

Internet and culture

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Discoveries and innovations in technology have directly and indirectly brought about profound changes in most basic institutions, social groups, worldviews and human values, ethical issues, the character of everyday life, and ways and means of satisfying human needs and international relations in modern society. Yet, the technological element which could be said that has deeply penetrated both the developed and developing nations of the world is the internet, bringing with it changes towards a more fluid flow of different cultures.

The accessibility of the internet enables the differences and complexities among cultures to be presented to the world and be understood. If long ago, traditions of some ethnic minorities and far-flung societies were unknown, people nowadays could have a glimpse of what is happening at the other side of the globe. This proliferation of information and knowledge is one of the benefits of the internet phenomenon since people are no longer ignorant of the intricacies among cultures.

Moreover, biases and prejudice are reduced because people can have the chance to comprehend the rationales behind some traditions and rituals that they might find strange and disturbing. Other than this, the internet also made way for the fusion of cultures as one internet user may acquire the habits, literature, and entertainment of other countries. Transferring of cultures is not actually rare in mankind's history. A civilization adapts to the culture of its predecessor, and a group of people borrows some elements from another race, at the same, combining it with their existing culture.

The Romans had done this with the Hellenic culture, and colonized countries gained the influences from their colonial masters while retaining their indigenous culture. Hence, it is not only technological knowledge itself that is being transferred and exchanged in the internet but also cultures, traditions, and ideas. In line with this is the advent of popular culture that seems to transgress every culture and race in the world. Popular culture is a micro-culture that exists within the spheres of the World Wide Web.

It is no question that popular music, movies, fashion and literature are consumed more by the youth than any other age group. The young people appear to agree on what is "in", who is to follow and what will be the next "it" thing. Moreover, though culture has long been thought as heterogeneous, encompassing various races and groups, the internet made the world to look like just one big community of people hooked on the wires of social networking, files sharing and online gaming.

There has indeed emerged a new culture entirely different from the previous cultures created before the invention of the internet. The World Wide is actually a huge community, bigger than any other existing or past communities in human history, which has developed its own culture, language and identities. Only entities would understand what "101" means, how to "tweet", or what makes Facebook so popular. Furthermore, the internet community acquired a voice that is able to spread information and news so quick that a world leader would resign from just a clamor from the internet users.

However, as much as the internet culture has become a good vehicle for change, it has also become a mode for destroying one's life by just one click. No other culture could be as unforgiving and as offensive as the culture in the internet. Internet culture also does not respect privacy and intellectual property. Music and videos are illegally downloaded and private pictures could be shared to almost anyone.

Actions allowed by technology precipitate conflicts in values, yet these values seem to be disregarded on the internet, whatever culture one may belong. Technology, specifically the internet, has contributed largely not only to the shaping of the world in which we live but also to the modification, creation and transfer of cultures. Its influences and impacts are all pervasive. Therefore, the intimacy with and the dependence on this technology in our lifestyles and culture are expected to become stronger in the future.