Virtual Societies

In today’s day and age, we’ve become very reliable on social media and technology. Due to the widespread production and variety of the technologies offered, people have adjusted to becoming a digital generation. Being part of the virtual generation has its perks, but also many consequences we need to be careful of.

One of the many problems in today’s society and generation is the immoderate usage of technological gadgets like phones, laptops, televisions, and much more. When we can’t control our usage, it becomes a problem. Not only personally, but also socially and economically. People become very reliable on all the opportunities and services offered behind screens that they sometimes forget to be self-dependant. Some effects technology has on us can be so big it can affect our safety both physically and mentally. People lose their social skills due to excessive usage of the internet, they can enter a state of depression or other mental problems. Studies have proved that depression and other mental issues have increased at a dramatic ever since technology has been introduced to this generation. Physical problems that they can cause are things like car crashes or miscommunication that leads to violence. The root problem to many car crashes is phone usage. Using the phone while driving is extremely dangerous, yet it’s very normalized in our societies, which is why balancing our usage of technology is really important.

Hatan Al Khater, one of the presenters in QLC 2019, spoke about the wide dynamics of the virtual generation and its perks and disadvantages. She emphasizes the importance of the balance between social reality and virtual reality. Keeping a balance between these two is a big obstacle our generation is facing. We are struggling to keep that balance because we are the first generation to have all these gadgets that our ancestors never had.

Why do you think people have become dependant on technology? After many researches and in my experience, this generation is depending on technology because it’s a window of communication and opportunities. Despite that, there are many disadvantages of depending on technology and its excessive usage. In education, students depend too much on the internet rather than putting in the effort of using their minds and other resources in real life. Is being in a virtual generation a good or a bad thing? Why? It’s actually both. There’s a good side and a bad side. Being in the good side, you should understand that you’re safe and you value for your real life. Being in the bad side can lead you to a dark place and loneliness. You’re going to be isolated from the opportunity of physical real life that you own. What would you change about technology and the internet today? What I would suggest is that people use limits and restrictions and take control of their interactions with technology and social life. Keep a balance between reality and virtuality. I’m not here to criticize technology because it does have its perks, we just need to understand how to use it effectively.

“Hatan Al Khater, one of the presenters in QLC 2019, spoke about the wide dynamics of the virtual generation and its perks and disadvantages.”
Photography is not a hobby, it is not an art either, it is also not a technical achievement, it is a form of expression, speech, a form of language even. Photography encompasses the entire form of human speech and emotion, from despair to joy, to fear and freedom as well. Entire revolutions revolve around just one single picture. A single picture can show one side of the world from the other, from east to west, rich to poor, free to oppressed. Photography is much more than pretty pictures, it is speech and should be protected the same way we speak freely. Not only does it show people truth, but it shows us our past in a way that no memory would ever be able to reproduce in such an accurate fashion. It shows our past and the people that were with us within that time. A picture named The vulture and the little girl, also known as “The Struggling Girl”, is a famous photograph by Kevin Carter which first appeared in The New York Times on 26 March 1993. It is a photograph of a frail famine-stricken boy, initially believed to be a girl, who had collapsed in the foreground with a vulture eyeing him from nearby. The child was reported to be attempting to reach a United Nations feeding center about a half mile away in Ayod, Sudan (now South Sudan), in March 1993. The picture won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography award in 1994. Carter died by suicide four months after winning the prize. The image had an impact on the photographer that he could not live with himself. In March 1993, The New York Times was seeking an image to illustrate a story by Donatella Lorch about the Sudan. Nancy Burki, the newspaper’s picture editor on the foreign desk, called Marinovich, who told her about “an image of a vulture stalking a starving child who had collapsed in the sand.” Carter’s photo was published in the March 26, 1993 edition. The caption reads: “A little girl, weakened from hunger, collapsed recently along the trail to a feeding center in Ayod. Nearby, a vulture waited.” This first publication in The New York Times “caused a sensation” Marinovich wrote, adding, “It was being used in posters for raising funds for aid organization. Papers and magazines around the world had published it, and the immediate public reaction was to send money to any humanitarian organization that had an operation in Sudan.” Because of the image, parents on the other side of the world would not have to bury their children because they couldn’t give them even a small piece of bread. A child didn’t have to lose their mother because she insisted on feeding them first. Families had hope. Hope that came from the riyal you gave in the charity box, or the bottle you gave the worker on the way to work, not knowing that he didn’t have a penny to his name. So if anyone ever tells you that your charity doesn’t help, tell them to be thankful for the items and opportunities they have and remember, one riyal, one word, one water bottle and one picture can save someone’s life.

“One riyal, one word, one water bottle and one picture can save someone’s life.”
Are trendy diets worth the hype? Being trendy conflicts with your personal choices, but in this case, it technically doesn’t. Leading a healthy life is so important and the fact that it’s going mainstream now is really good news for our society. Lots of people are hopping on the bandwagon and it’s helping them lead better lives. But are all healthy trends good for us?

It’s good to take care of yourself and understand your body’s functions and needs. With the new health trends, it’s really important to understand what’s good and what’s not good for you personally. Each person is different, so we have to be careful about how we adjust our lifestyles. Let’s take the keto diet for example. This diet supposedly helps people lose a lot of fat in a short amount of time. It does do what it claims to do, but if people don’t follow this diet consistently, they gain all the weight that they lost back and more.

Another famous example is veganism. Being a vegan means that people don’t eat meat or dairy products. A vegan’s diet is based on fruits, veggies, nuts, and many other animal-free foods. Many vegans practice veganism because they believe that humans don’t need meat and dairy to live, and that being a vegan contributes to saving the environment. Although this diet has its perks, it has a lot of cons on the people who practice it. Cutting off meat and dairy means that you have to replace your sources of vitamins and nutrients with alternative foods, or else their health would decline. This diet is hard for many people because meat and dairy have been staple foods in their daily meals for a long time. Researching diets and lifestyles to check if they suit you is very important. Going to a specialist and asking for advice is even better. You have to do what your body wants from you, not what the trends say.

Under Age Driving

Law is for all. To be protected by, to be given freedom and to be guarded by the national security. Unfortunately some privileged children prefer to go above the law and put themselves and others in danger by driving without a proper license. They feel that the law is not designed for them but only the people who don’t have the privilege like they do. All around the world we can see this issue growing and no strict laws are implemented to solve this problem. Supervision these days is not enough as most eyes go straight away to crimes like stealing. People are still not aware of how this issue may be a big concern and danger for all categories of the society.

Not all people who drive illegally are doing it for fun. For example due to the Saudi Arabian women driving ban, some children even as young as twelve years old have to drive in order to drop their sisters and mothers to their workplace. Even though the ban was lifted the culture of men being the people who control women is still found. Women are not able to drive unless they have permission from their guardian which is supposedly a male figure.

Taxis also may not be a solution as many people can’t afford to take a taxi to work everyday. So they depend on their children to drive them because they can rely on no one else. But this issue also leads them to a bigger issue of depriving them from their education.

While some may be driving illegally due to the extreme situations around them. Some people drive just because they think the law is basically not for them. Many unfortunately injure or themselves or other people. If you or anyone you know drives without the proper regulation, just remember it takes one second, one second to hit a car and make a 9-year old orphan.

“The Health Wave”

“Each person is different, so we have to be careful about how we adjust our lifestyles. Let’s take the keto diet for example.”

“Just remember it takes one second, one second to hit a car and make a 9-year old orphan.”
Celebs VS Human Rights

Deema Al Ali
Vision International School

A lot of us have favorite celebrities that we look up to because of their humbleness and inspiring personalities and work, yet little did we know, our favourite celebrities may have questionable human rights records. Celebrity support of states guilty of ethnic cleansing such as Israel, Myanmar, and China in most cases isn’t very obvious and on the media, which is why people are unaware of it. Ethnic cleansing completely goes against human rights and many people do not associate themselves with such inhumane practices. These same people may not know that the Madonna, a very popular singer that’s known for many hit songs, is in fact Pro-Israel. She did cancel a show in Israel, but she went there on a secret visit in 2015. She was spotted in a luxury penthouse in Tel Aviv with her daughter enjoying her stay.

Kanye West, a famous fashion designer and rapper is also Pro-Israel. He defied the boycott of Israel and performed a show at Tel Aviv in 2015. He reportedly is looking for real estate in Israel and has two of his children baptized in Jerusalem.

Seth Rogen is an American-Canadian comedian, actor, writer, producer, and director. He signed the 2014 pro-Israel statement, which makes him very clearly a Zionist supporter.

Adam Sandler is an American actor best known for his parts in many famous comedy movies. Many people don’t know that he’s a huge Israel supporter. He said it himself, he’s a major supporter of the Zionist country and is very proud of his Jewish background.

Muslims In America

Mohammed Gulzar
Qatar Academy Doha

Many Muslims in non-Muslim majority nations, have to deal with discrimination and oppression due to misconceptions about our beliefs and our practices. America, a nation that is proud of the fact that by law, anyone and everyone is accepted for who they are and that they can say whatever they want to say. As the saying goes, “Home of the free, land of the brave.” Unfortunately, there is still a large stigma against Muslims, resulting in the Islamophobia phenomenon that occurred after the 9/11 attacks which were fanatics that had nothing to do with Islam. Yet, people needed a face to blame and unfortunately, a religion of 1.5 billion people had to take the blame for the terrorists that had nothing to do with Islam. Attacks against Muslims have risen exponentially due to the attacks in the past 17 years and mosques have been shut down due to security threats to the mosques. Muslims regularly get checked twice at the airport, have a higher likelihood of being stopped by the police and more likely to be detained (arrested for no reason). People have a fear of Muslims that cannot be stopped due to the media always vilifying Muslims. Many Americans give tips to the police to anyone wearing Arab clothing to which the police use over-proportionate force against them. An Emirati individual was about to die as police tackled him and he was just leaving the hospital due to a major stomach surgery. No apology was made. Students are shunned from making friends as many say, they simply just don’t fit in. Some Muslims completely have to abandon their belief system to assimilate to American culture. This should not be the case as if America is truly the home of the free and the land of the brave, people of all religions should be accepted for who they are.

“Unfortunately, there is still a large stigma against Muslims, resulting in the Islamophobia phenomenon”
What makes us human? Is it a biological definition in which our soul isn't accounted for? Or is it our humanity, our inherent love to help and save our brothers in oppression? Whatever conspiracy theorists say, we as humans usually don't tolerate oppression. Whether it's from a German man with a weird mustache who hates Jews, or a madman who thinks he can get away with genocide in Cambodia or terrorists in the Middle East who think slavery should still be a thing and that women don't have a soul. The similarity between all of these people is that they were all quickly and resolutely stopped from expanding their terror on more people. Have all evil people been stopped? Of course not. Are there financial/political reasons countries don't help other oppressed people? Of course. Yet, when push comes to shove, we think we always do the right thing in the end. Yet, right now, there are over a million innocent Muslims trapped in concentration camps, some as young as nine years old and as old as 90 to be stripped of their identity, faith, language, mind and unfortunately sometimes their life? Did you know that random people are being killed in the camps and harvested for organs? These practices are essentially modern concentration camp and embody the Jewish camps in Nazi Germany. Among other horrors happening within the camps, Chinese authorities are rounding up any political dissidents that speak up against the treatment of the ethnic Uighurs and putting them in front of a death squad. For those who don't know, the P.R.C is trying to instill obedience to the communist state, in any way possible and Uighurs are an ethnic minority in the west of the country who are mostly Muslim, which contrasts to the East of China which is now mainly Atheist. In order to keep all of its citizens in line, China has officially opened 'voluntary' 're-education camps' for its citizens who want to relearn what it is to be a Chinese citizen. In reality there is nothing voluntary about the experience and many do not make it out alive if the government decides they're too outspoken to be in public. Never to be heard of again, no informing of family, no funeral and no retrieval of possessions. The Communist party's practices bear a frightening resemblance to the practices done within Soviet labour camps called Gulags, infamous for their inhumane practices towards prisoners. Obviously, the world must be getting ready to free a million innocent people who are being killed by an evil government, just like another evil person in WWII. Or at least, severely condemning China's practices and suspending trade with them. Not exactly, in a quite sickening fact is that all Muslim majority countries excluding Qatar signed a document stating their support to the Chinese government with the 're-education' of Muslims in the area. The Pakistani is actively trying to locate Uighurs that fled to Pakistan and sending them back to China. These people are not terrorists, nor rebels, or criminals. These people have families, trying to escape genocide and they're Muslim. They're the people that for anyone in Pakistan you took an oath to protect from all dangers once you placed your hand on the Quran. The world is not watching the Uighurs but history is, and history never lies on who spoke up and who aided the oppressors and stayed quiet. Let's not have to explain to our children why we made the same mistake twice that caused the deaths of a million innocent Chinese Muslims.
Thirst Project

Mohammed Gulzar
Qatar Academy Doha

Having access to clean and accessible water is one of the key rights given to all of humanity and that is set by the United Nations as an irrefutable human right. The idea of giving water to every human being came in the ancient Egyptian times when a water stipend was given to all people, including slaves. Now, officially ratified by The United Nations, many NGOs who work to give water to all people in the world. One of these companies is called the Kellen Brewer is a full-time staff member at Thirst Project, the world’s largest YOUTH water organization. He graduated from Arizona State University with a degree in Global Studies and a focus on International Development. For his last semester at university, Kellen interned with Thirst Project where he traveled across the United States as a representative for the organization. Since 2017, Kellen has spoken to thousands of young people about the global water crisis, working with groups like the United Nations, UNICEF, National Association of Student Councils, Key Club and more. With a mission to END the water crisis, Kellen and the Thirst Project team currently works closely with the Kingdom of eSwatini and four other nations to build clean water projects for communities in need. We are pleased to have Kellen Brewer to be a speaker within this conference, QLC. Please speak to registration to see the room and presenter timings for Kellen Brewer.

“In the idea of giving water to every human being came in the ancient Egyptian times when a water stipend was given to all people, including slaves”

Influencers or Frauds

Abdullah Al Naar
Qatar Academy Doha

Do we know who we listen to and take advice from? It could be that the people we look up to have their own agendas and don’t care about his or her followers. People these days are guided by these people we call influencers. These days we see people just trying to do everything they can to be just like them. Identities are being erased and people are just becoming the same. People now have a shared identity which is not supposed to happen at all. Each person has to have a different and unique character which differentiates them from others. Unfortunately these people may have a negative influence on a huge number of people. Many tensions have recently happened in the gulf region which were started by those “influencers” who have a very high number of followers. For example in Kuwait a very popular issue that trended on Twitter and on many other social platforms was about the people who have a passport without being originated in Kuwait. This issue supported segregation between the “Original” Kuwaitis and the “Bedoon” which meant they have no origin they come from. There is also an issue with racist influencers who constantly berate and harass non-Khaleeji people such as a specific individual that deeply insulted an Indian driver and justified the issue due to the fact that the driver did not speak Arabic. She then went on to say that she can be racist as she has a vast amount of money and that she can say what she pleases to say.

These are not the ideals many parents want their children to follow. Racism is an ongoing struggle unless we teach our children better, they should realise the impact of the words they say.

“Racism is an ongoing struggle unless we teach our children better,”

parents. Influencers they have and be cautious of the words they say.