you profoundly

Academically yours

Sd/-

Co-ordinator