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Shut Up and Dance

Black Mirror has made a name for itself by showing us the unexpected consequence of technology, some of the things that they point out are obvious, but others are not. They also over exaggerate things within their shows to make it clear how technology can affect our lives. The episode I watched was called Shut Up and Dance, and it focused on blackmail and hacking technology. Many people use the internet to hide or express themselves in ways that they would not in the real world, forgetting that the internet is not solely their own space; it is a place shared with so many others. On the internet, our information is not exclusively ours; we make one wrong click can lead to a world of problems. In this episode, Black Mirror does its best to show that you are not safe on the internet and that what you do will have consequences no matter what extremes you go through to cover up your actions.

In this episode, we follow Kenny, a teenage boy blackmailed into committing bizarre and criminal acts by a hacker possessing a video of him masturbating, which he received by hacking into his computer camera. He is not the only one affected by these hackers. There is a string of people who these hackers have something on and are forcing them to commit these acts to keep their secrets a secret. These tasks are as extreme as robbing a bank or just dropping off a cake to one of the others involved in the game that is being played. Even after following all the instructions, the hacker still reveals their secrets and gets punished for the crimes they have been forced to commit. This episode brings to light that our privacy is not guaranteed on the internet, and two, you can not trust everyone that you speak to on the internet, even if they have

something on you. The safety of the internet is a considerable concern to many people; many have webcam covers to prevent potential hackers from viewing them. With the increase of internet use, cyber attacks are only going to be on the rise, these attacks can be personal or large scale like companies, but everyone is at risk. Reports say that globally 30,000 websites are hacked daily (Bulao, 2021); yes, there are millions of websites on the internet, but just because we might not see the effects of the hacking does not mean that others are not experiencing it. Black Mirror does an excellent job of expressing this by the number of people involved in the blackmail; we have no clue what affects people every day.

The second form of internet safety that this episode of Black Mirror focuses on is that not everyone is who they say they are, and you should not openly trust everyone. Everyone in the blackmail scheme just openly trusted the hackers hoping their secrets wouldn't be relieved in the end; this trust proved to be the wrong move. People blindly trust people on the internet, whether it is buying clothing from a cheap website expecting them to look like the pictures, developing relationships with people online, and trusting that they say who they said they are. Although this theme is not super clear within the episode, I feel very well touched on within the situation. Trust nobodies word on the internet, protecting yourself is very important but, according to the Child Crime Prevention and Safety Center, there is an estimated 500,000 predators active online each day (Kraut, 2020), if that number does not make you think about your safety it should at least make you feel about your children, or younger siblings because anyone can fall victim to online predators. Yes, Black Mirror's portrayal of how someone can gain control over someone is a bit extreme. It shows that it can happen to everyday people.

The unexpected consequences of the internet become very clear after watching this episode of Black Mirror. It gives us an extreme view of what could happen if we do not try to

protect ourselves when using the internet. This episode addresses both cyber attacks and online predators. The cyber attacks are being addressed with the hacking of people's personal computers to take personal information and online predators with the people being blackmailed blindly trusting the hacker. The characters slowly become destroyed by their actions and the hacker's action just for their secrets to be relieved through the episode. We need to understand that the internet is not a completely protected space and that we need to take the proper precautions when using the internet to keep ourselves safe.

References

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