

The internet is changing our lives for the worse - Penny Morrow 5/6C

The internet is changing our lives, whether it be for better or for worse. Although, it is *my* intention that our lives, although potentially more convenient, are being manipulated as a result of catfishing, fake news, threats and online bullying. So when you flick your laptop open, when you light up your home screen, are you really just lighting up the pathway to danger?

To begin with, anyone can be maliciously subjected to fake news, on a daily basis. Fake news is spreading like wildfire, and children are most at risk. It all starts when a scammer posts something untruthful online, then a few people see it, share it, and soon 6.8 million people see that and believe it. David Donahoo, senior adviser on digital innovation with the Alannah & Madeline Foundation, said, "Everyone can open up photoshop and change an image a little bit or download a video and upload it.", meaning anyone can make fake news, even a child. An example of such atrocity is, when an influencer posts videos of war that happened 20 years ago, pretending that it is happening right now in Ukraine, wanting sympathy that was caused by straight up lies. Over the span of 2019 and 2020, 53% of Americans, young and old, admitted to sharing fake news online. That's more than 145 million people! Fake news is just one of the many horrible reasons why the internet is ruining our lives.

In addition to this, in the world of technology, there are bound to be scams. In November 2020, a middle aged man named Geoff Harper was called by a stranger. The stranger on the phone was claiming to be an inspector from the National Crime Agency and told Geoff Harper that he was the victim of a complex fraud involving banks, police and, possibly, members of his own family. Harper was asked to help track and identify the fraudsters and to withdraw the money from his three compromised bank accounts for safeguarding. Soon enough, he found out that all his money had been stolen, leaving him homeless and suicidal. Scams that target one person are cowardly and pathetic, but these scammers won't just stop at one, they'll target whole schools. Bomb threats occur when schools are informed, by a random person, that there is a bomb inside the school, causing everyone to evacuate, only to find that the caller was a scammer, and there was no bomb, just an explosion of lies. So, do YOU want to lose money, and/or endure the panic of thinking your child's school is under threat?

People may say, "Oh, but you can make new friends online!" Yes, you can, but with making friends online, comes catfishing. If you are unaware, catfishing is wicked. It is when a person pretends to be someone who isn't them. (I.e fake dating profiles, online chat rooms, ect.)An

innocent person might really connect with the fake person, and share their life with them, then when they find out they were catfished, they would be heartbroken. Around 35% of victims of catfishing experience significant psychological consequences, meaning that depression or trust issues can be caused by catfishing.

To further support my point, online bullying is on the rise. Online bullying is horrible. Online bullying is abusive. Not only that, but it could collude with the mindset of children, especially if it is a person they know, who they thought was a friend. It doesn't just have to be saying mean things, it could be targeting the user in a game, excluding them from a group text chain or a multiplayer game. 2019 cyberbullying statistics showed that nearly 43% of teens had experienced some form of online harassment. **43% of teenagers all over the world!** That's almost half! Think about how these kids would feel, and how the parents would feel, knowing they can't do anything to discontinue it?

So to summarise, you, your friends, your child, ANYONE you know, is at risk of online bullying, catfishing, scams and fake news when they go on the internet. Mikko Hypponen, a computer security expert, said, "The situation on the internet is so bad right now that if you go and buy a computer and plug it into the internet, it will be infected within 5 to 10 minutes." The arguments presented above show that nobody is safe on the internet, not even you.