

People have become overly independent on technology

[Technology](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Technology is a wonderful thing. In many ways it's why we enjoy a high level of comfort in our lives, improving our working and living conditions. But do you think our reliance on technology goes too far? Or is technology merely a tool for social development? As a writer I've explored the moral and ethical use of technology quite heavily in my work but I've always had a favourable view of technology. However a recent experience has made me question that. I was shopping the other day, getting a couple of DVDs, and I was thrilled when I saw they were on sale; buy two and get 20% off the second.

Perfect! So I grabbed both and queued up. The woman who served me took the DVDs; the first one was fine but the second scanned up at full price. She didn't know it was on sale, so I told her it was 20% off and she scanned it again but it was still the same price. She started to do it manually but said she didn't have a calculator, so she didn't know the price. I was stunned. First, how can you work there and not know what's on sale? But even worse – didn't have a calculator? It was 20% off \$30, hardly rocket science. Do we rely on calculators that much?

Finally she fixed it and I paid for them and left. I know it's just a small thing but I can't help but think that it's symbolic of a larger problem. Just because technology is there and makes something easier doesn't mean we should rely on it so much that we can't think for ourselves. What happens when the technology fails? In April this year the London Stock Exchange was closed for 8 hours when a glitch shut down its system. They lost millions of pounds and all they could do was sit and watch. Should any piece of technology be so important that we can't function without it for 8 hours?

It's not just the way we use technology, though, but the way people obsess over it. Have you noticed how people can't live without their mobile phones? If they're not talking then they're checking for a message that wasn't there two minutes ago. Can't we be out of touch for even a few minutes? And that's not even mentioning the hype surrounding the iPhone. Or the Kindle. I don't understand the fuss about the Kindle. I like ebooks but I can't justify the price of a reader and I'm sure long-term I'd miss the touch and feel of real paper.

My point is that technology seems to have become more of a convenience than a tool. Let me ask you this. If civilisation were to fall tomorrow, could you survive without technology? How would you cook without electricity? How would you get clean water and travel without working transport? How would you stay warm? How would you protect your family and teach your children? I'm not sure I could survive in that world; I doubt most people could. The civilisation that survived would be very different... but isn't that the same argument pessimists have used against change since the beginning of time?

Weren't there doubts that other inventions would destroy society and take away our humanity just as people talk about computers and the net now? I guess I'm conflicted. While I do feel that we're starting to lose ourselves, I am also a big fan of the potential of technology. I have an extreme sensitivity to noise and being outside is like torture when I'm not feeling well. But a few years ago I found a pair of earphones that use sound isolating technology to block noise and they've been a godsend. So I know firsthand what technology can do for someone's life.

<https://assignbuster.com/people-have-become-overly-independent-on-technology/>

If you think about it, the advances in technology (particularly recently) have been astonishing. Technology has brought us DVDs and iPods, microwaves and cameras. It's taken us to the Moon, brought us images from Mars. And then there's medicine. It's not just the instruments and techniques but the way medical science has advanced. We've cured diseases, mapped the human genome; our quality of life is better than any generation's and we live longer than ever before. And people who never believed they could have children now can. Looking at technology that way, how can anyone deny its impact?

And that's not even touching on cyberspace. There are a lot of bad things about the net – porn, viruses, spam – but its benefits are far greater. While the net is primarily an information resource, its true power lies in that it connects people in ways we've never seen before. Previous inventions have brought us closer together (trains linked cities, planes linked nations) but the internet is the world's first global community. The net is the future and that's the real power of technology, to show the way forward. But even in moving forward it's still important to hold on to our values.

Some advancements make me feel uncomfortable: gene therapy makes my skin crawl and I find the developments in artificial intelligence, while impressive, ethically troubling. Are we ready to create life? Like many people I'm also worried that our social skills are deteriorating. I've heard of people texting each other when they're in the same room instead of speaking – and then there's the Euricase, which allows you to propose to your partner without even being in the room. So I guess when people say that we're losing ourselves to technology, I agree to some extent.

<https://assignbuster.com/people-have-become-overly-independent-on-technology/>

But I see the benefits as well and I don't see why there can't be a balance. If we can respect our past but embrace the future at the same time, I don't see why we should ever lose who we are. That's what I try to do. I think I've found a balance and I'm not afraid of an iPod or an ebook; I just try to buy a CD and go to the library as well. I send emails and texts, but I don't forget to say hi to my neighbours and turn off my phone. If we can do that then I don't think we have anything to worry about. The future will take care of itself.