

What Is The Impact Of This Global Epidemic On You?

Any Lesson learned?

(by Lau Chin Tat F.5B)

“When will we see the light at the end of the tunnel? Our life is fundamentally screwed up!”

This is what I always hear when I am around my friends. Thanks to the pandemic, our life has been radically altered. However, other than looking at what it takes away from us, why don't we discover what we have acquired during the pandemic?

Needless to say, our life has changed in one way another: our lifestyle, socialization, you name it. Due to the pandemic, we can barely hang out with our friends as we are scared of being infected. Facing the unknown Coronavirus and the rise in the number of infection cases, we have no choice but to stay at home for the sake of our well-being. Who doesn't want to spend time with their best friends? At the first outbreak of the pandemic, I desperately yearned to sneak out for whatever reason since the desire never vanished, and I thought it is not a big deal.

Nevertheless, my friends always told me to abide by the government measures. They all agreed not to participate in any social gatherings unless the situation is less severe. As the old adage goes, “Half a loaf is better than none”. Although we cannot see our fellas face to face, we can now see them face to face virtually. During the pandemic, apps like Zoom and Discord have become a sensation. We are so driven by the craze of these apps. They were even ranked the most-downloaded apps in 2020. I thought, “other than craving seeing people in person, I can at least see their faces on a tiny screen.” Since then, I have learned an inspiring lesson. During this unprecedented

pandemic, our life may not go the way we expected. There are countless unexpected surprises or mishaps. However, we can always look at them from a different perspective and look for alternatives. We should constantly remind ourselves that getting less than what we wanted is better than getting nothing at all.

We, of course, want the epidemic to ebb and go away. Therefore, folk tales about the epidemic situation spread through word of mouth. Given the lack of thorough understanding of the virus, sometimes, we fall prey to some unscientific news. In February 2020, there was a circulating rumour that toilet paper and surgical masks were made of similar materials. Hence, a myriad of citizens went to supermarkets to scramble for toilet paper. There was a period of panic shopping because we did not take the initiative to fact-check and seek the truth. We panicked because of the epidemic. Honestly, we all did. However, we should always think critically; we should retain our sanity in this irrational situation and think twice before we act. I used to act before thinking as I believed efficiency matters, but the consequence was often catastrophic. This epidemic taught me a lesson on thinking rationally. Only through critical thinking can we never fall prey to flying rumours.

At one time or another, my mind began to churn into chaos. I could only feel sadness, anger and frustration which unfortunately tied me up in knots. There is too much negativity in the world with no positivity that I can hold onto. Unwanted changes and heartbreaking news of people dying have involuntarily become my companion, whether I liked it or not. I had to get used to uncertainties. Seeing the rise in the death rate, I was not sure whether I could survive the pandemic as my life has already been screwed up. Sometimes, I cannot help but wonder about miracles. Are they white lies? Have they saved people from desperation? Perhaps both. Queen Elizabeth II once said, “We should take comfort that while we may have more still to

endure, better days will return.” The pandemic has affected us in a myriad of ways. Some of our hardships have been strenuous, but others’ may be much more arduous. We should be grateful that we are alive and we can witness miracles like worldwide vaccination and the collaborations among world leaders. Some people have sacrificed much more than we have. They may have lost their families as they fight against the virus. We cannot keep everything from being tainted, but we can stay positive to create miracles as they often come within ourselves. Undoubtedly, changes in the virus are still here. However, why don’t we try to see things differently? Why shouldn’t we be grateful that we are still alive?

We want to get back to normal. After this life-changing experience, let us not forget what the epidemic has brought us. Although it is a torture, it indeed is a bittersweet experience for the whole world. I have great faith in all the scientists and medical practitioners who have devoted their time to fighting against this deadly virus. Hopefully, the pandemic is going to end and we will see the light at the end of the tunnel soon.

How Has YouTube Changed My Life?

(by Chan Tsz Ying F.5D)

In this technological era, no one knows nothing about YouTube. It is a social networking app on which you can see videos. Some people upload their videos onto YouTube. They are called YouTubers. YouTube users can then follow their favourite YouTubers' videos.

I always watch videos about fine art like drawing and cookery. I can learn different cultures through listening to K-pop and classical music on YouTube. I can support my favourite idol and musicians like Beyonce and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart by watching their performances on YouTube.

Sometimes, I use video editing software to share my vlogs about my daily life. I show my cute cat in the video clips. Some YouTube watchers reply by giving 'likes' to my vlogs. I feel my effort is recognized.

I started to access YouTube two years ago. I downloaded the app onto my cell phone. All my friends access this platform every day. I think YouTube is a good channel through which everyone can be a film-maker to create and share videos. I can follow the trends to see what is hit during a particular period. Research has shown that watching YouTube videos can help increase one's sense of belonging to the community and acceptance within the social network. When many people like my videos and follow me, I will feel content and delighted. Sometimes when I upload my videos about tips on doing workout to reduce weight and get 'likes' and positive comments, I feel satisfied by being able to help people to regain self-confidence.

I reckon YouTube is a world-famous app during this technological era. I

like to use YouTube, which is an international communication platform. I can access other YouTubers' accounts to know more cultures from other countries. When different cultures meet, meaningful and rewarding interactions will occur to the benefit of all.

Working From Home — A Mixed Blessing

(by Fung Chak On F.6A)

Up until the last second before the coronavirus outbreak, seldom would we see people sitting at home, typing and talking in front of computers; however, the pendulum has swung the other way. Recently, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, working from home has become a common practice. Nevertheless, this new mode of working has led to fierce debate about whether remote working does more harm than good. In this essay, I will explain my view towards this controversial topic.

The paramount advantage of working from home is certainly to protect employees from the virus. As we all know, Covid-19 is a highly infectious disease which can be transmitted by droplets, body fluid, or even airborne particles. Just in a flash without people even noticing, the coronavirus will enter your body when you are working in your office or discussing a project with colleagues. If this is the case, won't it pose a threat to our workers? It is, therefore, highly requested that employees should be given the permission to work at home. Such contingency plan not only minimizes the risk of getting infection but also ensures that the staff with a health insurance plan will not ask for a compensation if they are diagnosed with Covid-19. It would be a mutually beneficial measure for both company holders and employees as workers' productivity and companies' revenue can be maintained.

Another argument in favour of remote working is to build up a positive image for the whole company. The pandemic is so unstoppable that the virus has ravaged this city and menaced the health of every single citizen. Imagine if an 'inhumane' company forces its staff members to go back to the office for work, won't it trigger the anger of employees and even the citizens for neglecting their health? So, working from home is definitely a method for a

firm to adopt in order to prevent the public from protesting against the company. Additionally, since the image of a company is polished, the general public will appreciate the efforts that employers pay for the sake of staff's health, and thus people are more willing to do business with a conscientious organization and more income can be generated.

The above mentioned are some plain benefits for both the staff and the companies, but every rose has its thorns.

One disadvantage of remote working is that the authorities in a company cannot effectively monitor what and how their staff members are doing at home. In a traditional workplace, people in higher positions can monitor their staff in order to promote working efficiency by giving advice to the interns or applying some pressure to them. Nevertheless, remote working may not provide any chance for employers to understand whether the staff members have encountered some obstacles or not. Hence, they may stay on the wrong track, and thus the productivity of a company will slow down.

In line with the above is another disadvantage of remote working which is employees may not work attentively as in workplace. There is always a tense atmosphere in the office because some staff may want to receive appreciation from the boss so that they may have an opportunity to get promoted to earn more money. However, one's home seems to be so relaxing that an employee will not feel the competition with other staff. Subsequently, their working efficiency will decrease once they loosen up.

In conclusion, remote working has both advantages and disadvantages, but I would say that the benefits outweigh the shortcomings, because protecting individual right to be healthy is of utmost importance. It is inappropriate to ignore one's right to live a healthy life.

Working From Home Brings Negative Effects?

(by Wong Po Ming F.6A)

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the traditional mode of working. Working from home has become very common and it brings a lot of convenience to us. However, whether remote working would bring negative impacts to the staff and the companies is still controversial. I will discuss the pros and cons of working from home below.

Working from home is time saving. The fact that spending hours a day on the way to work has been a huge problem for employees. In spite of the convenience of the public transport system, those who live remotely from their companies still need to spend more than an hour going to work. However, working from home, you can access the document that you want right away. The time spent on travelling can be used on projects instead. More tasks can be completed before deadlines. Job efficiency can be raised. As you can see, working from home is more efficient than the traditional way to work.

On the other hand, working from home reduces the rental cost of companies. Rental cost is one of the main issues for company holders as it could cost more than a million dollars. By working from home, employees do not need to have a desk in the company since their home is their workplace. Most of the work can be accomplished at home. Therefore, employers can rent a smaller unit and use it as the office. Moving from a large place to a smaller one, the cost could be decreased from millions to thousands. The employers can use the extra money to invest in the other areas of their company. It shows that working from home can reduce the company's rental cost and even make more profit.

As you can see, working from home enhances time efficiency of employees and helps companies to reduce operation cost. However, some people have realized that working from home may not be a benefit for the staff and companies. Here are some negative impacts that people suggested.

Working from requires good network connection and computers for employees to meet with their co-workers or clients. If there are any technical problems, such as Wifi connection failure or computer malfunction, employees may fail to engage in work for the whole day. Companies may need to utilize more time and budget on coping with the technical issues as they may slow down working efficiency and productivity.

On the other hand, a higher cost of monitoring the quality of work may be another obstacle caused by working from home. Since the employees only stay at home, they can do whatever they like without anyone watching or coaching them. Employees may adopt a laidback attitude to complete their work. They lack a serious workplace environment, so their time management or progress of work is likely to get worse. Employees may rush through their work at night before deadlines. The outcome of their work could be terrible. In this situation, employers need to monitor their employees' working attitude and quality of work. Due to this laidback attitude, working from home can cause a higher monitoring cost.

To sum up, working from home brings both positive impacts and drawbacks to employees and companies. In order to increase its benefits and reduce the trouble it brings, both the employees and companies should have better communication and maintain a proper working attitude in order to enjoy all the positive effects of remote working.

Should Parents Install Apps To Monitor Children's Activities

(by Chow Man Hei F.6C)

Dear Editor,

I am writing to debate about the recent phenomenon which is the parents' action of installing apps on their children's phones that monitor their online activities. Personally, I am against this disrespectful action. Here are the two reasons.

Let's begin with the first reason, which is about the respect for privacy. Monitoring others is a highly intrusive action. In fact, parents can view the information about their children's Internet history, location, mails and messages. All of these bypass the agreement of their children. Some may think that as a parent, ignoring children's opinions is a common and acceptable way. It is not necessary to ask for their opinion before taking their actions because they are the ones who educate them. Parents who have these perceptions will not care about whether or not their children can have their privacy. Therefore, it is not surprising that they are using the parental control applications. The more the parents are ignoring children's privacy, the more their children will ignore others' privacy in the future. Under the long-term impact of the intrusive action from the parents, children will take this as a usual behaviour which everyone has in the current society. In short, the aforementioned actions which parents take are distorting the values of their children.

Moreover, the parents' action of installing parental control apps on their children's phones will also affect the sense of responsibility of their children. The extreme intervention from the parents on the Internet has completely failed in instilling the correct sense of responsibility. Children are not aware of what they should do or should not do on the Internet. They can only find

a black screen with the warning “PARENTAL CONTROL” when they get into the blocked sites or games whether on purpose or not. More limitations make them more curious, especially children. Parents should tell children the negative effect these sites or games could bring on their growth and then educate them with the proper knowledge and attitude. The blockings for no reason are totally not acceptable.

Some may say that they use parental control applications to prevent children from gaining access to the sites or games with violent or erotic content. These arguments are easy to comprehend but they cannot be used to justify such an inappropriate way to monitor children. As I have mentioned above, the way can only be educating children with the negative effects on the mind these sites or games could bring and instill the correct values. Even though installing parental control applications is absolutely an instant solution, no one can tell if children will be in touch with these things in real life. If children have no proper values of these aspects, more limitations will make them more curious and vulnerable to temptations. The consequences are beyond our imagination.

In view of the above reasons, I think that the parents’ action of installing apps on their children’s phones that monitor their online activities cannot achieve the target of instilling children with a sense of responsibility and respect for privacy. In fact, it is just distorting the values of their children and make them more ignorant.

Yours faithfully,

Chris

Chris Wong