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Technology, Internet

The Internet:

The Defining Technology Of A Generation

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Introduction

The Internet represents the most important technological development of our generation. It's effects may surpass those of television and could, over the decades, equal the influence of the printing press. I believe the Internet will have broad implications for government policy-making, corporate planning, and social and cultural study. The ideas and uses of the Internet are endless at this point in time, therefore, it is a necessity that the government and corporate world gather as much insight as possible to assess all the abilities of it.

Statement of Problem

The rapid evolution of any technology naturally raises questions about both its potential benefits and possible negative consequences. This is especially true of the Internet, it's enormous growth and powerful interactive capabilities have inspired a national response by the media, legislators, and among public interest groups. Issues in this broad discussion of the Internet include questions about children and access to online material, potential online threats to personal privacy, the effects of the Internet on family involvement and social organizations, gender differences in use and access, credit card security, and the effects of the online sales on traditional retailing.

Review of Literature

In 1969, it would have been nearly impossible to imagine that a fledgling experiment that began at UCLA and other research institutions could one day become the defining technology of a generation (Lebo p. 4). Yet in the 31 years since the events that led to the creation of the Internet, this technology has become the fastest growing electronic communication tool as we begin a new millennium. " The Internet today is at the Apollo 11 stage..." (Ebert 2000). The Internet has the potential to provide more communications power, purchasing capability, and knowledge gathering outreach than print and electronic media combined.

Even more astonishing is that most of the Internet's growth has occurred in less that seven years, that is almost seven times faster than that of television. In January 1994 the Internet had little immediate relevance in the daily lives of Americans. So many people are now attracted to the web that

businesses are struggling to attract them and then hold on to them (O'Leary 2000). The prediction that the Internet would become a powerful, interactive tool for commerce, education, cultural enlightenment, and personal relationships was only a modestly interesting subject of discussion for most Americans - if it was of interest at all. Yet by 1997, some 19 million Americans were using the Internet. That number tripled in one year, and then passed 100 million in 1999 (Moore 1999). Even after five years of extensive growth, Internet enrollment continues to stay high. " Every 24 hours, the content of the World Wide Web increases" (Simms). In the first quarter of 2000, more than five million Americans joined the online world - roughly 55, 000 new users each day, 2, 289 new users each hour, or 38 new users each minute. The majority of whom are adults and not teens on the contrary of popular belief (Naughton 2000). " Few economists believe that the longest economic expansion in U. S. History is going to slam into reverse" (Heft 2000). According to Negroponte (1996), it is not the Internet that provides the information; just like it is not the television that gives you entertainment, it's the people. His statement here carries a concept that many people seem to overlook, limiting their understandings of technology. "... technologies often open up new frontiers of scientific knowledge" (Rhodes 2000).

E-mail, perhaps the most basic of online services, continues to grow beyond all expectations, and with its expansion come intriguing new questions about how interpersonal communication and commerce are changing. The number of electronic mailboxes worldwide jumped 84 percent to almost 570 million in 1999. While in 1998, the U. S. Postal Service delivered 101 billion pieces of

mail, estimates of the number of e-mail messages transmitted that year range to as high as 4 trillion(Rhoads 1999).

Compare/Contrast

The Internet has become enormously important in everyday life for almost everybody. Life, for the most part, has been made easier, whether it is noticed or not, by the Internet. Yet it has come, like all things, with a price. The internet has no guidelines as to the information that is available on it. The ability to monitor it and the right for it to monitored have played key roles in it's ongoing assessment. The Constitution of the United States comes under a microscope in deciding how to control the abilities of the Internet. Its awesome power has come fast to the public, which is looked to as a good thing, but at what price? Is monitoring even relevant? I believe in freedom and the right to privacy in what you do on the Internet. I believe that adults should monitor their children if necessary. To much blame is put on the program, instead of the person that accesses the program.

Conclusion

The Internet is the fastest growing electrically supported device ever. It's range of power are beyond that of human understanding. The problems that have arisen from this marvel of technology are because of this inability to understand. Governments, corporations, businesses, and households are all connected to an endless source of information. This endless source of information has changed the world completely. It has connected people thousands of miles away as if they were next door and it has merged

businesses and corporations with more business. The Internet is far from being fully discovered, and like that of the newly found found nation called the United States of America, the Internet is also a " manifest destiny".

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