

Does social media affect creativity and productivity?

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |

Without a doubt social media has changed our lives forever. First was the internet, which created worldwide access to information and communication. It shrunk the world so to speak. Technology today provides us with many more forms of social connectivity.

Social media can take many different forms, including Internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, pictures, video, rating and social bookmarking. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Digg, Flickr, Youtube, Blogger and Reddit. With all the bells and whistles going off to attract our attention to social media, how does one create a balance to find uninterrupted time to be creative and productive?

As with most research, there are differences of opinion of the impact of social media on creative and productivity. Several studies on the effect of social media have revealed impressive benefits. For students, social media has definitely enhanced learning opportunities. Participation in social media offers opportunities for enhancement of individual and collective creativity through the development of artistic and musical endeavors. It provides for the growth of ideas from the creations of blogs, podcasts, videos and gaming sites.

Through media communication, students are able to share interests that include others from more diverse backgrounds that afford the opportunity for respect, tolerance and increased discourse about personal and global issues. Blogs and other media forms can be used to allow students to gather outside of the school to collaborate and exchange ideas about assignments and work on projects together. Some social media sites have the benefit of reinforcing skills, providing tutoring and creativity.

With the deluge of e-mail, text messages, voice mail, instant messages, Twitter messages and Facebook posts, how does one become proactive to channel our energy to allow us to be creative and productive? In an article written for mashable.com, April 15, 2010, Scot Belsky gives a few tips on how to develop ways to combat this reactionary workflow caused from social media.

1. Create windows of non-stimulation: Proactively block out time for creating and absorbing, rather than just responding.
2. Keep to-do lists: When organizing the tasks to be done create two lists, one for urgent items and another one for important long-term goals.
3. Schedule focused periods of processing every day: Set aside uninterrupted time for checking inbox and media sites.
4. Don't hoard urgent items: When you are in the position to do so, delegate urgent items to others who can efficiently and effectively respond.

I personally have found these tips to allow me to be more productive. It is easy for one to react all day. However, when we spend all our energy on reacting, our ability to think about bold

ideas will suffer.

As with anything that can become addictive, social media addiction can quickly derail all of our creativity and productivity. The important thing is to find a balance.