What is a smartphone? Well, smartphones are basically “a handheld computer integrated with a mobile phone” (Stone, 2011). Due to the wide range of uses the smartphone provides, it has become an essential tool in many of our lives.

Despite the smartphone’s many advantages, there have been ongoing debates for many years now on whether technology – in this case, smartphones - is making it harder for people to interact with each other, making people antisocial (Nixon, 2011).

Although some people may argue that they only use their smartphones to while away time (especially when waiting), it is obvious that some people cannot let go off their smartphones. It seems to be par among many young people, who would congregate in packs, furiously pounding out texts on their smartphones (Jake, 2010).

But how exactly do we define ‘anti-social’? Lee (2011), a senior lecturer, defines it as “retreating so far into your own world that social and cultural niceties are blatantly ignored”.

According to Lee’s (2011) opinion of the relationship between smartphones and antisocial behaviour:

Let’s take those ‘interactive’ games on smartphones for example. The interaction is only between the player and the phone. Friends, classmates, teachers, family – all are ignored if the player is sufficiently entranced in the game. I know this for a fact because I have lost many hours of sleep playing such games.

People do not realise that by being anti-social, they are contributing to an uglier social environment.

Despite various attempts to fix this problem, alas, the problem only worsens. eMarketer (2011) estimates that “31% of mobile users, or 73.3 million people in the US, have a smartphone this year” and an estimated one billion people in the world will own a smartphone by 2013 (Lulu, 2010).
1. Framing your research topic

a. Some possible reasons for obstacles related to the usage of smartphones are because smartphones provide the convenient accessibility to social networking platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. While trying to be more social on the internet, these people have lost their ability to interact face-to-face. Also, smartphones have a variety of games and applications to download. Thus, people become hooked on to their smartphones (or become addicted), ignoring the world around them (a form of anti-social behaviour).

b. Often at events, many people are chatting (interacting) with one another, but you can ALWAYS spot some people either playing games or texting away on their smartphones (Jake, 2010). This clearly shows that some people prefer to stab at their smartphones, rather than have face-to-face interaction with others.

c. There are a few solutions to this “anti-social behaviour” problem.
   i. Firstly, one can educate the masses on how to use their smartphones wisely and appropriately.
   ii. Another method is to discourage people from buying smartphones.
   iii. Also, there can be parental locks on smartphones to prevent children from playing games or going to social networking platforms.

d. The first solution (educating the masses) is can be cost-effective because it is easy to reach out to people nowadays via large audience talk, newspaper articles etc. However, it might be difficult to convince someone who is already addicted to their smartphones.

e. Evaluating my solutions:
   i. For the first solution (educating the people), it is more effective as it does not require any agreement with smartphone retailers. A simple live talk or an article post on the internet will do the trick. However, trying to convince someone might be a problem.
   ii. The second solution (discourage people from buying smartphones) might not be as effective as the first because smartphones are such a useful tool that it has become essential in many people’s everyday lives. People might not want to heed the advice to not buy smartphones.
   iii. The third solution (parental locks) is only effective for children who own a smartphone. This solution will allow parents to control their children’s activity on their smartphones. Unfortunately, if the user himself is an adult, the solution might not work.

f. I feel that the government should put in some effort and capital to educate the masses on how to make good use of their smartphones, but at the same time, do
not over do it (as in use the smartphone inappropriately). They should also provide more helplines and social services to those who have become anti-social due to overuse of their smartphones, to teach them how to overcome their problems.

2. **Reasons for choice of topic**

a. I chose this topic because one day, when I was having dinner with my family, I saw a couple sitting at the dining table waiting for their food. Instead of conversing with each other, they were looking at their smartphones. This really shocked me – the degree of anti-social behaviour has become so serious in the 21st century – that I decided to choose this topic.

b. It allows me to investigate the relationship between smartphones and becoming anti-social so I can help to educate the masses and prevent more of such problems from rising. This way, I can not only contribute to the society, but also learn more in the process.

c. (iii) This topic will benefit the society as people will learn how to prevent becoming anti-social due to misuse of their smartphones. This way, our society will not be an anti-social one, to the extent that many people have retreated so far into themselves such that no one else matters (Lee, 2011).

3. **Feasibility of the project**

a. There is definitely a need for my project. The reason is simple: “the smartphone is the ultimate anti-social device” (Jake, 2010). If this problem continues, the society might be greatly affected. Thus, my project aims to help people who are becoming anti-social due to smartphones.

b. I feel it will be possible as this project does not require much money or too much time. At the same time, it will interest a lot of people (as it might influence them), and I will be able to garner a lot of support.

c. My course of action is to educate people on how to use their smartphones appropriately. It will be logical and realistic because in modern days, people are becoming more and more hooked on to technology – in this case, smartphones – so it is pertaining to the current human condition.
d. My project provides sufficient opportunity for:

i. **GENERATION OF IDEAS**
   Yes, because my solution can always be improved on to facilitate even better education for the people (on how to use smartphones without becoming anti-social). People can always generate new ideas to build on my original idea.

ii. **ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OF IDEAS**
   Yes. There are many debates about people not becoming anti-social at all when using smartphones. According to Nixon (2011), “Technology is a tool, and if used properly and with respect, it can change your life for the better.” This will result in people relooking at my ideas, and hopefully, improving them.

4. **Manageability of the project**

   a. (1) First, as a group, we will plan our project.
      (2) After that, we will start our research.
      (3) Then, we will start collecting our necessary information through surveys, interviews etc.
      (4) Following that, we will collate our information and do a thorough analysis.
      (5) Finally, we will put everything together and submit the completed project.
      *(Below is a diagram on the timeline)*

   b. Since the project requires a lot of information, every group member will have a part to play in completing this project. Some would have to do thorough research, others would have to send out surveys and conduct interviews, not forgetting the analysis of our information. As we have to collate all our information as a group, our project will certainly provide sufficient opportunity for group work.

   c. I expect certain deadlines (created by ourselves) will not be met due to time constraints. I also predict that it will be hard finding information, as this topic (smartphones on anti-social behaviour) is quite specific.
5. **Accessibility of the information required**

   a. Information such as “how smartphones affect people’s social interaction” and “how smartphones have affected people’s personal relationships” will be relevant to my project.

   b. To obtain this information, I can refer to both primary and secondary sources. For primary sources, I can obtain information from people who own smartphones via surveys or interviews. For secondary sources, I take already available sources (e.g. books, articles, online articles) for reference.

   c. An alternative is to turn to people who do not have smartphones, but see how smartphones affect their family members or friends. This information is usually quite useful, though it may be biased, depending on whether the person favours smartphones or otherwise.

   d. For primary sources (surveys and interviews), I might not be able to reach out to a wide audience. As for secondary sources, I might have an overload of information and I would have to pick out the useful and relevant ones.
Bibliography


