

English Oral

The Internet Generation

The Internet. An already vast and ever expanding new dimension to the world we live in. It is out there in cyberspace that we can realise and fulfil our wildest dreams. The Internet or the net as it has become known to us is an immense space of, well nothing. Ask any teenager how to get on to this new age superhighway and they will gladly start to tell you about the numerous servers which allows you to logon to the world wide web. But ask them to explain to you exactly how this surfer's paradise actually works and they will give you an almost baffled expression and say 'well it just does.' So how is it that we have become so reliant on this virtual world without even knowing how it works?

As with all things connected to computers the answer lies with speed. No I am not talking about the latest g-whiz ISDN connection but instead about the velocity with which the Internet was introduced to us. Six years ago the majority of the country didn't even have a computer let alone have access to the net, but now both computers and the Internet have become essential to everyday life for us, the so-called Internet generation.

The first place I turned to when looking for inspiration for an oral topic was of course the Internet. For a month I have had to live without the beloved piece of technology known to you as my computer. You see I had encountered a minor technical glitch and was therefore without the services of my trusty companion. Rather than looking elsewhere for inspiration such as the library or a newspaper I chose to wait until my computer was returned.

It was a very enlightening experience trying to live without my computer. I found myself incapable of completing any work needed for school, I couldn't communicate with my friends and I was unable listen to music. Without my three main time consuming activities I was lost. I had hours of free time which I usually devoted to sitting in front of my technological masterpiece. I was greatly astounded my incapacity to do work, I realised just how reliant I had become on computers. I had lost the ability to function without the guidance of my computer.

Yet I am not the only one who appears to be suffering from this debilitating disease. Upon entering my local library I was confronted by an eerie silence interrupted only by the noise of buttons being pressed on a keyboard and the dull buzz of computers processing vast amount of virtual data. It appears that the library is no longer a necessity for research it is now instead a hangout for parts of the Internet generation who are not fortunate enough to have access to the net at home.

Those of us without access to a computer have become social lepers. We are unable to communicate with the wider world, we can't access the latest music downloads or game and of all the unmentionable humiliations we have to trudge to the library after school in order to complete that history assignment.

Now whilst I recognise the immense benefits of computers it seems to me that any invention which has the power to change the way society functions in such a profound way cannot be considered to be completely faultless. Computers have undoubtedly aided the world in which we live yet at the same time they appear to have hindered the progression of us as a society. It is now entirely

possible for someone to live their whole life without ever having to make contact with another person. This point was proven by the social experiment where three people were locked in separate rooms and given a virtual bank account and a computer to try and survive. They bought clothes, food and nearly everything else anyone could ever need over the Internet and needless to say it was a huge success.

Why are we congratulating ourselves over the creation of such a huge global catastrophe? Why is it that people always fail to mention the countless number of sites devoted to pornography, violence and racist institutes such as the Ku Klux Klan? Surely there has to be something wrong with the fact that any child can now find out exactly how to make a pipe bomb over the Internet.

I suppose it's all in the name of furthering society and of course technology. Well call me mad but after many hours of reflection I would rather not be associated with all of these new technological feats. I think that I would rather tell my grandchildren that I spent my youth really interacting with interesting people, actually visited interesting places and actually went out and bought all of those ridiculous fashion accessories. Instead of saying that I sat and stared at a screen for my entire childhood and experienced them in a realm of virtual reality.

No, you can count me out of the Internet generation, I prefer to be a technological leper than a social failure.

