

The socio-cultural effects of technology on society

Technology



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Group research paper: The Socio-Cultural Effects of Technology on Society

Technology and society or technology and culture refer to the recurring co-dependence, co-influence, co-production of technology and society upon the other (technology upon culture, and vice-versa) (Webster's Dictionary 5060).

There are an extraordinary number of examples how science and technology has helped us that can be seen in society today. One great example is the mobile phone. Ever since the invention of the telephone society was in need of a more portable device that they could use to talk to people.

This high demand for a new product led to the invention of the mobile phone, which did, and still do, greatly influence society and the way people live their lives. Now many people are accessible to talk to whomever they want no matter where any of the two people are. All these little changes in mobile phones, like Internet access, are further examples of the cycle of co-production. Society's need for being able to call on people and be available everywhere resulted in the research and development of mobile phones.

They in turn influenced the way we live our lives. As the populace relies more and more on mobile phones, additional features were requested. This is also true with today's modern media player. Society also determined the changes that were made to the previous generation media player that the manufactures developed. Take for example, today's media players. At the beginning, cassettes were being used to store data. However, that method was large and cumbersome so the manufactures developed compact disks, which were smaller and could hold more data.

Later, compact disks were again too large and did not hold enough data that forced today's manufactures to create MP3 players, which are small and holds large amount of data. Today's society determined the course of events that many manufactures took to improving their products so today's consumers will purchase their products. Looking back into ancient history, economics can be said to have arrived on the scene when the occasional, spontaneous exchange of goods and services began to occur on a less occasional, less spontaneous basis.

It probably did not take long for the maker of arrowheads to realize that he could probably do a lot better by concentrating on the making of arrowheads and barter for his other needs. Clearly, regardless of the goods and services bartered, some amount of technology was involved—if no more than in the making of shell and bead jewelry. Even the shaman's potions and sacred objects can be said to have involved some technology. So, from the very beginnings, technology can be said to have spurred the development of more elaborate economies.

In the modern world, superior technologies, resources, geography, and history give rise to robust economies; and in a well-functioning, robust economy, economic excess naturally flows into greater use of technology. Moreover, because technology is such an inseparable part of human society, especially in its economic aspects, funding sources for (new) technological endeavors are virtually illimitable. However, while in the beginning, technological investment involved little more than the time, efforts, and skills of one or a few men, today, such investment may involve the collective labor and skills of many millions.

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Technology has frequently been driven by the military, with many modern applications being developed for the military before being adapted for civilian use. However, this has always been a two-way flow, with industry often taking the lead in developing and adopting a technology that is only later adopted by the military. Winston (2003) provides an excellent summary of the ethical implications of technological development and deployment. He states there are four major ethical implications: - Challenges traditional ethical norms.

Because technology impacts relationships among individuals, it challenges how individuals deal with each other, even in ethical ways. One example of this is challenging the definition of "human life" as embodied by debates in the areas of abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, etc. , which all involve modern technological developments. - Creates an aggregation of effects. One of the greatest problems with technology is that its detrimental effects are often small, but cumulative.

Such is the case with the pollution from the burning of fossil fuels in automobiles. Each individual automobile creates a very small, almost negligible, amount of pollution, however the cumulative effect could possibly contribute to the global warming effect. Other examples include accumulations of chemical pollutants in the human body, urbanization effects on the environment, etc. A Lancaster dropping bundles of 4lb stick incendiaries (left), 30lb incendiaries and a "cookie" (right) - Changes the distribution of justice.

In essence, those with technology tend to have higher access to justice systems. Or, justice is not distributed equally to those with technology versus those without. - Provides great power. Not only does technology amplify the ability, and hence the strength, of humans, it also provides a great strategic advantage to the human(s) who hold the greatest amount of technology. Consider the strategic advantage gained by having greater technological innovations in the military, pharmaceuticals, computers, etc.

For example, Bill Gates has considerable influence (even outside of the computer industry) in the course of human affairs due to his successful implementation of computer technology. Lifestyle In many ways, technology simplifies life. * The rise of a leisure class * A more informed society, which can make quicker responses to events and trends * Sets the stage for more complex learning tasks * Increases multi-tasking (although this may not be simplifying) * Global networking * Creates denser social circles * Cheaper prices * Greater specialization in jobs In other ways, technology complicates life. Pollution is a serious problem in a technologically advanced society (from acid rain to Chernobyl and Bhopal) * The increase in transportation technology has brought congestion in some areas * New forms of danger existing as a consequence of new forms of technology, such as the first generation of nuclear reactors * New forms of entertainment, such as video games and internet access could have possible social effects on areas such as academic performance * Increased probability of some diseases and disorders, such as obesity * Social separation of singular human interaction.

Technology has increased the need to talk to more people faster. * Structural unemployment * Anthropocentric climate change Institutions and groups

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Technology often enables organizational and bureaucratic group structures that otherwise and heretofore were simply not possible. Examples of this might include: * The rise of very large organizations: e. g. , governments, the military, health and social welfare institutions, supranational corporations. * The commercialization of leisure: sports events, products, etc. McGinn) * The almost instantaneous dispersal of information (especially news) and entertainment around the world. International Technology enables greater knowledge of international issues, values, and cultures. Due mostly to mass transportation and mass media, the world seems to be a much smaller place, due to the following, among others: * Globalization of ideas * Embeddings of values * Population growth and control Environment Technology provides an understanding, and an appreciation for the world around us.

The effects of technology on the environment are both obvious and subtle. The more obvious effects include the depletion of nonrenewable natural resources (such as petroleum, coal, ores), and the added pollution of air, water, and land. The more subtle effects include debates over long-term effects (e. g. , global warming, deforestation, natural habitat destruction, coastal wetland loss.) One of the main problems is the lack of an effective way to remove these pollutants on a large scale expediently.

In nature, organisms "recycle" the wastes of other organisms, for example, plants produce oxygen as a by-product of photosynthesis, and oxygen-breathing organisms use oxygen to metabolize food, producing carbon dioxide as a by-product, which plants use in a process to make sugar, with oxygen as a waste in the first place. No such mechanism exists for the removal of technological wastes. Humanity at the moment may be compared

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to a colony of bacteria in a Petri dish with a constant food supply: with no way to remove the wastes of their metabolism, the bacteria eventually poison themselves. *Spook Country*” introduces us to the interesting world of information immersion through the eyes of Hollis Henry, a former rock band-Curfew’s musician and the lead character in the novel. She is confident and ambitious. She quit her band because she was not making enough money for living, so she decided to start her career as a journalist. She actually started writing when she was little, even before she became a rock band member. It was obvious that she had a passion for writing.

Hollis’s job is very complicated, she has to untangle all the mysterious things and find out information for the *Node* magazine which does not really exist yet. Hollis searches for a strange container throughout the entire novel and when she finally finds it in the end, she discovers that the container is ultimately filled with U. S. Government Money, “ One hundred million dollars. In a set of fake pallets, along the floor. About fourteen inches deep. Little over a ton of U. S. hundreds” (Gibson 337). This makes her become a possible target for a Chinese / Cuban group intent on tagging the money with Cesium.

She starts in Los Angeles and ends up in Vancouver. Henry’s assignment is to interview locative art specialist Bobby Chombo, who took his last name from a computer program which, according to the Applied Numerical Algorithms Group, “ provides a set of tools for implementing finite difference methods for the solution of partial differential equations on block-structured adaptively refined rectangular grids. ” Bobby is a computer geek with a

fascination for the intersection of virtual space and real space. He specializes in geospatial technologies.

He got into locative art after a career working navigational systems for the US military, and uses his expertise to place works of art on a VR grid mapped over real cities and towns. In my opinion, Gibson's story is not only about locative art and how weird our world is becoming: he also has the good graces to give us a spy story, which deals with the ubiquity of information in a different way. Agent Brown and his captive junkie Russian translator, Milgrim, are on the tail of a Cuban-Chinese Spetsnaz-trained ninja believed (rightly) by the US government to be smuggling information to an unknown entity for an unknown purpose.

Brown relies on satellite information to track him, another nod to the ubiquity of information, and keeps Milgrim in the dark about his actual affiliation and intent. Milgrim experiences a big shock in his life as he boards a Jet stream to Vancouver. He loses his mind completely which has never happened to him before. Prior to boarding a Jet stream, he was excited to get his hair and makeup done in Washington, DC free by Brown's attache. Later in the novel, Milgrim crashes car in an attempt to kill Tito but he manages to escape and steals Hollis Henry's purse which contains five thousand dollars given to her by proxy from a dead band mate, heroin overdose, Jimmy Carlyle. After all these activities are over, Milgrim wakes up in a nice bed with a nice egg breakfast next to him. As a drug addict, he is very calm and focused on what he is doing. He works with Brown very closely, their relationship is more like Brown takes control of everything and gives orders

to Milgrim. They work in New York in the beginning. Milgrim is a prisoner of the world of information.

In “ Spook Country,” Gibson’s use of these three characters together, lets the story of Tito, Brown and Milgrim, and Hollis build to a conclusion which amounts to a great big middle finger to the war in Iraq. Gibson has illustrated characters looking, literally, for their place in the world, and they have shown that the world we live in today did not turn out to be the futurist paradise we might have wanted, validating our inevitable escape into the digital. No flying cars, no magic pill hamburgers, and no pocket computers, but works of art that we can only see if we are wearing virtual reality goggles, standing on a particular street corner.

Information is all around us, rather than a thing into which we insert ourselves. The topics that I researched were the “ Santeria” religion, Ochun, the National Security Agency (NSA), and the term “ Big Brother”. These topics were all related in the novel “ Spook Country” by William Gibson. Technology played a big a part in the plot from robots to cell phones to computers. Information as commodity was also a major influence in this novel with the use of Ipods, newspapers, and surveillance cameras. The characters depended heavenly on all these items as tools of survival.

I will discuss the history, the development, and impact among the “ Santeria” religion, Ochun, the National Security Agency (NSA) and the term “ Big Brother”. Santeria (also know as “ La Regla Lucumi”) is a combination of the West African Yoruba religion and Catholicism. The Way of the Saints, Santeria or as the descendants of the Afro-Caribbean tradition in Cuba

prefers to call it. Santeria rather overemphasizes the Catholic elements in the religion, which was essentially an African spiritual path, developed by their ancestors (www. africanholocaust. net).

They attempted to covert Africans but while they accepted the teaching they found it did not provide “ religious fulfillment”. They continued to practice their own rituals which they found was useful and effective, most importantly, filled the spiritual void in their lives. It was brought to Cuba originally by the African slaves who were brought by the Spaniards to that island. Santeria believes in one creator, one All Mighty God – (Olorun Olodumare), who created the other “ semi-gods” or entities called Orishas, to deal with every facet of human life a nature itself.

They interceded in on our behalf just as the Catholic saints intercede.

Although the African slaves were not allowed to express their religion freely they had to “ disguise” their gods, with those of the slave owners (www. santeriaspells. com) below is a small list (marked with an asterisk) what are called the Seven African Powers: 1. Olodumare (God Almighty) 2. * Ellegua (Sant Anthony of Padua) 3. * Obatala (La Virgen de Las Mercedes) 4. * Yemaya (La Virgen de Regla) 5. * Chango (Santa Barbara) 6. * Oya (Santa Therese de Jesus) 7. * Ochun (Las Caridad del Cobre) 8. * Ogun (San Pedro)

In the Santeria religion “ Eleggua” is the keeper of the roads and the world. Eleggua is the gatekeeper that stands in the path of life and celestial grounds. Ellegua is an Orisha (spirit) associated with “ opening the ways”, or crossroads. Often depicted as a child or a small man, he is playful and a trickster god. During the ceremonies worshippers would often have a “

cement head” this is apart of the ritual: A cement head with a metal spike in the top, and cowrie shells for eyes and mouth, as a representation of Ellegua which receives offerings and protects in return (wikipedia. org).

The “ Babalu Aye” is the Orisha name for St. Lazarus it means “ Father of the World” he is commonly referred to the Father of the World. His colors are brown, black and purple. His number is 17; his symbols are two dogs and crutches. He is portrayed dressed in burlap. He is offered white wine, popcorn, sesame seed candy and a variety of grains, beans, and seeds. Many Cubans hold a vigil starting the night of December 16th. They get together and light candles and make offerings to Babulu Aye and wait for him to arrive at midnight. Come midnight they ask for San Lazaro to watch over them nd keep them and their families safe and healthy. Today, December 17, is Babalu Aye day in the Afro-Cuban religion (www. babalublog. com). In Cuban Santeria, Oshun (sometimes spelled Ochun’ or Ochun) is the goddess of love, of money and indeed of happiness. She brings all the good things of life (www. angelfire. com). This goddess is adorned with jewelry she speaks to one of her birds, the parrot. She is the goddess of sweet water, she is found near fresh water, at rivers, ponds, and especially waterfalls. Offerings are sometimes left at the waterfalls for her.

Ochun loves to dance and make merry but she does have a serious side. Many offerings are sometimes left for her at the waterfalls. Many ceremonies are located at the river (www. angelfire. com). Her favorite day of the week is Saturday and the number she is associated with is 5 (wikipedia. org). It’s been known that she had to sell her body in order to feed her children and the other Orishas came and took her children away. Oshun went insane from

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heartache and became depressed. She wore the same white dress everyday it turns yellow over time.

A gentleman by the name of Aje'-Shaluga, another Orsiha, they fell in love while she was washing her dress. He supplied her with money, and gems that he gathered from the bottom of the river. They became married and she was reunited with her children again. Ochun has played a great role in Cuban history, revealing herself as the Virgin Mary to three copper miners caught in a storm at sea in the seventeenth century and also assisted Cuban soldiers, who sewed portraits of her in their uniforms, during the second war of independence in 1895.

Ochun has been called La Virgin Mambisa, in commemoration of her fierceness in fighting for the independence of Cuba; Castro's Movement the 26th of July used the colors red and black, which are the colors of Elegua (www. african holocaust. net). This religion welcomes all doctors, lawyers, politicians, thieves and pimps. All those who seek the power to control their own lives and want to lead them in accord with the deepest parts of their beings are candidates for initiation into Santeria. This religion seems to be an open one that accepts all races there is no discrimination within this religion.

Santeria is a religion of trance, mystery, possession, blood and sex. If you want to know more, go to the ceremonies, burn the candles and dance to the drums. Skin color or language is no barriers. The ancient gods will recognize their own (www. Moonweb/Santeria/Intor. html). The National Security Agency (NSA) was created in November 1952 provided United States

decision makers and leaders for more than 50 years (The Shadow Factory: The Ultra-Secret NSA from 9/11 to the eavesdropping on America.).

The NSA is the largest, most secretive, and most powerful intelligence agency in the world. With a staff of thirty-eight thousand people, it dwarfs the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in budget, manpower, and influence (Body of Secrets: Anatomy of the Ultra-Secret National Security Agency). Cryptologists laid the foundation of the critical role of all major conflicts: “ In 1956, the General Canine enlisted the help of an outside management firm to examine the agency’s problems. The consultants recommended a complete change.

The repercussions, according to a later National Security Agency (NSA) report, lasted more than thirty years. Signals intelligence would be organized according to target-countries; China and Communist Asia; and so on. Each of the section would include specific disciplines, such as cryptanalysis and traffic analysis (42). On November 23, 1956, Ralph Canine walked out of National Security Agency for the last time as Director. A message from Howard Campaigne “ I was surprised to learn later that the people above him didn’t think nearly as much [of him] as we did. Mr.

Canine made a tremendous impression” (43). There efforts of the use of radio intercept, radio directional finding, and processing capabilities gave United States and its Allies a unique advantage in World War I. (www. nsa. gov/History. com). The use of the Radio intercept in the National Security Agency was a vital tool often used in tracking the location of planes, missiles and also served as acommunicationtool for the pilots. “ For Years American

intercept operators in Turkey had eavesdropped on Soviet radar installations as they tracked the occasional U-2 over flight.

But because the spy planes flew far too high for either Russian MIG's or their SA-2 surface-to-air missiles, they were out of harm's way. It was like throwing a rock at a passing jetliner. This time, however, something was different; something was very wrong " He's turning left! " the American heard a Soviet pilot shout. A few moments later the intercept operators watched the U-2 suddenly disappear from Russian radar screens near Sverdlovsk (49). The United States spends a lot of money to protect its National Security, in 2007 \$572. 4 billion dollars on national defense.

In 2004 \$456 billion dollars was counted for. The total estimated budget for 2007 was \$2. 7 trillion dollars. Most expensive components of National defense were the cost for development and testing new highly sophisticated military equipment such as: aircraft, ships, and submarines. Spending on Nat'l defense spiked during World War II. , reaching nearly 90% of the nations total outlays. (National Security: The Information Series on Current Topics). The National Security Agency is oversea of several federal agencies: - United States Department of Defense (DOD) United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) - Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) certain components After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks law makers quickly put together a new law designed to help the US fight the terrorist threat. The new law that was implemented was the Patriot Act which stands for: The Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required Intercepting and Obstructing Terrorism (Terrorism- Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by <https://assignbuster.com/the-socio-cultural-effects-of-technology-on-society/>

sub-national groups or clandestine agents. (USA PATRIOT) Act of 2001. The act consists of ten titles: Title I. – Enhancing Domestic Security against Terrorism (Terrorism- Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents). Title II. – Enhanced Surveillance Procedures, Title III. – International Money Laundering Abatement and Anti-terrorist Financing Act of 2001, Title IV. – Protecting the boarder, Title V. – Removing Obstacles to Investigating Terrorism, Title VI. – Providing for Victims of Terrorism, Public Safety Officers, and Their Families, Title VII. Increased Information Sharing For Critical Infrastructure Protection Title VIII. – Strengthening the Criminal Laws against Terrorism, Title IX. – Improved Intelligence, Title X. – Miscellaneous. One of the purposes of the act is to facilitate better cooperation and information sharing between government agencies, particularly between the IC and law enforcement agencies (National Security: The Information Series on Current Topics). In 2002 Congress and President George W. Bush created the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks on the United States to investigate all the circumstances relating to the terrorist attacks.

This investigation resulted in “ For nearly two years the commission reviewed relevant documents and interviewed more than one thousand people as part of its investigation. In 2004 their findings were published in the 9/11 Commission Report (National Security: The Information Series on Current Topics). The term “ Big Brother” came from a fictional character in George Orwell’s novel: Nineteen Eighty-Four. The novel was about a dictator of Oceania, a totalitarian state take to its utmost logical

consequence. This is where the ruling elite (The Party) wield total power for its own sake over the inhabitants.

The term “ Big Brother” is caused to refer to any ruler or government that invades the privacy of its citizens (www. barleby. com). Big Brother physical appearance is of Joseph Stalin or Lord Kitchener. His moustache is also similar to Adolf Hitler. After researching there was a lot of information that I learned about the “ Santeria” religion, Ochun, the National Security Agency and the term “ Big Brother”. I learned the history of the Santeria religion, the Seven African Powers, the gate keeper “ Eleggua”, the Father of the World – “ Babalu Aye”.

I read about The National Security Agency development and its functions within the Agency. I also discovered the birth of the term “ Big Brother” affect this term had on the government. After reading the novel “ Spook Country” by William Gibson the topics that I can relate to are the National Security Agency and the term “ Big Brother”. The event that affects me the most is the bombing of the “ Twin Towers” on September 11. From this event security has increased in airports, on planes, trains, subway stations, buses, malls, schools and also inside Federal Government and other buildings.

The term “ Big Brother” is watching you are related also to today because of the September 11th terrorist attack, which brings this term to real life: “ Someone is Watching You”. The National Security Agency has made it a top priority to keep the United States a safe and secured country for everyone. Work Cited Applied Numerical Algorithms Group. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Berkeley, California. 2007. 8 Nov. 2008 < <http://seesar. lbl. gov/>

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