

## Social media lowering our collective IQs



Mark Pavilons]

?Social media websites are no longer performing an envisaged function of creating a positive communication link among friends, family and professionals. It is a veritable battleground, where insults fly from the human quiver, damaging lives, destroying self-esteem and a person's sense of self-worth.?

? Anthony Carmona

Those of us who are ?connected,??have a grasp on the power of social media.

But in reality, we're like little children playing with a new toy, not fully understanding how it works or what it is. We just push all the buttons, leap on the information highway and join the long ?commute? to our destination.

Too fast, too soon, too much. Words to keep in mind.

Most of our society is ill equipped to manage our own grocery lists, credit card bills and personal relationships. So, let's give everyone a gizmo with enough power, data and connectivity so everyone has their 15 minutes of fame. Is this wise? Do we really want the prevailing social voice, or current trends to be in the hands of teenie-boppers with a thirst for gossip and exploiting human frailties?

I guess I've answered my own questions, but I can't stress enough how dangerous the situation is becoming.

Seemingly innocent indiscretions are caught on camera, broadcast within seconds around the globe for all to see. We can't even scratch our behinds in public for fear of being caught on tape. Nose-picking??Don't even think about it!

No, fellow citizens, social media and our related techno-toys are evolving (?) into modern-day methods of surveillance. Forget about Orwell's ?Big Brother? ??our own brothers and sisters are in on it and watching our every move. Boy, had Orwell seen this coming, his story would be quite different, indeed.

Why give all the power to the government, and secret agencies, when the public can watch each other's every move. Brilliant! The conspiracy theorists must be having a field day with all of this.

I?wouldn't go so far as saying John and Jane Doe are all in league with Lucifer, but there is ?evil? afoot.

And that shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone who pays attention to human history or human behaviour.

?People take things at face value on social media. Earnestness is the assumption.?

??Mindy Kaling

Mindy is quite right. But when has our species been perfect in making assumptions, or displaying ?earnestness?? Since when has our collective judgement been impeccable?

You're right, never!

So, along comes an array of new tools and gadgets, things that make our lives better, more entertaining, easier. We don't want to be left out, so we flock to stores and follow the mobs as they line up for the newest and latest in devices.

Many are addicted to technology and simply must be on the leading edge of advancement.

Notice I didn't use the word 'progress,' since that would be a matter of opinion. I'm still on the fence.

What I'm clear about is the destructive capability of social media in the wrong hands.

In recent years, we've now added cyber-bullying, online luring, social media stalking and the collection and distribution of all sorts of disgusting imagery to our list of 'accomplishments.' I find it disheartening that humankind exploited another method of displaying its base and twisted tendencies.

Dear friends, social media has, in many ways, kicked morality in the shins, with no regret or remorse. It's so easy to become Jekyll and Hyde online or behind a mobile device that our weaker souls flourish in their own debauchery.

I will now get off my soapbox and close my Bible.

The Internet and social media can do such good in bringing a community, or the world, together.

It's a mainstay of today's marketing, promotional and fundraising toolkit. It's a must for spreading awareness and keeping people informed and educated. The key is finding reputable sources for your 'fix' of instant information.

Being in the information business, I am a bit torn between traditional and new methods of educating the public. Sure, you can read almost any publication online or via your phone or tablet. Does that make physical newspapers, magazines or catalogues things of the past? Not at all. For many, flipping through pages, or reading your community newspaper with a cup of coffee simply can't be beat.

I will admit, though, that you can't ignore the interest in online access. Our paper has its own website, and I know people from all around the world keep tabs on King via our informative articles. And that's a good thing.

We are living in interesting times. I would suggest that everyone familiarizes themselves with virtual reality and exploring the wonders of encyclopaedic knowledge at your fingertips.

But be warned. With great power comes great responsibility. Enjoy social media wisely and in moderation!