

How technology, with particular emphasis on the internet and computers, has chang...

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How technology, with particular emphasis on the internet and computers, has changed world culture. One of the most obvious characteristics of the modern world which distinguishes this age from previous periods in history is the widespread use of computer technology. The increased potential for communications across vast distances at instant speed has allowed millions of people, especially in the developed countries of the world, to have a much wider circle of contacts and friends than was possible before. It is now possible to speak of a truly global culture, which circulates across the airwaves using many languages and multiple media including music, pictures, videos and rich texts full of emoticons and hyperlinks. This communication explosion is the biggest cultural impact of the new technologies. Beneath the surface of this virtual world of avatars, wikis, blogs, and tweets, however, there are some deeper cultural changes which have both good and bad consequences.

On the positive side, applications like video-conferencing and instant messaging are very useful in the world of work because they facilitate group discussions without the need for expensive real life travel. This saves time, and reduces the carbon footprint of any business. In terms of family and social relationships, these technologies also allow more frequent contact between individuals, even when they are located in different places, or even different countries. This can enhance family stability. Students can access a far wider range of learning resources, and older people can join leisure and interest groups, which offer friendship in pursuing hobbies, dealing with illnesses, and finding any number of other beneficial services. The internet exposes everyone who can afford to be connected, to a vast array of

information sources and different points of view.

One big negative change in the world has been a widening of the gap between rich and poor people. In Africa, for example, and in some deprived inner city areas of the developed world, there are many people who are excluded from these exciting opportunities because they do not have the resources to pay for equipment and broadband charges. This cultural divide can cause resentment and friction between developed and less developed countries or regions.

For those who do enjoy the many benefits of the new technologies there are significant dangers which must be taken into account. Parents are rightly concerned about criminals, or even other children, who might contact their children inappropriately and promote immoral, illegal or other potentially harmful activities. There are internet fraudsters who steal a person's identity and commit crimes involving banks and credit cards. Educators have pointed out that people who use the internet frequently may never develop a good memory for facts and figures, because they rely on their computer for every task. The culture of social media sites encourages young people to be too trusting, and allow private information to be posted on the web, causing potential problems later in life. Another negative impact of the internet is that people tend to be less polite, and more aggressive than in real life, because they can hide their real identity. These features change the way that people relate to each other, and this may have serious and negative implications for human culture in the long term.

Overall, these new technologies have opened up local cultures to the influence of a new, global culture that takes place in virtual reality. Many

people have the option to share in both dimensions, and so long as they are aware of the dangers of the new technologies, there is every sign that this mutual enrichment will carry on in the future and spread even further than it reaches at the present time.