

Headlight

Written by the students of Marblehead High School for our school and community
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Tech Generation Losing Focus due to iOverload

Danny Plunkett
iEditor, Senior

When you think of the new technologies of the 21st century, your mind probably makes a bee-line to personal hand-held devices such as music players, tablets, and, of course, cell phones. In a society where it is vital to have the latest piece of technology, the cell phone market has exploded. Almost everyone now owns a portable phone, and it is considered strange and “old-fashioned” for a person not to have one. You might be thinking: “but cell phones are so convenient! I could never live without mine.” Well very soon you may feel differently, because cell phones are ruining everything. They remove personal interactions from your life, make you obnoxiously accountable, and distract you constantly. If you are a young person in today’s world, you have a cell phone, and ironically you use it to avoid talking to anyone. Two new innovations in communication have severely reduced our ability to talk to one another: texting and voice-mail. Twenty years ago, if you wanted to find out how someone was doing or make plans, you just gave them a call and had a conversation. Nowadays, it is considered more convenient and easy to use text messaging. Teenagers (myself included) text constantly and never actually call anyone in person. Texting is quick – though not as quick as a call – and it is relatively free of any personal exchange. You can wait to respond to a text or wait to read it. It’s flexible.

Voicemail is the second culprit. People are so scared to talk to someone they just “let it go to voicemail.” We all do it. Cell phones have effectively eliminated the need to talk to people in a live setting and “phone tag” is now commonplace. You and your friends can throw voice messages back and forth without a second thought, never once talking to each other. Your cell phone makes you more social... but impairs your social skills.

Another byproduct of the cell phone craze is that everyone expects everyone else to be accessible during every second of every day. In the days of yore, when my parents were young, you called a friend’s house, talked to their mom or dad if they were not home, and had them call you back when they were available. If someone wants to reach you now, they send you a text. If you don’t text them back within a minute, they call your phone, and if you don’t pick up, they text you again. Then they leave you a voicemail – maybe. Ten minutes later when you get out of the shower and look at your phone, you have a text saying “sry i couldnt reach u so we left w/o u.” You would be hard pressed to find someone who calls their friend’s house anymore. Cell phones have made our lives too fast-paced to even wait for a return phone call. In addition kids must call or text their parents with updates constantly if they are out with friends, and adults always carry their phones around with them so they are available for their children or for their colleagues. You are considered irresponsible if you can’t be reached at all times, and this out-

look needs to be changed.

Worst of all, cell phones are a constant distraction, and because of them you can never truly give your whole attention to anything. Smart phones are the worst offenders, since they continually divert you with emails, games, notifications and a myriad of other applications. Even if you don’t have a smart phone it is still an issue. While writing this essay I have checked my phone next to me about twenty times, merely from habit. Cell phones take away your focus from everything: driving, meetings, homework, meals, etcetera. Some people feel stressed when they are away from their phones for just a few minutes because they think they might have missed something important. This creates a tense, high-strung generation that is less efficient and entirely dependent on cell phones to survive.

You may argue that the convenience of a portable phone outweighs its downsides, but that is simply not true. Humans lived without cell phones for years and functioned perfectly well. We would be better off getting rid of them altogether so that we could simplify our lives and exist in a happier state. Cell phones only created stressed-out, distracted people and you would be more independent without one. They have permeated just about every level of our daily life and it’s time that we stopped relying upon them so heavily!

Stein's Corner: Treasured Memories

Alex Stein
Editorial Manager,
Senior

As time goes on, we forget more and more. Even at seventeen, I can’t fully recall all the moments of my childhood. Our memories, our adventures, our birthdays become fleeting thoughts of the past. Weekends at the zoo or Thanksgiving at the grandparents’ house slowly fade from memory. We can take pictures to preserve these memories but the feelings and the details of those moments are lost forever.

A few weeks ago, I was cleaning my house and stumbled upon a box full of old family videos. Considering they were never updated to DVD, they were tucked away and forgotten. It had been a long time since I had watched them so I hooked up the VCR and relived my childhood in front of my television. My mother always had a camcorder attached to her hand so I had an abundance of videos to choose from. Events that I once thought were fleeting memories again became vivid images.

While we haven’t invented time travel yet and Doc Brown hasn’t brought the flux capacitor to Marblehead, this is the best alternative to going back in time. We can close our eyes and visualize these events but they can’t replace the actual images. Home videos preserve a piece of us that we may have forgotten over time. It’s quite unique when you get to live in your old house again and relive your 5th birthday party. Even seeing the small things made my eyes light up, like how

I used to lose it whenever someone sang “Happy Birthday,” or how I had an infatuation with this plastic camera that made music. I had forgotten how great my Halloween decorations were and my brother’s tantrum in the North Shore Mall wearing his spider costume. It brought back memories of family traditions such as apple picking, the Topsfield Fair, holidays, New York during Christmas, and every trip to an amusement park. When I think back on how stupid it was when my grandfather videotaped me in my basement playing basketball in my imaginary Boston Garden, I am now thankful that memories like this were preserved. Still, I am sorry that I said, “no more” or “enough” to my mother every time she wanted to video or take pictures. Now I wish there were a whole lot more. I wonder what I can’t remember or will never recall again.

After I discovered these tapes, I brought them to my grandparents’ house because I remember them saying they would really like to watch them again. I realized that these tapes are a part of who we are. When my grandmother was reduced to tears after seeing her mother, my great-grandmother, at a party for me when I was born, I realized that these videos are the keys to the past, reuniting us with people who are no longer with us and more of a treasure than any sum of money. When my cousins visited last week, they wanted to watch the videos as well. My uncle’s face lit up when he saw his dog that died very young many years earlier. Only a fleeting image of Louie

carelessly walking around their backyard pool was enough to stir a response. These home videos do a lot more than entertain us; they show us who or what has gotten us to this point in our life.

It is funny to look back and see people who you forgot all about, people who died, and people you still (or don’t) talk to. Through my travel back in time, I caught glimpses of schoolmates who were once good friends that I now barely acknowledge. For those you’ve forgotten, you get to be momentarily reunited with them and wonder where they ended up. For those who died, it is a chance again to be with them, hear their voice, and remember the times that were special. And for those people you still talk to, you get to watch them make a fool of themselves, like at the Eveleth School Fashion Show or the kindergarten Thanksgiving sing-a-long.

I mentioned a few weeks back that there are television shows that are currently on that take us back in time and remove us from today’s hectic world. The same goes for home videos. It is quite refreshing to be taken back to a time when applying to college was not a thought and Blues Clues was a major priority. If I am ever given a wish, I would without a doubt want that remote controller given to Adam Sandler in Click. No amount of money would be equal to going back in time and seeing people who are no longer with us or sitting down to dinner in a house that I don’t live in anymore. Luckily, these memories are easily accessible in a box tucked away in the closet.

CALLING ALL TALENT!

Marblehead’s Got Talent is returning to MHS! If you have a talent that you would like to perform, please note the following audition dates!

7:15 to 9:15 pm- MHS Auditorium
-Tuesday, January 31st - Seniors
-Wednesday, February 8th - Juniors
-Tuesday, February 28th - Sophomores
-Tuesday, March 6th- Freshman
-Tuesday, April 3rd- Finals

Five finalists will be chosen to perform at Boston Yacht Club on Friday, May 4th
Students will be able to sign up for this event during lunch at MHS.
Start Practicing!

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