The consequences of technology in flowers for algernon, a short story by daniel k...

" There is no such thing as a free lunch," an old adage says; there are often hidden costs behind seemingly harmless offers. Bars in the late 1800's often advertised " free" lunch if a customer bought one of their drinks. However these complimentary items were often high in salt, causing the consumer to become thirsty. As a result, the restaurant would profit off this exchange as customers would spend more money buying more drinks. Technology can easily be compared to the free lunch. Although there are many benefits to technology, the underlying expenses are even more harmful. In the short story " Flowers for Algernon" by Daniel Keyes, technology is something that the main character seeks out as an opportunity to become smarter. This good opportunity results in a disaster as he becomes more lonely and separated from those he cares about. Technology is also a major reason why so many are lazy today. The minimal effort to completing tasks has caused people to become increasingly lazy and undisciplined. The improvement in the fields of transportation and manufacturing have also greatly impacted the globe negatively. Humanity's advancement is Mother Earth's calamity. Increased carbon dioxide emission due to technology has resulted in the Earth heating up faster than it has in thousands of years. Technology solved problems but results in people feeling separated from each other, increasingly lazy and fuels of global warming.

Although Charlie, the main character, has become smarter from the technology provided to improve him, many bad things result from it. Charlie originally has an IQ of 68 and after the operation, his IQ triples, making him smarter than even the doctors that operated on him. The best opportunity for Charlie turns out to be his worst nightmare. After Charlie gets fired from

his job, he states that his new " intelligence has driven a wedge between [him] and all the people [he] once knew and loved" (297). The technology used to help Charlie ends up hurting him more than it helps him. His co-workers become scared of him for suddenly gaining so much intelligence. This leads to Charlie being ignored by others and him becoming forlorn. Charlie's operation isn't advantageous to him overall because though it helps improve Charlie's intelligence, his social relationships are greatly harmed. He becomes increasingly lonely and separated from others around him. Charlie's artificial acuity also leads to him not being able to communicate with the person he is in love with. A few weeks after he is fired from his job, he goes to talk to Miss Kinnian but soon realizes that " no matter what [he tries] to discuss with her, [he] is unable to communicate" (298). Charlie's artificial intelligence restricts him from be able to properly communicate with Miss Kinnian, the love of his life. When he tries to start a conversation, he speaks in a way Miss Kinnian cannot understand. This creates a barrier between the two and denies Charlie the chance to express his true feelings. Many would think Charlie has benefitted because he is able to learn and understand things at a much faster rate. But despite possessing this ability, he becomes closed off and unable to communicate with others. His newest improvement proves to have many limitations. After the operation Charlie is not able to communicate well with others and that results to him not having social happiness. He eventually becomes touchy, depressed and moody which means he loses happiness in the attempt to become more successful. Charlie's experience proves that although on the outside technology appears appealing, the adverse hidden costs can be deleterious.

Technology is something that is directly responsible to making humans lazier. People will often take technological aids for granted to the point where " If they are stripped away, some people may not be able to function as well without them" (Previl). There are many cases where people are addicted to their phones. In fact, " 84 percent of respondents [in an international survey] said that they could not go a single day without their cellphones" (Gilbert). Some people who don't have their phones will feel anxiety or negative physical symptoms (nomophobia). This directly correlates with Previl's theory that people cannot function properly without technology. It is hard to imagine how people would live without household innovations like fridges or microwaves. Technology is helpful to humans, but at a certain point, people might become helpless when technology fails. People may go insane without access to the technology that they have depended on. Students are also affected by the constantly developing tools. Academic dishonesty has consistently been an issue among students, but with the uprise of the internet " 35% of teens admit to using a cell phone to cheat at school, while 65% say other students do it" (Kurtz). The article briefly describes how technology and the internet changes the perception of cheating towards teens. Searching for information quickly allows students to find all the answers they need, and they often don't realize what they are doing is wrong. Information is so accessible to everyone that people don't feel as if plagiarizing off the internet is doing something dishonest. The accessibility of the internet is resulting in people becoming increasingly lazy to actually do the schoolwork they are assigned.

Another increasing issue for people all around the world is obesity. The issue is in fact so serious that " one in every three adults and one in every six children in the United States is obese" (Crees). The great amount of Americans that have this serious condition can be blamed on the fact that the " average American watches five hours of TV" (Hinckley). This is one of the biggest factors that contributes to obesity. When people are watching TV, they will often remain stationary on the couch and snack on junk food. Sitting and eating unhealthy food for three or more hours a day is very harmful to the health of that person. They gain unwanted fat which can lead to " more than 70 illnesses" (Watson) including stroke, cancer and high blood pressure. With the invention of the TV, people are provided with hours of entertainment accessible right at their fingertips. This revolutionary device may seem like it is actually helping people because it makes life much easier and convenient. This is an understandable point of view but the evidence provided proves that many people abuse the gift of technology. The improved devices are used in the thought that it would help them but ultimately, people are harmed by it. People misuse technology to the point where it is not only harming their health, but also their integrity.

Another phenomenon caused by innovations would be global warming. Global warming is a detrimental problem towards the world and humanity's future. Global warming is often said to be caused by a " combustion of fossil fuels in cars, factories and electricity production" (National Geographic). Cars, factories and electricity are all forms of technology. They are all objects that have improved the efficiency and lifestyle of humans. The emissions of these developments has led to massive crop failures, killer storms, extinction

of animals and rising sea levels. The consistent use of chemical fertilizers has led to a " high rate of application of nitrogen-rich fertilizers has effects on the heat storage of cropland" (Markham). People use these chemicals to help with the production of food in a more efficient process. In the long run, this action is a harmful one. With the usage of the fertilizers it depletes the soil of nutrients, and the presence of the harmful chemicals remain within the soil. This directly correlates with there being a lack of agricultural output.

Technology is something that is harming people's relationships, morals, health and the world they live in. Some may argue that global warming is just a hoax created by the government but statistics taken of carbon dioxide emissions and the large amounts of melting ice beg to differ. In the movie Chasing Ice where a crew of people are capturing the melting of polar ice caps, there is one line of dialogue that really struck a chord with its audience. For the past " 800, 000 years or so, atmospheric carbon dioxide was never higher than about 280 parts per million … And now it's about 390 parts per million" (Balong). This piece of dialogue spoken in the movie shows how much damage humans have done over a small course in time. There hasn't been much change for nearly a million years but when technology started innovating, the carbon dioxide level rose more than it ever had. Studies done by many scientists have shown that the presence of technology has in fact greatly harmed the world. These effects of global warming can be a very harmful to humanity and the world people live in. If this behavior continues, sometime down the line, humans are going to run into a serious issue that will definitely put their lives at risk.

The great issues of community barriers between people, people becoming less active and the environment being harmed shows that technology is definitely hurting people more than it is helping them. Technology is something that proves to be too good to be true. Too good to be true is a phrase that describes things that are seem so great that it's unbelievable; there is definitely some sort of hidden cost. Technology is said to help connect people on a wider scale but it is proven in " Flowers for Algernon" that the people Charlie were once close with were driven away from him. Charlie's opportunity to get smarter seems wonderful but the underlying cost is that he feels separated from the people he cares about. He is unable to communicate well with others and develop healthy relationships, ultimately putting his happiness awry. Technology also is proven to be " too good to be true" because the constant use of it results in people also becoming increasingly lazy, a loss of their morals, deteriorating health and the eventual destruction of Earth. Many innovations are also causing harm to the world people reside in. Although there are many positives to it, ultimately, technology is something that will harm more than it helps. Technology the perfect example of something that is too good to be true.