

Communication in a digital age

Business



Technological determinism can be defined a reductionist theory which argues that the technology of a society drives the cultural values and the social structure that characterizes a certain society. Technology in this sense shapes how individuals in a society feel, think, act as well as influence their operations as they graduated from one technological age to the other. The theory suggests that technology pursues its own independent course without any direction or influence from human interventions (Griffin, 2000).

This theory is opposed to social constructivism which claims that meaning, notions and connotations and relationships that are assigned to certain events and objects of consciousness are developed within social context. In light therefore, technology is seen as a tool which meaning and direction are controlled or influenced by individual in the society rather that it defining a society. In the domain of this theory a social construct hence becomes a notion or idea that appears naturally obvious only because people have embraced and accepted it as representation of reality so it is only an artifice or an invention of a certain society. If we trace back on human communication from a technological perspective there is enough evidence that technology has played a grate role in influencing and changing the way human being communicate. In this light the culture of a society has therefore in a great way been molded by how the people in that society communicate. This can be qualified by looking at human existence from the following three perspectives.

The first one is that technological invention in communication tool has been a major contributor to cultural changes. The second one is that the changes in modes of human communication have been the background upon which

human life has been shaped. Finally, as human beings shape their communication tools, these tools in turn shape them (Griffin, 2000). If we shift our focus just a bit to consider the term media which is central to technology as it expresses the different types of technologies that we have; media can be defined as any object or application that helps people to intensify or amplify human senses or functions. To be precise, each type of media that is technologically invented can be hence considered as an extension of the human faculties that we have. For instance, a TV can be looked at as an extension of the human eye, the wheel-a human foot, the clothing that we wear- human skin and a computer the human brain.

According to the Technological determinism theory, human communication and interaction has been historically characterized by some giant technological evolutions over time. Each of the technological innovations that have been invented in age of evolution has enhanced the human senses in one way or another. The history of human communication can be explored from four critical evolutionary periods of time gliding from one to the other and each bringing in a new means or communication media that has brought a certain significant change in social life (Littlejohn, 1999). Initially human beings used to live in the primitive 'tribal age' then moved into the literate age, through to the 'print age' and currently the age in which we are living the 'electronic age.' People living in the primitive age used to relay their message by word of mouth and hence sound hearing was of the essence. The right brain hemisphere which controls hearing was hence well developed.

The introduction of the phonetic alphabet introduced the primitive people to the literate age where now they were forced to make use of both their eyes and the ears. This is a change that heavily altered the way of life of our ancestor leading to developments such as in philosophy, mathematics and science (Littlejohn, 1999). The introduction of the printing press later moved people from the literate age to the print age hence enhancing visual dependence in a greater length. Change came in the sense seeing ideas in print compared to the word of mouth gave messages a whole renewed meaning. This gave people ability to shape their opinions and views in a world wide scale the telegraph then moved people from the ' print age' into the electronic age which now has been met with a lot of advances with the computer now being the prime of all these inventions.

As highlighted earlier people learn, think and feel in accordance to the messages that they are confronted with by the available new technology. First was the discovery of the radio which only required people to listen and develop their sense of hearing. Then came the television that engaged both our visual and hearing senses. Now we have the computer that even involves our sense of touch (touch screens) in addition to the above. These developed senses are then transferred into everyday life as we use them again and again. The medium has hence become our message (Griffin, 2000).

Critiques have argued that the society or else its culture changes in order to reflect the sense that there is a need to make use of new technologies. But they should try and focus on analyze cause and effect relationship that characterizes the introduction of new technological advancement and the changes that follow in the ways of acting, feeling, thinking and believing.

<https://assignbuster.com/communication-in-a-digital-age/>

Trends clearly indicate that society changes as people try to adapt to new inventions and technological advancement. In conclusion Technological Determinism theory comes as a very reliable theory in explain the relationship between social structures as well as cultural values and technological interventions. Technology plays a very major role in direction of cultural values and social structure. Human beings introduce technological tools which in turn change their lifestyles.

From observing historical developments over time in the light of technology as technological media changes so does the society entire change. People only make use of a type of media for the purpose for which it was intended. If a type of media for communication becomes impersonal then the message definitely becomes impersonal. This theory has been proven to be objective since everyone will have to feel, act or believe the same regardless of what medium the make use of provided that for them to be at par they will have to use the same medium.