Celeste Stresau

Professor Jones

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Throughout the globe in recent years, the presence of social media and digital communication has increased drastically. With the first form of social media being created in 1997, apps have only become increasingly numerous and popular. However, with a society that is moving towards an entirely online life, it is important to not neglect a life in the real world while creating a virtual one. This is a concept that is easily observable in Gen Z or those born between 1997 and 2012. Although this issue is prevalent, there are multiple ways to resolve it, one of them being bringing awareness to the problem. The following artifacts display this idea in two drastically different ways; one through an informational poster, and one through an educated article.

A bright pink fishbowl, with outstretched, human-like arms reaches above itself to feed the fish labeled with social media names inside. In its other hand, is a cup filled with fish food labeled time. This online poster created by Australian artist “Jeremyville” is a part of his collection called “Community Service Announcements,” in which he explores humanity through art. At first glance, this piece is just a simple warning about the over-use of social media in one’s life. However, after a further review, it is apparent that this piece explores the larger idea of overfeeding social media thus neglecting other aspects of people’s lives along with the theme of time being an ever-fleeting element. .

This poster effectively informs its audience on the dangers of having social media in the forefront one’s life as it consumes the younger generations time. It does so by appealing to the audience’s sense of logic through the illustration of time as an ever-diminishing theme while it is light-heartedly, poured into social media. The intended audience of this message is the younger generation, and more specifically, social media users that are quickly scrolling their feed. By utilizing the bright pink shade of the bowl and the vibrant blue water, the artist creates a contrasting scheme that quickly catches user’s attention causing them to take a second glance upon the picture. While it captures the audience’s attention, this poster appeals to the audience’s logic as is portrays the dangers of spending the majority of their time online. By placing the fish food in the cup labeled “time,” the artist emphasizes the limitations that a person’s time obtains, and the manner in which time is constantly being used throughout someone’s life. Furthermore, by displaying the graphic as a fish tank, the artist illustrates the constrictive nature of social media, and its inability to connect with the outside world in a genuine manner. This portrays the fictitious quality of social media and the online world as it fails to establish genuine bonds between people and the real world. Similarly, through the action of feeding the time, fish food, back into the bowl, which depicts itself, the artist demonstrates the concept of social media being self-fulfilling, severing needs for ties to the outside world. Along with this, the imagery of the fish being satisfied by the food, or time, displays how pouring time into social media is a form of temporary self-fulfillment, while also emphasizing its short-term nature as the fish will not permanently remain full. Similarly, it explores the ever-demanding manner of social media as it always calls for more time and interaction from its users. This expands upon the artists appeal to logic as it makes the reader assess the uselessness of using their limited time in such a futile manner. The artist was successful at targeting their audience through an appeal to logic as well as the use of bright colors and simple illustrations in order to cause readers to evaluate and second guess their usage of social media as well as their wisdom in time management.

# The second artifact that explores a similar concept in an entirely different way is an article entitled “Adverse effect of social media on generation Z user's behavior: Government information support as a moderating variable”. In this article, the authors utilize a concerned tone as well as an appeal to the audience’s emotion in order to explain the negative effects of social media on Generation Z and how social media platforms could be regulated more securely in order to better the Generation’s wellbeing. Furthermore, it explores how specifically, social media has affected the younger generation and different ways for this negative effect to be mended.

# The author maintains a concerned tone throughout the article in order to convince researchers that there is an immediate need to explore the effects of social media and the immediacy of information on Generation Z. As the Author is speaking on Gen Z’s high internet usage, he refers to it as an “addiction” to their phones. This word choice helps establish a concerned tone as it creates a feeling of Generation Z needing help to escape their “addiction.” By referring to social media and phone usage as an addiction, the author successfully uses the negative connotation of the word addiction to form a concerned tone for the audience. Similarly, as the author explains more about the prevalence and uses of social media in this generation, he shares that although there are many positives to the internet, it obtains a “dark side” that is less commonly explored. Through the use of the word “dark” in reference to social media, the author is able to further create a concerned tone as he correlates a dark and dangerous thing with the use of social media. This forms a concerned tone and an urgent, dangerous idea of social media usage. By using a concerned tone, the author is successfully able to portray the necessity of conducting further research on how to aid Gen Z on the internet in order to make it a safer and less “addictive” place.

# Throughout the article, the author appeals to the audience’s sense of emotion by portraying Generation Z as helpless and isolated through social media in order to convince his audience that further research on how to better internet usage is mandatory. These words cause the audience to feel bad for Gen Z, and target the audience’s wish to help those in need. While the author speaks about the Covid 19 pandemic which caused social media and internet usage to skyrocket, he states that while Gen Z was pushed to use the internet to connect, they were forced to have “minimum physical interactions” thus leading to isolation and worsened or severe anxiety. This appeals to the audience’s emotion as it leads them to have a sense of pity for the younger generation as they lacked regular human interaction and were forced into isolation. Along with this, as the author explores the idea of phubbing: ignoring human interaction to pay attention to one’s phone, he shares that this concept may be the primary cause of “social exclusion leading to anxiety.” By once more emphasizing this Generation’s anxiety, the author appeals to the audience’s sense of empathy for this anxious generation. This appeal to emotion successfully conveys the need for immediate and in-depth research on how to repair social media and internet access and usage in order to better the younger generation.

# Although this article successfully appeals to the audience’s sense of emotion, it would have been more successful with a more emphasized appeal to logic or the author’s credibility in order to convince them of a need for further research. Because the author’s main audience was researchers and professionals, an appeal to logic would have been more effective as it uses data and research to prove a point whereas an appeal through emotion lacks concrete evidence. Similarly, if the author had appealed to ethos in some manner by establishing his credibility as an author, he may have been more successful in targeting his audience of professionals as it would have established grounds for the author to be acknowledged as a reasonable voice by other professionals.

# While both artifacts are aimed to tackle the same topic of how social media affects Gen Z negatively, and how this issue could be remedied in multiple ways, they could not be more different. Although they both have a similar message they intend to share with an audience, each of these artifacts have drastically different means of reaching said goal. While the poster appeals to its audience through logic in order to convince users to spend less time on social media platforms, the article appeals to the audience’s sense of emotion in order to portray Generation Z as helpless to some degree. On the other hand, while the article successfully appeals to the audience’s sense of pity and protectiveness, it would have been more effective with its intended audience if it created a greater emphasis on logic or building the author’s credibility. Because the intended audience of the article was professionals and researchers, with a greater use of an appeal to logos, the author would have been more successful and been able to create a professional tone throughout the piece. Similarly, if the author had utilized an appeal through ethos by building his credibility, the article would have been more successful as it would make the author appeal to be a voice of reason as well as being knowledgeable on the subject at hand. By appealing to their audiences in drastically different ways, through the use of logos as well as pathos, each of these artifacts successfully illustrates the danger of allowing the digital world to consume one’s life as well as how people can remedy this issue to their respective audiences. And although they both effectively portray their meaning to some degree; the artist of the poster uses more appropriate rhetorical choices for his audience and portrays his meaning in a more successful manner.

**Annotated Bibliography**

Sharma, Manu, et al. “Adverse Effect of Social Media on Generation Z User’s Behavior: Government Information Support as a Moderating Variable.” *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, vol. 72, 2023, p. 103256, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103256.

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