

### INTERNET OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS: YOUTH AND THE VIRTUAL WORLD

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**Annotation:** This scientific article describes the role, opportunities and benefits of the Internet, which is now popular, in people's lives, as well as the dangers of the Internet.

**Key words:** Internet opportunities, virtual world ,Cyberbullying ,dangers of the Internet.

Introduction: The Internet has become an integral part of modern life and has fundamentally changed the way we access information, communicate and engage with the world around us. This is especially true for young people, people growing up in a digital environment. While the Internet offers opportunities for education, social connections, and personal growth, it also presents risks that require careful handling. True, the impact of the Internet on young people has been relatively positive, expanding their access to information and knowledge: The Internet has made it possible for young people to easily and quickly search, learn and use information in oral, written, graphic and multimedia formats. This created ample opportunities for their independent development of knowledge and skills. Digital tools such as online learning resources, open lectures, tutorials, videos have made it possible to increase knowledge and skills in a way that matches the interests and needs of young people. This opened up new ways to show and develop their individual abilities. - Social networks, forums, blogs have become effective platforms for young people to exchange ideas, create new ideas together, and show their creative abilities. Also, the Internet has brought young people closer to the world of open, comprehensive information and broadened their horizons. This will help them to develop new thinking, research and solution-seeking skills. The development of the Internet and digital technologies has increased the opportunities for strengthening social relations, networking and cooperation among young people: Social networks have become a modern, convenient and widespread tool for connecting young people with each other, communicating and working together. This strengthened the bond between them. Different online groups, forums, platforms made it possible for young people to unite around common interests, values or problems and support each other. It helps to develop their sense of belonging. New acquaintances, friendships, social relations were formed among young people through the Internet. This helped them to expand their social circle, communicate with new people and get involved in cooperative activities. Online discussions and events related to global problems, political and social events stimulated the integration of young people into the globalized world and increased interest in international cooperation. As a result, the Internet has

become an important tool for bringing young people together, for their solidarity and united actions. This increased their social and civic activities. The Internet and social media pose a risk of addictive behavior among young people:

- Excessive use of the Internet and social networks can lead to problems such as improper distribution of time, disruption of daily routines, sleep and eating disorders among young people.
- Over-indulgence of some young people in social networks, online games or other digital activities can lead to the development of inappropriate and purposeless actions and addictive behavior in them.
- There is a possibility that this situation will have a negative impact on the daily activities of young people, family relations, education and social life, and harm their physical and mental health.
- Excessive use of the Internet can weaken young people's communication skills, weaken their personal relationships, and alienate them from real life, causing excessive interest in the virtual world. To eliminate these risks, it is necessary to increase the literacy of young people on the Internet and social media, to form a culture of using digital tools, as well as constant supervision and guidance by parents and educators. It serves to maintain and develop a healthy lifestyle of young people.

The dangers of the Internet with the intensive use of the Internet and digital technologies, youth problems such as cyberbullying and online bullying have arisen. These issues pose serious risks to young people's emotional and mental health: - Cyberbullying involves bullying and belittling young people through aggressive, abusive or threatening online messages, posts, videos. This causes problems in their self-confidence, self-acceptance, and social relations. - Online bullying refers to attempts to intimidate and harm young people through threats, blackmail or harassment. This reduces their sense of security and protection, and can lead to negative psychological consequences such as depression, anxiety, and feelings of distress. - Such cyber-threats are likely to seriously damage young people's mental health, self-acceptance, self-confidence and moral development. This can have negative consequences for their successful and happy life in real life. In order to prevent and eliminate these problems, it is important to disseminate information among youth, parents and educators about cyber safety, digital culture, responsibility as members of the community, and take measures within the framework of the law. As a result of the rapid development of the Internet and digital technologies, young people are exposed to a variety of inappropriate, harmful and harmful content: - Young people, especially children and teenagers, have easy access to harmful information such as appearance and body image, sexual content sites, messages, videos. This can have a negative impact on their personal life, moral and mental health. - Young people may also be exposed to content related to various bad habits, violence, crime and drugs. This leads to processes that become dangerous social problems for them. - In addition, young people face risks of information flow, such as information security, dissemination of distorted, false or incorrect information. This can undermine their healthy lifestyle, beliefs and values. - In order to overcome the above risks, it is extremely important to develop digital literacy, online safety, ethical standards and proper content evaluation skills among young people, parents and educators. It is also necessary to develop legislation and social programs by the state and public organizations to protect young people from such risks and create a healthy and safe digital environment for them. The Internet and social media pose a risk of addictive behavior among young people: - Excessive use of the Internet and social networks can lead to problems such as

improper distribution of time, disruption of daily routines, sleep and eating disorders among young people. - Over-indulgence of some young people in social networks, online games or other digital activities can lead to the development of inappropriate and purposeless actions and addictive behavior in them. - There is a possibility that this situation will have a negative impact on the daily activities of young people, family relations, education and social life, and harm their physical and mental health.

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### Conclusion

The Internet presents a multifaceted landscape for young people, offering many opportunities, but also significant risks. As educators, parents and politicians, we must work together to empower young people to navigate the virtual world responsibly and safely. This includes implementing digital literacy programs, encouraging open communication about online risks, and developing strategies to mitigate the effects of the internet alongside its positive aspects.

By balancing the opportunities and risks of the Internet, we can build the skills young people need to take advantage of the full potential of the digital age and thrive in the virtual world.

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