

## Affects of Online Communication to our Psychological being

The Internet remains as one of the biggest communication tools that we have access to in the modern world that we live in. You could log on today and speak to someone who lives half way around the world but how do you know if that person is really who they say they are?

The Internet allows for communication at anytime to any place. It can create a sense of community whilst decreasing isolation and facilitate the learning process. There are also several ways in which online communication can take place such as email, blogs, message boards/forums, instant messenger, two way interactive TV and web cam as well as the ever growing popular profile sites such as Myspace, Facebook and bebo. These sites allow users to create personal profiles including pictures. The Internet allows us to keep in contact with people who may live miles away or who may be based in another country. Many people also use the Internet, especially when it comes to sites such as Myspace and Facebook to meet new people who share the same interests or who live near by. This is all well and good but does the Internet change the way we react to situations and the way in which we communicate with people? Numerous amounts of research carried out by various psychologists suggests that it does.

The Internet masks who we really are and people are more forward than they would be in real life. As we are not face to face with the person we are communicating with we are more likely to talk about topics such as sex, which often lead to flirting in what would be a platonic relationship in a real situation.

Attractiveness is also less of a worry on the Internet as communicating with people in this way doesn't feel like a social situation, which is why many shy people find it easier to express themselves via the Internet. However there are certain dangers around communicating via the Internet as no one really knows who they are talking to unless they know them previously and often people change their identity for online purposes. Online you can pretend to be anyone and can pretend to be doing anything. This is why children and the Internet is such a concern as children could harmlessly think they are talking to one of their peers when they could really be letting a paedophile into their lives.

The Internet changes the way we portray ourselves and the way we interact with other people. This could simply be by changing your name through to changing your gender and age. Internet communication is often compared to fancy dress. When we are in costume we are psychologically masking who we really are which gives us a new found confidence, the same theory can be applied to the way we communicate whilst online.

The most important thing to make sure of when you are in a discussion with someone online is to be true to yourself and not get forced into doing anything that you don't want to do. Trying to be someone else only leaves you being caught out in the end.

## About the Author

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