

# Social impact of technology

[Technology](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Social Impact of Technology There is no doubt that technological change brings about social change. The Industrial revolution saw many people displaced from their land, to find work in crowded city factories. Serfdom was abolished and the population shifted from villages to the cities.

Strong family ties, self sufficiency and the right to occupy land were replaced with uncertain tenancy of land, dependency on trade and a weakening of the family unit. Economically, goods and money abounded, and trade flourished.

The merchant class profited from the wealth that was generated on the backs of the displaced population of urban workers. Children were sent to work in factories, in order for families to make enough money to live. The peasant class worked long hard hours in poor conditions with no security. The Industrial revolution led to the alienation of the working class and although many union battles have since led to the adoption of better working conditions, the effects of the Industrial revolution remain.

The family unit is even more vulnerable today with soaring divorce rates, high rates of teenage suicide, most of society are either heavily mortgaged to banks or paying high rents, and no one can be self-sufficient in a world governed by free wheeling free trade. Advances in technology, is generally not equitably shared within society. People with money have more opportunity to acquire technology, which enables them to acquire even more wealth. It is also important to remember that war has been and will continue to be the driving force for technology and innovation. Power and wealth are intrinsically tied together.

Technology leads to greater social economic division. Laborers are viewed as commodities and expendable. Technology leads to alienation because it can

<https://assignbuster.com/social-impact-of-technology/>

create jobs that require no specialist knowledge. To date, since the industrial revolution we have seen technology used to the detriment of society. The right to occupy land has become a privilege that must be worked for and earned and now the battle is on to control all the world's food and textiles through genetically modified seeds and animals. The insidious part of GM is that there is no recall once it is released into the environment.

Salmon that will grow ten times faster than normal salmon will destroy river systems, as their unfair genetically modified advantage will see all smaller life forms extinguished, and genetically modified crops that are dependent on pesticides will contaminate organic, heritage seeds that have sustained people for thousands of years. Seeds will no longer be able to be harvested and replanted but the farmer will have to buy new seed every year from GM seed makers. This fight is more important than the fight over open source because it involves the right of people everywhere to have clean, safe food that has not been genetically altered.

Essentially GM is a tax on everyone because a patent will be on every seed and seeds are made to be sterile the following year. This is something to become angry about. The greedy corporations and individuals that want control over our food, water and land, do not care about the irreversible damage to the environment, people and animals that they cause. We have the right to eat tomatoes that are free of fish DNA, meat and milk that is free of human DNA, pigs that haven't been grown to harvest anthrax antibodies. They will never be able to prove the safety of GM food and no long term studies have been done.

Nor will GM solve the problem of soil erosion, and pollution of rivers from artificial fertilizers and pesticides. Only a return to responsible organic and biodynamic farming practices will solve these problems. The 50 harmful effects of GM food Courts are not keen to pursue pesticide makers for poisoning farmers, or GM seed makers for monopolizing the world's seeds through patents, (through genetic engineering that not only renders the seed worthless for replanting the next year but also contaminates non-GM crops by cross pollination.

Already the majority of the world's seed stock is controlled by a handful of corporations - see <http://www.cqs.com/50harm.htm> and <http://www.seedsavers.net> ) The internet in its current form was developed as a free exchange of information, unregulated by any one government or owned by any one person or company. In its raw form it was the playground of hackers and computer geeks, who challenged the status quo. It brings about a new era, the technological revolution.

The free flow of information, has brought about technological advances at an unprecedented rate and has made many rich and brought companies who failed to adapt to a standstill. How will this technological revolution impact on our society? If the industrial revolution is any thing to go by, there will be winners and losers to technological revolution. E-commerce will affect the middle man and allow direct trade with consumers. Efficiency brings about lower prices for the consumer, but it is more accurate to argue that efficiency brings about greater wealth for shareholders, directors and owners.

The intrinsic weave of social interactions of trade, can be disentangled and made into a horizontal supply chain. E-commerce will create efficiencies that effectively remove the need for a long supply chain but at the expense of social relationships. The effect of e-commerce, and the internet will impact on every society on the earth. Already, the barriers of trade between individuals in different countries are non-existent. Company contact details are searchable through powerful search engines, and trade can commerce between two individuals who would otherwise never have met.

The internet dissolves national boundaries, and the consequences for cities that have developed as centers of administration and trade will be disastrous, if they do not embrace the technological advances in communication and trade that the internet brings. While at the same time, free trade means fierce competition without the protection of award wages. People are reduced to consumers and suppliers. Resisting the tide of technological change is impossible. Of course it is possible to do business without a website or email or mobile phone or a fax machine.

People have been doing business well before any of these gadgets were invented. But business today is about competition, and technology is about leverage. Technology can lead to alienation if it is not widely dispersed in society. The Industrial age saw the concentration of technology in the hands of the rich and powerful, allowing them to dominate and subdue the population into harsh working conditions and the social impact of the internet and computers is only just beginning, will it challenge the status quo or will it lead to greater population control?

The latter is probably more likely, and many will look on this time as the golden age of the internet. Already technology like digital TV is being pushed in the guise of better quality but the benefits to those who own the systems is that they will be able to track what you watch, when you watch it, whether or not you switch off an ad, and perhaps even whether that pizza ad makes you pick up the phone and call for a pizza.

Knowledge is power, and with access to tapping phone lines, reading emails, reading your credit card statements, knowing by GPS where you are by tracking your mobile phone, it can be a scary world, if all that knowledge and power were to be used to oppress and control. On the upside, technology has made the developed world a richer place to the detriment of the environment. Machines have allowed people to move away from physical work, so that now in Australia there is 100, 000 accountants and 85, 000 farmers.

Perhaps, technology has gone too far, and there are more people counting beans than growing them ! Impact of technology on government The legal system is dependent on local jurisdictions under common law. Historically, one has to remember that before the age of the internet, airplanes and telephones, the vast majority of business was done locally. Technology has rapidly changed the way people do business but there has not adapted to the changes. There is no one body that governs international trade. What are the implications?

If you buy a product from a local supplier in your State, and it turns out that the item is faulty, you can go back to your supplier to work out repair or replacement and if they don't help you, you can take the matter to local

Trades office or file legal action in your state. If however, you buy a product outside your jurisdiction, you must file a claim in the State, where the supplier is located. You can only use a lawyer in the State where you file your action, your local lawyer can only act as a consultant and has no authority to represent you in court or to serve papers.

Therefore, we have a world which is governed by local laws and yet the businesses and individuals are now actively trading outside of their local area. Governments are trying to make laws about content on the internet but have no jurisdiction to enforce those laws. This has created havens in small developing countries, that are happy to accept companies that want to run online gambling websites that may be outlawed in their jurisdiction or companies that wish to reduce their tax liabilities by opening up bank accounts in developing countries.

We see arising now a homogenizing of local laws on issues like SPAM, and even sending a international letter from anywhere in the world involves the completion of almost identical forms, Governments are making agreements, in an attempt to be relevant in a world where people are able to trade more freely and where digital communication has enabled businesses to work, almost without physical boundaries. Business names and the Internet In the beginning, it was easy to start a new business.

You would go to your local business registration office in your State and apply for a business name. If it was taken, you would choose another name. Most people do not realize that a business name is only valid for the State that it is registered in and the only way to protect your business name is to incorporate a company. In Australia, you would lodge forms with ASIC to <https://assignbuster.com/social-impact-of-technology/>

incorporate a company and you then have rights to use your business name exclusively in Australia and its territories.

However, with the birth of the internet, your Australian company name may be the same as the name of a company overseas. This has resulted in legal action being taken, as companies tussle of business names and the rights to use those names and a court system that is unable to deal effectively with international disputes over business names and has resulted in greater costs to people who want to start a business as they must register multiple domain names, take about international trademarks and find a name that has not already been taken.

Even if they contact lawyers to register all the domain names and trademarks to avoid disputes(both local and international), legal action can still be taken against them. And when it comes to justice, money wins almost every time, unless companies want to relocate to safe havens in developing countries where they cannot be pursued in court. Conclusion Technology has allowed man to move from manual labour of the fields to cities and machines. It has allowed huge cities to arise, because of the urban poor that have migrated to cities for improved services and job opportunities.

Technology has spawned the growth of modern society but it is also now used to control the population, in a way the Roman Caesars could only have dreamed of The economic impact of information technology has been a subject of a great deal of debate. For business economists, it is useful to identify how information technology (IT) is likely to impact the economy, because IT (defined as computer and communications technology and its



applications) is likely to have a substantial impact on the economy's growth during the coming decades.

The reason for this is the use of IT by nearly all industries in the economy's base, so that IT becomes a universal input to nearly all other outputs. If IT costs decline, they can create substantial economic gains for many of the industries that use IT, because money spent on IT can be invested in other inputs and improvements in production or services. Furthermore, because business relies upon IT to do a wide range of tasks and to create competitive advantage, by facilitating these tasks for end users, important gains are achieved that are difficult to measure in a classic input-output framework.

In addition, IT, seen in a larger context, should have even wider impacts on the economy, because new channels of communications, such as the Internet, cellular television, and broadband applications, will provide business with new channels to reach customers and suppliers. In the past, the economic impact of IT has been subject to much debate. The productivity paradox was first proposed by Steven Roach, the chief economist at Morgan Stanley, who found that BLS data on investments in computers had a clear negative rather than a positive impact on productivity gains in several major industries.

Roach's paradox appeared to be valid because quite a few service industries had negative productivity gains between 1977 and 1984. Some tried to explain this paradox by noting that it was difficult for workers to adjust to computers. Others noted that few computer applications made significant improvements in the amount of work most workers could do. Still additional

commentators felt that the paradox was a product of poor statistical measurement.

Because this paradox was driven by the negative productivity results for several service industries, one approach was to see if the service productivity figures were accurate. One study, by Joel Popkin and Company for IBM,(1) found that the BLS productivity statistics Roach used for several service sectors had important shortcomings. Most importantly, the BLS productivity data relied on output measures that did not truly reflect the changes in the nature of work in some service industries. If these are corrected in several important service industries, two things could be shown.