

pointernetstory

The Internet Impact on Teenagers

Almost three-quarters of American teenagers are using the internet and it has a major role in their relationships with their friends, their families and their school, concludes a report by Pew Internet & American Life Project.

The report goes on to say that a significant number of teens use the internet to conduct relationships. "A notable proportion of online teens asked someone out online." For instance, a 16-year-old boy wrote, "I eventually asked her out...online, of course. It's not the most romantic thing to do, but I was very nervous and it helped to make it a little bit easier."

On the other side, the report tells us that an equal number of boys and girls use the internet to break up. Nadia, one of these teenagers, for example, has formatted letters on her PC in case she needs to quit a relationship. "Sure it's easier when you don't feel brave enough to face him," she argues.

Almost 40 percent of the American teenagers think the internet takes "a lot or some" time away from the time they would spend with their friends. But this seems contradictory to Neil Ray, a teenager who read the report. He found that "48 percent say their use of the internet improves their relationship with friends or 32 percent say internet tools help them make new friends."

In their families, on the other hand, 80 percent of teenagers see little or no improvement in relationships with their parents through the internet.

"The only thing we seem to disagree about is how much time I want online and how much I get," noted one Boy, 17, and he does not seem to be alone. The conflict over access to the Net is frequently highlighted throughout the report.

Of course most parents worry about "inappropriate content" or "strangers" talking to their children, but 87 percent believe the internet helps their children in school and 78 percent of the teens agree.

In fact, almost all teenagers online report using the internet to research for school.