Keeping in touch in the 21st century

The online world

Computers and the internet have a great impact on our everyday life. We use search engines to surf the web, retrieve information, do shopping and banking; we download material, share photos and news with friends and we even apply for jobs or a place at university – all via the internet. Online encyclopaedias, video-sharing or microblogging websites allow ordinary people to upload content to the Net and thus to gain access to a global audience (at least in theory). This interactive aspect of the internet, sometimes referred to as Web 2.0, has turned formerly passive consumers into active contributors.

The internet in your pocket

Thanks to the invention of hand-held devices like tablet PCs and smartphones, the internet has gone portable, with far-reaching consequences for society. Information available online – train times, ticket prices, maps – can be accessed when and where it is needed: on the go, at work or at home, wherever there is a wireless connection. So-called apps (short for applications) and QR (quick response) codes enhance the usefulness of portable devices in a variety of situations.

The rise of social networking

The number of channels now available for communication influences the way we deal with each other. As the amount of digital text-based communication steadily increases from year to year, traditional forms of linking up (phone calls, face-to-face conversation) appear to be losing popularity.

At the centre oft he new digital culture are social networking sites (SNS) that allow their users to share pictures, instant messages, activities and interests. Since their first appearance around the turn of the century, they have mushroomed to global meeting points that link hundreds of millions of people worldwide. Originally they appealed mainly to a young audience that used them to make new contacts and post photos and messages, but today more and more older people are discovering their usefulness as well.

By representing themselves as a ‚community‘ of ‚friends‘, SNS can create a false sense of security that leads some teenagers to post personal information or private photos that can be copied and passed on by anyone. The anonymity of cyberspace also makes it easier for cyberbullies to torment their victims without fear of legal consequences.

Source: Context Starter, Cornelsen 2014 (Prüfauflage)

1 Text comprehension

Read the text and answer in complete sentences. Use your own words. Don't quote.

1.1 Summarise the main idea of the text in one sentence.

1.2 Outline the **uses** and **effects** of
   a) the internet
   b) portable internet devices
   c) social networking sites

1.3 According to the author, „ … traditional forms of linking up (phone calls, face-to-face conversation) appear to be losing popularity."
Beyond the text, think of arguments for the usefulness of phone calls and face-to-face conversation.

1.4 Explain what the author means by saying „SNS can create a false sense of security."

2 Beyond the text

2.1 Translate the following sentences.

a) Dank des Smartphones können wir überall auf Informationen aus dem Internet zugreifen.
b) Immer mehr Menschen entdecken die Nützlichkeit des mobilen Internetzugangs.
c) Seit Erscheinen des Smartphones ist die Zahl der verfügbaren Apps ständig gestiegen.
d) Textbasierte Anwendungen steigern die Bedeutung des geschriebenen Wortes.
e) Soziale Netzwerke machen es möglich, mit alten Freunden in Kontakt zu bleiben und neue Kontakte zu knüpfen.

2.2 Describe and interpret the cartoon.

source: https://de.pinterest.com/explore/work-cartoons/