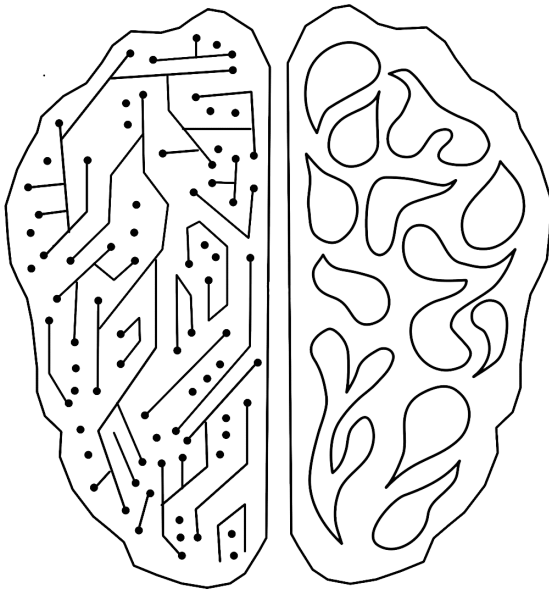


CHARTER

GONZAGA'S JOURNAL OF SCHOLARSHIP & OPINION



BEING HUMAN IN THE
TECHNOLOGICAL AGE

2014-2015

Charter
Gonzaga's Journal of Scholarship and Opinion
2014-2015

Editor	Caitlin Sinclair
Assistant Editor	Franny Wright
Copy Editor	Cody Holland
Layout Editor	Alexandra Roland
Advisor	Dr. Robert Donnelly
Student Publications Manager	Joanne Shiosaki

Charter is a publication of the Gonzaga University Publications Board. All questions and comments regarding Charter can be directed to charter@zagmail.gonzaga.edu.

All contributions to Charter are created and designed by current students and faculty of Gonzaga University. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of the Charter staff, the Publications Board, or Gonzaga University.

*"Technology is teaching
us to be human again."*

-Simon Mainwaring

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Editor <i>Caitlin Sinclair</i>	1
---	---

1. ANTISOCIAL MEDIA

Connect Four <i>Allison Armfield</i>	5
---	---

The Rise of Technology; The Rapid Fall of Humanity <i>Caitlan Kern</i>	7
---	---

Face to Screen <i>John Cartwright</i>	9
--	---

Businesses Are People Too <i>Theresa Schlei</i>	11
--	----

2. CREATIVE DESTRUCTION

Insatiability Killed Authenticity <i>Matt Friedman</i>	15
---	----

Notes <i>Kailee Haong</i>	18
------------------------------	----

Business in the Modern Age <i>Katie Cronin</i>	20
---	----

The Dawn of the Digital Music Age <i>Evan Kruschke</i>	23
---	----

Survival of the Raddest <i>Grace Lindsey</i>	25
---	----

3. BODY BY TECH

This Is Your Brain on Technology <i>Mackenzie Roberts</i>	29
--	----

Old Fashioned
Anthony McCluskey 31

3D Printing: The "Terrors" of Technological
Advancements
Sierra Fallau 33

**4.0100100001110101011011010110000101101110
(HUMAN)**

The Challenge of AI
Corwin Bryan 37

Technology and Language: Doing What We Do...
Just a Lot More of It
Dr. Charles Lassiter 40

Thoughts on Tech In a Hamburger Joint
Evan Olson 44

The Disconnected Connecting Self
Richard Grablin 48

5. GLOBAL NETWORK

Obsession
Meggie Tennesen 53

Tabloid Justice
Caroline Rourke 55

Technology: an Avenue for Human Expression
Chelsea Gibson 58

Spread the Word
Charé Gilliam 60

Letter from the Editor

Caitlin Sinclair

Dear Readers,

When I was younger, I remember walking into my kitchen to find my dad waving his hand in front of the lid of our trash can. He looked insane. Before I could reach over and open it, a red light flickered, internal mechanisms whirred, and the lid sprung open.

My dad stood still, proudly admiring the new gadget. I tossed a napkin at the opening, and the lid swatted it back as it began to close. "This won't last," I thought to myself.

It did. We had three different automatic trashcans by the time I left for college. This was not the last time I was wrong about technological advances (see Ripsticks, Zunes, and Snapchat).

From the addictive to the obscure to the downright unnecessary, technology is abundant. We work with it, learn from it, live with it, and communicate through it. The applications seem to be endless.

Paperless transactions. Up to the minute news. The Cloud. Technology is our revolution. This is our culture.

We are not simply stream-

lining our daily tasks or automating processes. We are creating beautiful, user friendly devices and applications. For better or for worse, we are changing the way people live.

The human experience is defined by our collective understanding of the struggles and triumphs of a lifetime. Technology is reshaping the moments we normally regard as milestones. We have created devices, programs, and platforms that evolve with us like organisms, and we pay closer attention to our natural inclinations in order to develop technologies that fit our lives.

The technological revolution allows us to claim a sense of autonomy like never before. I made a movie this year. My friend and I wrote and recorded a rap and a music video. With technology, I am an artist. I am a writer. I am a student. I am a teacher. I am a chef. I am a comedian.

With technology, I am also a recluse. I am anonymous. I am code. I am lights. I am anything but human. We are encouraged to "unplug" more and more now. There are stories of cyberbully-

ing, technology addictions, and deteriorating social skills. How can we come to understand our cultural revolution in light of its inspiring benefits and devastating disadvantages?

This year, the staff at Charter encouraged students and faculty to reflect on technology and how it influences modern life. The impact is widespread, complex, and constantly transforming. The articles herein illustrate our multifaceted transition into the digital age in the attempt to spark conversation and critical reflection throughout our community.

1.

ANTISOCIAL MEDIA

Connect Four

Allison Armfield

Four adolescent girls strut into their local café. Each orders a latte and they congregate around a table with their coffee and cell phones. The coffee shop is buzzing: people whir in and out amidst their busy days, the steam wand hisses as the barista diligently attempts to keep up with the demand for caffeine; and the sweet, smoky, aroma of the espresso fills everyone's nose as they enter the shop. Coffee shops are hubs for human interaction: couples are on dates and long-lost friends catch up with each other over a cup of coffee. People weave into each other's lives while they wait in line for their espresso, making small talk and departing with wishes of a 'good day.'

The four teens are in the center of all the buzz, sounds, and smells, and are each absorbed in a separate world that revolves around her cell phone. They are oblivious to each other and to the surrounding commotion. The girls could be enjoying the environment, people watching, catching up with each other, but instead, one is sending a Snapchat selfie to her boyfriend, another is updating her Facebook status while the

other is choosing a filter to put on a picture of her Frappuccino for Instagram. The fourth girl feels obligated to scroll through her own social media page while being neglected by the rest of her friends. This disconnect is what it means to be human in a technological age.

Technology has disputably started to dehumanize, or perhaps change the definition of what it means to be human. Though it began as a faceted approach to keep up in the rapidly globalizing economy, this movement has resulted in a lack of empathy and over-reliance on machinery. Many people are too engrossed in their smart phones to be cognizant of the world around them, let alone appreciate it. To be human is to inherently possess emotion and empathy; the human connection is a uniquely unifying experience, and as technology advances, there seems to be a decline in humankind's ability to interact socially.

There are many valuable assets in a technologically advanced world that help promote the human connection. Social media, video chat, text messages and so forth enable people to maintain contact with each other

despite geographical differences. This could potentially improve the human connection enabling its growth across a larger spectrum. Thanks to video chats such as Skype or FaceTime, it is now possible to be in a room with someone while not physically being in the same location. One can almost instantly make contact with another person clear across the country with a simple text message. People don't seem so far away thanks to social media pages where someone can track up-to-date photos or statuses of their loved ones, which minimizes the distance gap. Unfortunately, some people abuse the power, preferring digital contact to organic interaction. According to a Match.com survey, 40 million Americans use online dating services, which demonstrates that many people today prefer meeting their significant other through an online dating website as opposed to meeting serendipitously. The goal should not be to replace genuine social interactions with technological ones, but merely to increase the quality or frequency of the interaction by using technology as a jumping off point.

In a rewrite of the café scenario, the four girls could be squished to one side of the table, huddled around a singular phone and watching a funny YouTube

video. Or maybe there is a post on Facebook that upset one of the teens so she is showing it to her girlfriends, sparking a heartfelt conversation. Technology is still in the center of these scenarios; however, the girls use it as a tool to generate genuine conversation and are in a shared experience, as opposed to the original script where they are in their own worlds in close proximity to one another. Technology could be useful in society without destroying our social skills. This is one of many ways society can benefit in the technological age, but people must remember that these phones, computers, and apps are aids, not replacements. Technology is only advancement as long as it is used as a conduit to progress as a society, not regress as individuals.

The Rise of Technology, The Rapid Fall of Humanity

Caitlan Kern

Technology has dramatically changed the way we see the world. It has also changed the way we communicate with one another. No longer do people call each other on the phone or write letters to see how friends and family are doing; instead we now use a variety of methods including texting, FaceTime, Skype and even social media to keep in contact with each other. No matter the distance, the time zone, or even the country, we are more connected and “plugged in” than ever before. That said, how has the role of technology changed our society’s culture?

Culture is such a broad word, but when you think about all of the changes that technology has brought about, one of the most astounding is the way dating has changed. No longer do we rely fully on our good looks and charm, but now there are also dating websites and apps that have been created to help us find love, or at least that is what we hope. There is a dating site for

every type of person out there. Some are based on beliefs, some occupations. While websites such as eHarmony and Christian Mingle are used more by people who are in their late thirties and older, apps for smart phones are preferred by college students.

One of these popular apps is Tinder. While Tinder may have started out as a new dating app, it is mostly used by college students for hook-ups. What does this say about us as humans? Can we no longer spark romantic interest without our smartphones? We rely so heavily on apps and smartphones that we basically put our lives on these devices. They keep track of our appointments and birthdays, essentially doing much of our remembering for us. It is almost as if we can no longer lead complete, fulfilling lives if we are not tied to some piece of technology.

More people are looking down at their phones instead of up at the world around them. We are having a harder time putting

down our phones and talking with each other. Time and time again, people will go out to a restaurant and spend the meal looking at their phones instead of talking to each other. While the rapid advancement of technology has changed both the world and our society, it has not improved our social interactions.

Not only are more people drawn into the cyber world, but they also continue to be pulled further in through the idea that they can be who or look how they want online. Photoshop and other photo enhancing apps have become extremely popular with the millennial generation. We are the generation that has grown up with the invention of social media, so, naturally, we want to post everything about ourselves online so our friends can know what we are doing almost every second of the day. We use enhancement apps to try and make ourselves seem more spectacular and unique. These apps are also used to boost our self-esteem since altered pictures will get more likes on Instagram or favorites on Twitter. Airbrushed and altered photos no longer belong to just super models.

Technology continues to change us and change the world in which we live. New devices and different apps have changed the

way in which we communicate. We no longer get to know people, but instead get to know their Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts. Technology has not only changed how we communicate, but also how we meet and connect with others, through screens rather than out in the world, experiencing life.

Face to Screen

John Cartwright

Human interaction with technology has exploded over the past century. With the advent of the smartphone, laptop computer and social media, our interconnectedness has grown even stronger during the past twenty years. I believe that we must be wary of this interconnectedness and of our reliance on technology. We must know how technology plays a role in our lives and when limits should be enacted upon this influence.

One way we can maintain our connectivity is by maintaining control over the technology with which we interact. When we lose control of our technology and let it dictate our lives, we also lose part of our humanity. While extreme cases of this are portrayed as dystopian futures in movies such as the *Terminator* and *I, Robot*, every day cases can be seen if we stop and look around. We have all heard people boast about how many likes their Facebook pictures have received, and/or how many followers they have. Many people have become more focused on tracking how many “up votes” their post on Yik Yak has received in a day instead

of counting how many meaningful conversations they have had. I believe people need to focus less on social media and more on being social.

People need to learn how and when to appropriately use technology to communicate. Technology is a great way to communicate with people over long distances or get in touch with people immediately. Far too often, however, we communicate via technology when we should be communicating in person. Our human emotion is often lost when communicating through technology. Text messages, emails and online chats leave out emotion and other non-verbal cues that we would otherwise communicate in person. Since much of our communication is expressed through nonverbal actions, such as body language, communicating through technology is frequently an inadequate way to converse with others, especially about sensitive topics. Because constant communication through technology is a relatively recent development, we have not yet learned when we should put down the phones, laptops and tablets and

go talk to others face to face.

We need to recognize the limits of technological communication and seek out a purpose in the amount of connectivity we have with technology. In the technological age, many people have their phones within reach at all times, even while sleeping. It is now assumed that we will be on our phones 24/7, and this seems to be the result of an unhealthy amount of technological connection.

Many people get anxious if they do not receive an instant response to their text messages or phone calls. "Did you get my message?" "Is she ignoring me?" "What are you doing?!" There are so many uncertainties present in digital conversations that were never concerns before. We have substituted dense interactions for digital exchanges, and they do not always suffice. Our constant connection has given us the option to filter communication through technology rather than communicating in person. We must learn the boundaries of interacting via technology, look up from our phones, and interacting with each other.

Businesses Are People Too

Theresa Schlei

This past summer I worked at a large talent agency, and was given the opportunity to meet the company CIO. He told me that he hoped to move the agency into the Cloud. He wanted to utilize social media outlets like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram to tap into clients' interests in order to cater to their needs better. By seeing what was important to users, his agents could set up projects and iron out contracts that better fit with what they wanted. So what does social media mean in the realm of customer service?

When a service is at the heart of a business, catering to the needs of customers is of the utmost importance. Help desks and FAQs are common means of customer service, but now that companies have their own Facebook and Twitter pages, traditional means are quickly falling out of favor. Companies of all kinds have looked to using social media as a way to respond to the needs of their customers. If you mention how awesome your dinner at Chili's was in a Facebook

post, the Chili's social media team will respond, thanking you for your praise. Similarly, if you post a complaint or problem to a company, their social media team will respond with a solution. My dad was having difficulty with Photoshop on his computer, and in a fit of anger posted a frustrated tweet mentioning Adobe. Within about ten minutes, Adobe responded with apologies and a solution to my dad's problem. Needless to say, my dad's anger melted away and was replaced with a sense of validation. This would not have been possible without the speed and ease of social media.

In addition to their specialized social media teams, some companies, like Microsoft, have special forums in which their users can comment. Rather than having a special customer service team, Microsoft lets customers help themselves. When a problem arises, more times than not someone else has encountered it and found a solution. Rather than having hundreds of people call in to Microsoft, they post their questions on a forum where other

users respond with their own solutions. This method has been rather effective, and has saved Microsoft quite a bit of time.

What about human interaction? As social creatures, we enjoy communicating with real people. As social media customer service continues to grow, the need for actual humans working traditional customer service jobs decreases. Soon we might be able to fix our problems without ever troubleshooting in real time with another person. However, social media has increased the ability of businesses to offer individual support. Before Facebook and Twitter, you never would have called a company just to thank them for their product or service; now, you can simply post about it and get a response from them. Businesses' use of social media has increased their quality of customer service. While you may not actually interact with a person physically, an actual person is still replying to your specific input.

2.

CREATIVE DESTRUCTION

DESTRUCTIVE CREATION

Insatiability Killed Authenticity

Matt Friedman

The inexpressible beauty of music is innately subjective. Nothing more than the vibration of air molecules, captured by your ears and interpreted by your brain, music is no more beautiful than someone simply stimulating your auditory cortex with electrodes. However, we all know that this is not true—music is so much more than simple stimulation. Next to language, music is one of the most clearly defining characteristics of human culture. Since the inception of civilization all cultures have created and revered music in some capacity. In part, it is this very reverence that makes music so beautiful. However, I believe that in recent years, we have lost our reverence for music, particularly in our American culture. Music has become commoditized, and has lost the authentic quality that makes it truly beautiful.

In our modern, consumerist culture, instant gratification is the name of the game. We want what we want—now. We want it cheap, preferably free, and we want more, more, more. In modern America, the single reigns king.

The album is a mere formality in modern music. This is evidenced by the very structure of our music sources, including iTunes and Spotify. Directly below the Quick Links on the iTunes home page, is a list of the Top Singles of the week, only then followed by the Top Albums. Spotify itself is based on our culture of singles, categorizing music in playlists, or collections of singles. Each song is isolated, removed from the context of the album as a whole. Frequently, songs are released independent of an album at all. These songs are released by “successful” artists, whose goal is not to produce quality music, but rather to merely produce *more* music; as quickly as possible, to maintain sales and popularity. No artist has more than their “fifteen minutes of fame,” however. Our consumerist culture has robbed artists of a *relationship* with their audience. No one seems to care about artists—we just want to be cool and have the most current collection of music in our social circles. To stay “cool” and current necessitates constant updating,

and because of this, platinum bands such as Mumford and Sons disappear from the music scene as quickly as they appear. Our “singles” culture produces music that is enjoyable on the surface level, but devoid of meaning.

A necessary aspect of creating and maintaining the ever-changing singles culture is production power. In its earliest history, music was exclusively performance-based, a temporal art created by craftsmen. The invention of the microphone and playback media, such as vinyl, cassette, CD, and now MP3, have transformed music into a commodity to possess rather than something to experience. The performative aspect of music has become secondary to the recording and selling of it. In this value shift, music has lost much of what made it beautiful: authenticity. The goal of modern recording is not to reproduce a great performance, but rather to produce perfection; even if that ideal is achieved through the artifice of auto-tuning, the sonic equivalent of airbrushing. This is most clearly evident in pop music, though over-production reaches into all genres. Finding artists whose sound is truly *authentic* is rare nowadays. This is why artists, such as Code Orange, Every Time I Die, Death Grips, and Hozier, are

so beautiful to me—they have maintained their authenticity in the face of a cultural revolution that told them, “In order to be successful, you must be *perfect*.” Their recordings are dirty, riddled with mistakes and noise, and I wouldn’t have it any other way. They are real, and I can appreciate what they do so much more because of it. The responsibility of maintaining authenticity lies at least partly with the musicians themselves. But, an arguably larger part of the responsibility lies with their production team and audio engineers. The teams that produce the albums of authentic artists are committed to a process of minimal editing and correcting. Editing comes into play *during* the writing and performing of the songs rather than post-recording, and because of this, what you hear on the record is what the artists actually performed. Of course, all artists use the immense power of editing and effects during the creation of an album—not even the most authentic artists are exempt from this. But it is the degree to which an artist relies on this power as a tool rather than a crutch that separates them from the herd.

What truly distinguishes musicians in my mind is how they view music—is it an art or a commodity? In a practical sense,

a musician's job is to create music. Like anyone else, musicians need a livelihood, and it would be unrealistic to assert that musicians should not be concerned with money. However, I believe that the priority in the production of music should be creating an authentic work. And the creation of authentic work does not necessarily mean being wholly original, and does not necessarily preclude change or making money—bands change, nothing is completely original, and who doesn't want to make some money doing what they love? Musicians don't have to play into the archetype of the starving artist in order to be authentic.

In the end, the burden of authenticity lies with each individual—nobody can tell anyone else whether they are authentic or not. I only hope that our culture of insatiability hasn't killed authenticity, and that our artists can learn to be honest with themselves once again and to truly *value* their craft for what it once was: beautiful.

Notes

Kailee Haong

Hold button. > slide to unlock.
Open Notes app. New.

October 8, 2014, 5:49 PM

What *does* it mean to be a human in a technological age? If you are not certain, you could always Google it...

Recently, I inherited a myriad of wonderful books from an old English professor at UW who passed away. While digging through boxes of old, dusty books I stumbled across something: a complete volume of the works of Voltaire bound in a leather cover that fell apart a little more each time you picked it up. Rifling through the pages of those books with delight made me realize something – print is slowly dying because of new technological advances. Why would you want a shelf full of heavy books when you can store *thousands* in one teeny, little lightweight contraption? I mean, books are cheaper and more convenient that way, right?

I would be ignorant if I did not fully acknowledge that the shift into this technological age is more convenient. Answers to

practically any question we could ever dream up are one Google search or Siri command away, and that is helpful. However, while these great and advantageous things are happening, remnants of our culture are slowly deteriorating.

People in the past purchased books because they had to for information and entertainment. I purchase books because I do not want my future children or grandchildren to live in a world without literature in print and I fear that is exactly what is occurring in today's sociocultural environment. In the same way that our generation today is not familiar with things such as typewriters and phonographs, the next couple generations are not going to be familiar with books or parallel parking without a back-up camera. With every new model of the iPhone that comes out, we slowly and sometimes unknowingly acquiesce into this state of being "okay" with the idea that everything our grandparents and great-grandparents worked for is no longer of value to modern culture. If that is not resonating, look to the future.

Years from now, everything that this generation has worked for will also be obliterated by some high-tech fancy new technologies. Is our advancement beneficial or detrimental? I could easily argue both.

If the world is moving forward, we must also – but this does mean we ought to throw all artifacts of previous development out the window. History books might be rendered obsolete one day, but history itself should never suffer the same fate. When you carry around your phone, tablet, or computer, remember that you also carry memories of the way things were. Modern technology enables us to preserve moments, items, and ideas we could not have otherwise preserved. Let's make use of this ability.

So, what does it mean to be a human in a technological age? It means we have the opportunity to both advance and progress, yet also preserve and remember. It is an opportune time, really, one that should not be simply looked past.

Save. Home screen. Lock.

Business in the Modern Age

Katie Cronin

I own an LG Octane cellphone. It sends and receives calls and texts, it takes little pictures, and it flips open and closed. As an entrepreneurship student, this seems to be a problem, considering that the majority of emerging companies are developing smart phone apps. Day in and day out, we study companies like Facebook, Uber, Tinder, and Snapchat, and no business class fails to preach the genius of Amazon and Apple at least once a week. Being a business student—and more specifically, an entrepreneurship student—in the modern age, means technological innovation and apps. Apparently there is no place for businesses that hold inventory (unless you are Amazon) or businesses that rely on a brick and mortar building. While pitching my online clothing rental company to a self-proclaimed investor, professor, and entrepreneur, the only response was, “No one will invest in a company that relies on inventory. Get rid of the clothes and you have a viable business.” Essentially, he suggested we facilitate an eBay

for clothes site, where users can buy and sell their used clothes via an online thrift store. Gone are the days of starting business as a legacy your family and children inherit; rather businesses can only dream of being the next overnight tech-savvy sensation.

Transaction based businesses (aka apps), such as Airbnb and Uber make money not by doing any actual work but by providing a means for person-to-person exchange while skimming a profit off the top. This is the era of the demand economy. For the consumer, that means monetizing your resources, and, for businesses, that means no overhead, few employees, and a lot of monetary potential. eBay truly blazed the trail as one of the first transaction based companies (founded in 1995). Transaction based apps will inevitably put mom-and-pop antique stores, country inns, and taxi drivers out of business. That is not the only way technology will take over business – and, perhaps more importantly, the workforce.

Fast food favorites including Starbucks, Chipotle, and Taco Bell

recently launched mobile ordering, making cashiers and food service workers obsolete, the job every burnt-out college student falls back on. Amazon Fresh and online grocers slowly reduce the need for bag boys and stock girls. Online resumes and job applications now filter through programming algorithms scanning for key words from the job descriptions immediately weeding out potentially qualified applicants, and some interviews have turned into webcam videos submitted for later review.

This mantra of digitize, automate, and do-it-yourself can bring about roaring success for modern startups and adaptive powerhouse companies, while haunting family business and traditional corporations with each new app or Google acquisition. As technology transforms this business landscape—a transformation that began with the advent of personal computers—education, workers, and governments must also shift. I belong to the generation that will not stick to one job or career or industry and instead will shift and rediscover itself. As a result, micro-labor organizations seek to connect anyone who wants to work with anyone who needs a worker at almost any price, as low as a penny. Anyone can become an independent contractor and

businesses no longer need to hire full-time employees to do the busy work often saved for interns and entry-level employees. And yet, I am in business school learning how to be a good general manager, executive, or a grand business leader, but not how to enter a transforming job market. This shift will completely change the way we think of business people, perhaps not so different from the industrial age when consumerism grew and families no longer needed to be self-sustaining. Resumes are turning into digital landscapes and portfolios with a laundry list of projects a person works on during his or her professional lifetime instead of a few positions held in an industry. We might begin to call ourselves consultants or financiers rather than employees of this or that company.

The transformation into the demand economy stirs consumers to crave things and need things that they did not even know they needed. Nobody cared about body odor until deodorant and clever ad agencies came along to make wearing deodorant a social norm. My LG Octane gets me in touch with people, and it serves a function that even 15 years ago was not common or necessary for survival. Now, I live a life of mobile irrelevance and people

laugh out loud when I whip out my flip phone telling me, “Good for you, but I don’t think I could ever live without my iPhone.” Suddenly constant access to people, news, email, weather, Dots, and Instagram is a need we never knew we needed. It is the era of an “I need it yesterday” mentality. Although I will continue to use my dumb phone until further notice, the business world continues to drive forward. The rest of us must attempt to ignore our educational planned obsolescence – along with replaceable razor heads and Mac connectors – and focus on developing our creative and innovative approaches to the problems of the future.

The Dawn of the Digital Music Age

Evan Kruschke

Music is the universal language. Ever since man first evolved to possess a higher level of thinking, music has been a constant throughout time, culture, and age. Though styles and instruments have changed over time, and vary throughout cultures, the creation and enjoyment of music seems to be a baseline of human experience, something that connects us all. However, we have entered a new age in the musical world: the digital age. From creation of music to the marketing and distribution, the shift to digitization in music has been rapid. As a musician and avid concertgoer, I believe that even in this time when artists have more control than ever in regards to what they make, in some ways it is taking the personalization out of music.

I grew up with Bruce Springsteen and the E-Street Band as a second family. My father constantly had a record spinning in the house, so by the time I started forming my own music tastes, rock n' roll was ingrained in me. As I grew older, punk bands like Blink-182 and MxPx were my

escape, and they remain so to this day. However, I am very open minded towards music, and when the electronic dance music (EDM) wave first swept the country I was completely on board. The bumps, wumps and wobbles of Skrillex blew me off my feet when I first heard them. This type of music was new and exciting. It brought a new energy to my music experience that had never been there before. Even now, the electronic genre continues to be one of my staples. Now, I am not attempting to discredit this genre of music, for I am one of its biggest fans, but the rapid takeover and total domination of our music world by this genre concerns me.

As a musician, I am a fan of musicianship. The ability to master and express emotion through an instrument is one of the greatest gifts we humans possess. Through EDM I believe we are losing that gift. While EDM DJs undoubtedly possess a great deal of talent in coming up with melodies and harmonies and different sounds, all the sounds they are making are still produced

by a computer. It is true that many producers and DJs do have musical backgrounds and are in fact skilled musicians (Leighton James of Adventure Club and Anton Zaslavski aka Zedd are both classically trained musicians), but this talent is kept hidden due to the fact they are making their music behind computers. When I was young, seeing and hearing Blink-182 over my stereo is what sparked my interest in learning guitar. I wanted to be just like them. Young kids these days do not have the same type of role models. EDM music dominates the radio, and consequently kids want to be DJs instead of drummers, or guitarists, or saxophone players.

Live shows of EDM artists are nothing more than a party where a DJ gets up, presses play and watches the crowd go nuts. While I will admit EDM shows like this are a blast, it does not compare to witnessing one of your favorite guitar players up on stage and watching him actually play what you have listened to on a CD many times before. Seeing a band play, live, puts the human experience into music, something I believe is lacking in the EDM scene.

Music is truly a gift. Genres come and go, and perhaps this is just another wave in the ev-

er-changing tastes of civilization. Electronic music still possesses a great power to create and evoke strong, beautiful emotions, just as all music can. I just do not want music to lose the human element of music that I fell in love with, the thing that makes it an experience and gives it life of its own.

Survival of the Raddest

Grace Lindsey

Music has always been a great cultural indicator; the popularity of a genre, artist, or theme can gauge what's important and relevant to the listeners. Humans have a biological desire for melodies that makes us intrinsically drawn to certain sounds; thus, our desire for music will surely outlast most other cultural nuances.

The evolution of music is almost entirely dependent on technological advances. Bands like The Beatles created a demand for the industry to develop the technology necessary to make their music widely available. This spurred the shift from analog recording to digital recording over the next twenty years. Records were replaced by cassettes, which were then replaced by CDs, and now even those are rarities. Nearly all music today is digitally stored on computers and other devices, making it easier to store and share.

Musicians and producers use technological developments to their advantage. Now that digital manipulation is so accessible and widespread, few things remain impossible to accomplish

in the editing process. Nearly any sound can be fabricated digitally, meaning popular music is less dependent on achieving perfection from vocalists and musicians in the studio, as anything can be altered in the post-production process. Auto-Tune, for example, took the industry by storm as a fairly simple proprietary device that measures and alters the pitch of singers and instruments. What was accepted as inevitable imperfections in analog recording now has an uncomplicated solution, and changing the sound of the actual singer is a commonality. Some would argue that this is a bastardization of the intended imperfect nuances of a song or sets unrealistic expectations for an artist, but I believe it is simply a byproduct of humans' interactions with the technological world.

Our platforms for distributing music now enable any individual to distribute their music on a mass scale. Increased reliance on social networking has dramatically changed the way humans communicate. Sites like YouTube and Kickstarter fuel the Justin Biebers of this generation into stardom

by the power of the average web browser. Bands used to struggle with uncertainties and hope to get picked up by a big shot recording label. Today, anyone with a web camera can perform for audiences around the world. A globalizing world now allows humans to share information at astounding rates, and the music industry has had to adapt to that speed of communication.

Pandora, Spotify, and Songza are three of the hundreds of free online radio and playlist generators. Since anyone with an e-mail address can register for unlimited free music, the music industry now faces a challenge of how to compete with free digital sources, not to mention the increased ease of illegally downloading the songs of popular artists.

The human demand for music is perpetual, and as long as technology remains at the forefront of human development, the industry will evolve to meet the needs of the consumers. The boundaries of digital manipulation are continually pushed with the popularity of electronic music. This fad has also spurred a countercultural movement that favors traditional analog recording. Yet the digital era will push on, and popular music will subsequently adapt.

3. BODY BY TECH

This Is Your Brain on Technology

Mackenzie Roberts

Today in America, if you enter an elementary school classroom, there is almost a guarantee that at least one child in that classroom will have a cellphone, or some sort of technological gadget. I did not get my first phone until I was fifteen years old, a freshman in high school. While there are pros and cons to young children being exposed to technology, there is growing research showing that technology might be doing more harm than good to young children. Children now rely on tablets, TV programming, and video games for the majority of their play – thus diminishing the possibility for play-related creativity and growth. Children’s minds are malleable and easily influenced, and the same goes for young adults. With each technological advance, the tools and gadgets available influence continued brain development.

In his article, “How Technology is Changing the Way Children Think,” Dr. Jim Taylor explains how children’s attention spans are decreasing as the use of technology increases. The ability to focus is a

highly malleable quality, which is greatly influenced by one’s environment. As Dr. Taylor explains, “Studies have shown that reading uninterrupted texts results in faster completion and better understanding, recall, and learning than reading texts with hyperlinks and ads.” In addition, students who were allowed Internet access during class time did not remember the lecture, nor did they perform well when tested on the material, compared to those who were not given Internet access during class.

According to pediatric occupational therapist Cris Rowan, “The impact of rapidly advancing technology on the developing child has seen an increase of physical, psychological and behavioral disorders.” Child obesity and diabetes are now the leading epidemics in young children in the U.S. and Canada, and studies show a link between overusing these health issues and technology. Diagnoses of ADHD, autism, coordination disorder, developmental delays, learning disabilities, anxiety, depression and

sleep disorders are increasing at a frightening rate and studies show a relationship between these problems and technology as well. Kids are at risk for developmental problems, and they are losing their basic foundational literacy skills. This is an issue that calls for urgent action and understanding by our educators, health professionals, and families.

There are four critical factors for achieving healthy childhood development. They are movement, touch, human connection, and exposure to nature (Rowan). Unfortunately, technology takes us away from many of these. When we play video games inside, we do not have to move around much as when we play tag. When we are texting on our phones, we are lacking the human connection gained by naturally interacting with others through conversation and touching through social contact like hugs and handshakes. Achieving healthy childhood development allows for timely school entry, and activates the parasympathetic system, lowering cortisol (a stress hormone), and anxiety. Therapists have determined that children need between two and three hours of active, rough-and-tumble play each day to achieve adequate sensory stimulation. In modern society, many kids are missing out

on outdoor playtime, interaction with other kids, and creative play which all help to promote proper social, physical, and cognitive development.

Technology has its place, but youth in our society could do with a lot less of it. I appreciate technological advances and gadgets as much anyone. I love my new iPhone 6, and I probably spend too much time on it. I love being able to communicate whenever I want with my family and friends. But after understanding the factors essential to a child development and their relationship to technology, I have a new perspective on technological “goodness.” Our relationship with technology has to be balanced, or it can do serious harm to our natural developmental processes. Responding to the widespread increases in psychological, physical, and behavioral deficiencies will require a new understanding of the appropriate use of technology during critical periods of development.

Old Fashioned

Anthony McCluskey

Technology can do a lot, of this we are sure; and we experience it on an everyday basis. But did you know that today technology can tell if you are happy? Although questions of assessing happiness have plagued philosophical minds for ages, do not worry ever again. According to *Mapping Happiness In American Cities, Using Twitter*, a group of researchers at the University of Vermont have recently refined their methods for measuring the happiness of a population. Using these improvements, the group has now applied it to Twitter, and by simply analyzing 46 million words the researchers have published a set of maps that can show, “how happy Americans are, right down to zip code.” Hawaii is ranked as the happiest state while Louisiana is the saddest. The study uses “word clouds,” which give empirical data on which words society chooses when happy or sad.

How these researchers measure happiness is incredible; however, the truly thought-provoking idea is that they think they *can*, quite accurately, determine our happiness using Twitter.

Even Jell-O has bought into such practices, with their “Pudding Face” ad in New York, which smiles or frowns based upon Twitter emoticons – they even release coupons when the ‘mood’ is considered too ‘down in the dumps’. So the next time you wake up and are unsure of how to feel, look to the almighty billboard! But is this really how we feel? Has social media become so intertwined with human life that it truly does hold the answer to *the* philosophical question, “Are you happy?”

Will we replace polite greetings and pleasantries with a review of others’ profiles? Maybe we could avoid the disgruntled stranger or employee, or maybe we will choose to talk to someone because their online happiness rating is four stars.

In a broader sense, it seems that there are points where technology does not simply give, but also takes away – whether we like it or not. Take society’s new “smart” fad; we all know about smart phones, smart wear and smart glass, but have you heard about smart cars? They are cars that drive themselves, communicating with other cars to de-

crease travel time and accidents exponentially. At first, it sounds awesome; we no longer have to deal with being stuck in traffic or you know, actually driving, but what could smart cars take away? If cars drive themselves then the generations to come will never know the pains of Drivers Ed, being taught to drive by a parent or older sibling, or taking twenty minutes to park in a wide open space. They will never know the joy of finally earning your license and driving that family minivan around as if it were a sports car.

This technological revolution is a balancing act. We have so much to gain, but what do we have to lose?

3D Printing: The “Terrors” of Technological Advancements

Sierra Fallau

The invention of the printer came about in the 19th century. It was originally used for Charles Babbage’s “difference engine,” a mechanical calculator designed to record and arrange polynomial functions. Since then, printers have become a mainstay of any household with a computer. However, we have been able to use printers for tasks far beyond printing pages of essays or documents. We can now bring our ideas into the physical world.

According to *The Independent*, by journalist Zachary Davies Boren, surgeons at a hospital in New York were able to print a 3-D image of a heart in order to save a 2-week old baby’s life. Doctors were able study the 3-D print in order to formulate a precise strategy for surgery. The heart contained holes and was riddled with disease. Thanks to 3-D printing, the surgeons were able to save the baby’s heart without having to perform further operations.

Printing 3-D is not restricted to medicine. In recent events, 3-D

food has become a palpable possibility. There are printers complex enough to create Oreos and complex sugar engagement diamonds. Everything that these printers make is completely edible, yet some are leery of the idea of printed food, since it can be seen as unnatural and strange. The fashion industry is also benefitting from the technological advancement of 3-D printing; dresses and other articles of clothing are being made via 3-D printers.

As we progress at dizzying rates in science, technology, and other societal advancements, humans have less time to acclimate to all the newness that is dawning upon us. It took years for the concept of the computer and the Internet to become normal features of life, and the introduction of new technologies has not halted. Three dimensional printers seem interesting yet intimidating to us because they develop at an alarming rate. Though some people embrace new advancements, others are uneasy about

a machine that prints almost anything. One could compare this to how people reacted when cars were first invented. People can react negatively to concepts and technology they do not yet understand, humans may, at times, feel useless and inadequate in light of these inventions. At the same time, we feel pride that we have the brain capacity and intelligence to conceive of any sort of machine that can print limitless objects.

Three dimensional printing is something foreign and hard for us to grasp simply because of the limited amount of information at our disposal. It's difficult to find condensed mechanical information on how these new-fangled contraptions work. With further research though, the concept of a 3-D printer will become less foreign and more natural to us. Humans are prone to adaptation, and the technological age is likely to inspire an outstanding transformation.

4.

0100100001110101011011010110000101101110

(HUMAN)

The Challenge of AI

Corwin Bryan

One glance at the history of Western philosophy betrays that humans have always had a fairly high opinion of humans. Strewn throughout the language of the philosophy of human nature are terms that we apply to no other animal in the biosphere—radical skepticism, higher-order learning, intentionality; even the Calvinist tradition, which trumpets the total depravity of humanity, reserves these virtues singularly for us. We fancy ourselves unique.

But, in light of modern developments in natural science and philosophy, it seems naïve to continue to hold ourselves in such high regard. The Neo-Darwinian synthesis has provided a rigorous and defensible theory of human origins, devoid of reference to a benevolent personal deity that would gift to us immortal souls, consciousness, or anything of the sort. The post-Enlightenment model of the natural world asserts that the comings and goings of the universe operate in perfect accordance with the unaffected, unaffectionate mechanisms of natural law, stripping it of inherent meaning or purpose. Such developments cast doubt on

traditional ideas about our world, traditional ideas about death, and, with the recent explosion of computing technology, traditional ideas about ourselves. In today's classrooms and lecture halls can be heard a growing number of intellectuals advocating the so-called computational theory of mind.

The computational theory of mind (CTM) holds that the human mind, for centuries considered transcendent and immaterial, is simply the software running on the hardware of the brain. Under CTM, the digital computer is not only an adequate metaphor for understanding the human mind. Under CTM, the digital computer and the human mind are of the same logical type.¹

Although the computational theory of mind is as speculative as traditional theories—asserting *a priori* that the human mind does not consist of nonphysical properties or substances, just as traditional philosophies of mind asserted *a priori* that it does—it has gained impressive traction in recent decades. To understand why, we must look back at its earliest proponents, who were

also, uncoincidentally, the earliest proponents of artificial intelligence. In 1950 Alan Turing, an intellectual titan in the history of computer science, published a paper in which he puts forth his famous and ambitious test. Put simplistically, he argued that if a computer can deceive a suspicious human judge, through simple conversation, into thinking it is a person, we ought to call that computer intelligent.² Put even more simplistically, if a computer acts like us, it is like us.

This entails a philosophy of mind called behaviorism, in which humanness is defined merely by the behaviors of humans, and which, presumably because of its roots in modern empirical science, is currently favored by a large number of modern philosophers and AI researchers. After Turing's seminal paper, behaviorists of all stripes were waiting for the invention of digital computers that behaved like humans, and in the late-twentieth century, they had only to sit back and watch history unfold. In 1997, Deep Blue beat the grandmaster Garry Kasparov at chess; in 2011, Watson won against two former champions on the game show *Jeopardy!*; in 2012, Eugene Goostman became the first chatbot to pass Turing's test. Among the more eager adherents of behaviorism,

these events effectively prove the computational theory of mind.

In light of this, I would argue that a weighty part of what it means to be human in the technological age is to answer the challenges set forth by the advancement of artificial intelligence: is the human mind of the same logical type as a digital computer? And if so, are perceptions of meaning and purpose illusory after all?

To take a headfirst dive into despair is, at this point, a bit hasty. For a moment, let us look under the hood of these apparently intelligent programs. Deep Blue uses what is called a brute-force algorithm, meaning it generates a huge number of possibilities and uses predefined criteria—formulated and inputted via human intelligence—to determine which moves are desirable. Watson uses a text processor and a search algorithm very similar to Google's, running over huge amounts of pre-collected data and regurgitating an answer. As for Eugene Goostman, Scott Aaronson's conversation with the "intelligent" chatbot soundly lays it to rest.³ By no means does this diminish the merit of these inventions, but they can hardly be called intelligent. Nor are we simply restricted to case-by-case analysis of alleged artificial intel-

ligence; there are strong reasons to believe that, in principle, digital computers can never equal the human intellect. For example, given that a digital computer does nothing until it is told what to do, it necessarily cannot formulate its own goals, desires, or intentions, i.e., a digital computer can never escape the limitations of its initial programming—and we have no reason to believe that human beings are subject to an analogous limitation. Such arguments, if they succeed, lead us to conclude that CTM is necessarily false.

Perhaps the computational theory of mind has achieved such celebrity because it has captured not our intellects, but our imaginations. Consider Cortana from the *Halo* series or SHODAN from *System Shock 2*, Data from *Star Trek* or the Cylons from *Battlestar Galactica*, Sam from *Her* or V.I.K.I. in *I, Robot*, or any one of countless other examples. Videogames, TV, and film are inundated with depictions of artificial intelligence, which logically relies on the computational theory of mind. Perhaps the theory has gained such widespread acceptance simply because we want to believe it.

We can let neither fear nor frivolous imaginings distort or replace rigorous thinking. The chasm between human minds and artificial minds remains both wide and deep, and the philosophical arguments against CTM suggest that it will always be so. Perhaps, then, human beings are as unique as classical and medieval philosophies suggest. Therefore, I advise modern intellectuals not to be ensnared by the computational theory of mind, not to so hastily dismiss traditional theories, but rather to remain open to the possibility that, although humans in the technological age will certainly have to learn new skills, knowledge, and behaviors, ultimately, we are as we have always been.

¹ Steven Horst, “The Computational Theory of Mind,” Stanford University. July 1, 2003. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/computational-mind/>.

² Alan Turing. “Computing Machinery and Intelligence.” *Mind* 42, no. 49 (1950): 433-60.

³ Scott Aaronson. “My Conversation with “Eugene Goostman”.” Shtetl-Optimized. June 9, 2014. <http://www.scottaaronson.com/blog/?p=1858>.

Technology and Language: Doing What We Do...Just a Lot More of It

Dr. Charles Lassiter

Dept. of Philosophy

Sophisticated language use is, as far as we can tell, a uniquely human phenomenon. In this essay, I want to consider the effects of technology on language. I'll argue that recent developments in technology don't fundamentally change what it is that language does, but they do change the scale on which we are able to do it.

One way to get a grip on the effects of technology on language is to consider what it is that language does. One obvious answer is that we use language to communicate information: I tell my students every semester when the final exam is. We also use language to get information. If I forget to mention the room for the final, my students can ask me.

But language is about more than trading information. Recall the last time you said, "I love you." Surely you're doing more than just giving the hearer some information about your feelings. You're trying to evoke loving

emotions in your hearer through an expression of your emotions. Under certain conditions, you might say "I love you" to stop a partner from leaving or as part of a marriage proposal. Clearly, "I love you" isn't just a way of trading information about attitudes. Or imagine this case: suppose you and your friend are walking to class when you see the University president riding a unicycle and juggling torches on the way to his next cabinet meeting. You might look to your friend and say, "Did you see that?!" fully knowing that your friend couldn't have missed it. Obviously, you're not asking a question; you're identifying some bit of common ground and establishing a kind of solidarity as ones who saw the president unicycling and juggling.

These two brief examples suggest a point developed in detail by the philosopher J.L. Austin: we do things with language.¹ For Austin, there are three ways to look at any meaningful utter-

ance. First, any bit of meaningful talking is a *locutionary act*: When I say, “Can I have some coffee?” I’m doing more than moving air molecules or producing some huffing sounds or squawks: I am saying something meaningful. Second, just about any bit of meaningful talking is an *illocutionary act*: something I do in saying something. When I ask for coffee, I’m performing the illocutionary act of making a request. When a priest says, “I pronounce you husband and wife,” he’s performing the illocutionary act of marrying. Third, most bits of meaningful talking are *perlocutionary acts*: things that happen as a result of saying what was said. When I tell you, “Your mother is in the hospital,” you become worried, and my utterance performed the perlocutionary act of making you worried. If I tell you, “You scored an A on the exam,” you will become happy, and my utterance performed the perlocutionary act of making you happy. Importantly, these second and third kinds of acts (1) require *uptake*: you have to grasp the import of what I am saying in order for the illocutionary and perlocutionary acts to succeed; and (2) can succeed even if I don’t have any intention for them to succeed.

By means of illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, we

create community and a sense of solidarity. When I was a graduate student in New York, one of my students forwarded to me a list of links to YouTube videos that every person she had met on campus — regardless of where they were from in the country — had seen. These little clips and phrases known by many worked as a way of creating a sense of community among young people from across the US thrown together in a few dorms. Or consider the sense of solidarity cultivated with #JesusIsCharlie. Or consider the recent efforts to preserve Gaelic and Hebrew.

Those are inspiring examples, but language is also used for terrible things. People perform illocutionary and perlocutionary acts that insult, degrade, marginalize, hurt, and punish. With advances in technology, it’s possible to do this on a global scale: internet trolls can threaten and intimidate people they’ve never personally met. More tragically, it’s possible under the cloak of anonymity for Internet trolls to threaten and intimidate people they know but without the trolls’ offline identities being revealed.

What new technologies do is enable people to perform illocutionary and perlocutionary acts across vast distances and stretches of time with relative

ease. I can email a friend on the other side of the world to express gratitude (an illocutionary act) even though she won't get it until the morning. But we don't need cutting edge technology for that: I can write a letter for my children that they won't open for 30 years. But we've never needed technology to do these things: we've been doing them for eons. It's just that technology makes us more efficient at doing it.

In virtue of doing what we do more efficiently, there is a kind of cumulative effect for some kinds of speech acts. Let's consider the bad sorts first. A quick stroll through the Twittersverse and blogosphere offers too many examples of people saying cruel and hurtful things to persons they may or may not have met. Consider a post on the anonymous bulletin board 4chan about Zoe Quinn, the developer of the game *Depression Quest*:

Next time she shows up at a conference, we...give her an injury that's never going to fully heal...a good solid injury to the knees. I'd say a [sic] brain damage but we don't want to make it end up so she's too retarded to fear us.²

Quinn's home address and phone number were made public

as she continued to receive death threats. While it'd be nice to say that this is an isolated incident, the fact is that it's not — just check out the vitriol directed at Anita Sarkeesian of Feminist Frequency.³

Anonymous vitriol of the sort described above doesn't require a new conceptual category for speech acts. A simple thought experiment illustrates this: Imagine a village in which some poor soul has been marked out for ill treatment. Other villagers post awful pictures and messages about this person around town in plain view for our poor soul. These pictures and messages are anonymous, and no one will out anyone else as a poster. Clearly, the situation is parallel, so it's not as though anonymous vitriol is an Internet-dependent phenomenon. Rather, our newest technologies are allowing us to do what we always have, or could have, done. There's nothing new here — sadly, only us.

But just as anonymous vitriol doesn't require new conceptual categories, neither does anonymous sympathy. Another quick thought experiment: imagine a village in which some poor soul has suffered incredible hardships. The other villagers, under cover of darkness, post messages of love and support in plain view

for our suffering villager. Our villager gets the messages but doesn't know the identity of the posters; and no poster is willing to out anyone as a poster. Clearly, this is a case of anonymous support and solidarity; therefore, new technologies don't add anything conceptually new here either. One such case during the Ferguson protests were tweeted tips from Palestinians for dealing with tear gas. One Palestinian advised residents of Ferguson, "...make sure to run against the wind...don't rub your eyes! #Ferguson" and another tweeted, "Don't keep much distance from the police, if you're close to them they can't tear gas #Ferguson."⁴ And again, there's nothing new here — happily, only us.

So what do we get from a consideration of the influence of technology on language? Technological advancements don't require development of new conceptual categories: we don't

have to think about language in novel ways as a result of email, 4chan, Tumblr, Reddit, or Twitter. But what these technologies do is write large what it is that we are already doing: sometimes hurting, sometimes helping, and always interacting.

¹ Austin was among the first to develop speech act theory in a systematic way. He did so in a set of lectures collected into Austin (1962) as *How to Do Things with Words*.

² Quoted in Parkin, S. "Zoe Quinn's Depression Quest" in *The New Yorker* (Sept. 9 2014). Available: <http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/zoe-quinns-depression-quest>

³ <http://www.feministfrequency.com/2012/06/harassment-misogyny-and-silencing-on-youtube/>

⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/11036190/Palestinians-tweet-tear-gas-advice-to-protesters-in-Ferguson.html>

Thoughts on Tech In a Hamburger Joint

Evan Olson

I am sitting inside Red Robin with my jacket on, too cold to take it off, and on the table in front of me sit a basket of cheery yellow fries, honey mustard, and camp-fire sauce. The fries are over-salted. Sliced thick. Mass grown and plucked and shipped overseas in frozen crates and tossed in boiling oil.

Clap, clap, clap, happy birthday! A trio of waiters had formed two tables away and begun clapping along to the happy birthday song. They are not smiling. They do this every hour. They clap to the tune of a sped up analog clock.

I want out of the restaurant. The place stinks of mass production, like the salty rubber scent ingrained into the plastic of McDonald's toys in Kids' Meals. It's the stench that lets me know I am yearning for something more personal. Something not stitched in a sweatshop or pieced together by robot arms in a KC12 plastic injection molding machine. I want a real burger, with real, unfrozen meat, and fresh fries. I want my grandma's quilt pulled needle

by needle with hand-dyed red and white yarn. My identifier, my barcode, the thing that says I am more than just a spoke on a cog of the human wheel.

Are we human in this technological age? When I get cynical, as I do while watching the Red Robin waiters dully clap their hands and groan, "Happy birthday!" I wonder if we have become less than what we could be. It is as if we have lost a grip on what gives us our humanity, our sense of identity.

I look down at my phone, it having suddenly vibrated and twisted to the left. Is it the screens in our pockets and on our tables that now define us? Those glitized up flat slabs of silicon and glass? We wrap our phones like salt water taffy in a candy shop—in molded clear, blue, pink, and you-name-it color, or we snap them in a camouflage protector, or we stick them in some dotted and/or wooden shell. The cases are mere fragile skulls, crucibles for the slabs that bring pixelated light to our faces. Smearred on like lipstick. Us glaring at its glare. Us

poking our thumbs, calling it our galaxy, our alpha, the apple of our eyes.

Phones and other portable screens have a kind of drug-like tug on our attention, their tendency to pull the corners of our lips back to a smirk or a smug “humph” of amusement. With our phones, we can snicker whenever we so desire—behind bathroom stall walls, under glass tables, and before the lit up, turned down faces of our friends who, too, have the urge, the itch, to pull down and watch the Yak’s head spin.

With our phones and our computers, we can be immortal on the pixel page. We can shove off the burdens that life places upon us, be it the essays, the group projects, and the twenty-page packets of busy work given by a tenured professor simply because he or she can. Be it, as well, the uncertainty of our careers, our future families, our lives beyond college, and of what happens after life. With the screens in our faces, we can breathe easy. We can laugh and forget it all, flip the bird at the classroom clock-face that clearly has no intention of halting.

However, when submitting to the ease of amusement our mobile screens can give, we are losing an aspect of communi-

cation: our attention. We are “plugged in,” and this appears wrong. This phrase brings to mind my nagging parents who were adamant about No Tech Sundays and one-hour-per-day computer times. I do not want to nag, but they are somewhat right. What are we doing when we are filling our free time? No doubt, at least some of these moments are spent with our fists pressed into our cheeks, hands hovering over the mice, our eyes jumping from link to link, from Instagram photo to six second Vine video, from 144-character Twitter post to a BuzzFeed top 10 article. No doubt our attention is somewhat partitioned towards the apps within our phone screens.

In addition to this loss of attention in communication, we are shortening our attention spans. The most popular websites we browse on our phones and computers, like Google, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, all scoop information to the viewer. They plop info on a silver platter for our eyes to gorge on. There is no heavy scanning. There is no lengthy reading. We do not have to work for the content we are looking for. It is efficient information distribution, and at the cost of this, we are not utilizing our capacities for concentration and contemplation. Thinking becomes

choppy and occurs only in spurts. The way in which we solve problems becomes less about pulling information from memory and interpreting it and more about finding the answer, copying and pasting it onto our short-term memories, as if we ourselves are becoming computers. Everything is a Google away. Answers are fed into one orifice and held long enough to get a result, then dumped and forgotten.

Moreover, when we debate on popular crowd-sourcing websites like Reddit and 4chan; it is the shortest, wittiest comments that generally reach the top. It is not as stimulating to read the long posts, the ones that are called "walls of text." We await the TL;DR, the "too long; didn't read" sentence placed at the end of such walls of text so that reading the whole thing is unnecessary. At the cost of amusement and this instantaneous access to knowledge is a seeming decrease in our communication skills.

We want content. We want "more." Faster. Now! A snap of the fingers is too slow for the quick-spinning loading wheel we see pulsing on each new refresh of every app in every App Store. Has our yearning for content, for the drug-like addiction of instant satisfaction and alleviating of our burdens, taken center stage over

the goofed thumbing of a friend's text, his or her smile rendered just beyond? We college students are the pioneer generation of total screen domination, of eye conglomeratization, and there is now a growing need to pull away, lift our heads, and ask, "Is this human?"

I want to say, "No, this is not human." I want to shout it. Yell it at the Red Robin waiters who have finished the birthday song, at my friends whose eyes I hardly remember, and I want to spring from my chair, smash my phone, run off to some lake in the "Wilderness," build a cabin, and live like Thoreau, like Aldous Huxley's Savage, like the woodsiest cabin dweller, a hermit, out there, all alone. I want to say our addiction to screens is wrong, that it is keeping us from so much more, that it is limiting our sense of who we are. Our humanity. Our identity. But who knows? We are in the thick of it. We are in the greatest transition since the invention of the printing press, the biggest upheaval and reshuffling of moral values in response to the vastness of globalization, of the Internet, of our technological age. It will take time to truly know the positives and negatives of our tech. And this is why I do not smash my phone. Instead, I lift my phone and read the new mes-

sage: a friend had texted me a line of periods, “. . .”, after I had asked about getting a ride home. I gently put the device back in my pocket, locking the screen. Then I pull the basket of fries forward, reach in, and take a large bite from a pre-frozen slice of fried potato. The salty edge drips in campfire sauce.

The Disconnected Connecting Self

Richard Grablin

Our experience is weird now. There is something weird and thrice removed from the real world about it, and a lot of us don't realize it. [...] Would I rather go muck around in the hot sun by the seashore or watch a marvelously put together documentary about the death of egrets. But by the time I go to the [...] seashore and have seen the egrets, I have already experienced this smooth documentary so many times that it becomes quickly incoherent to talk about an extra-mediated or extra-televsual reality. [...] I can go to the ocean that I've never seen before, but I've spent 1,000 hours... I mean, who would want to live when you can... watch?

-David Foster Wallace¹

The technological age draws out the importance of connectivity and the notion of the human as the *animal semioticum*, the semiotic animal.² Because of its transcendence over subject and object, all relations *per se* are *suprasubjective*. The denial of this premise leads to solipsism, the view that one can know only the existence and states of consciousness of one's own mind,³ a view that I emphatically reject, and I believe one of the great potentials of technology is to overcome solipsism in many of its manifestations. At the same time, technology presents a real danger to enter into a deeper form of

solipsism.

When we look at existing things in themselves (*esse in se*), we see that they simultaneously contain self-perfective and self-communicative dynamics.⁴ If it is intrinsically self-communicative, then that being is intrinsically relational; thus *esse in* is simultaneously and always *esse ad aliud*, being *towards* or for another, and being towards implies being *from* (*esse ab alio*). Communicativity therefore indicates receptivity (*esse ab*) as a complement even if the former is not always actually attained between subjects. Receptivity, then, is a perfecting quality, for without it a being

could not advance towards its full development. In humans, receptivity is the necessary condition for love, gratitude, empathy, and generosity.⁵ Hence the person is “that which is most perfect in all of nature”⁶ because as semiotic it recognizes through the objectification of its surrounding subjectivities the difference between object and subject, between ideal and actuality, and through this recognition attains an ethical relation to the entire biosphere of which no other living organism is capable.⁷ Such humanism decentralizes the human by establishing it in a semioethical relation with the cosmos.⁸

Technology is a constructed⁹ extension of humanity’s semiotic capacity to recognize and model the difference between subject and object.¹⁰ Digital technology has opened up the possibility of virtual reality. An important consequence follows as Fr. Tim Clancy, S.J., points out,

Social media and the web is blurring if not obliterating the public/private dichotomy and with it individual autonomy (if indeed it ever existed). [...] How discern or even decide which of my multiple personae, both online and offline, is my “true self”?¹¹

Herein rests the danger of digital communications: while increasing interpersonal connectivity to a degree never before experienced (instantly and globally), the new forms of communication *disconnect us from each other* precisely because the relation is not wholly physical but virtual. Technological communication presents not subjects but a twice-removed objectification of them; that is, we see a constructed, digital identity and not a person. We live glued to the screen, walking past each other because we are busy texting each other, sending filtered images of the reality we look up at only to take a picture, subsuming it into the all-important digital un-reality. Is reality boring to us, then? Is that why we must objectify it, that is, adorn it with pretty filters? Do we not do the same thing to humans by our cruel standards of beauty? By uncritically entering this frenzied, constant connectivity, technology tempts us to surrender that which makes us human: the ability to recognize that the object of our awareness is more than an object—it is a *subject*. It is not simply an “it” but noble and beautiful.

Our reliance on smart phones and social media is not a sign of personhood¹² but objectified, technological slavery.

Looking into a stranger's eyes has become awkward and discomforting. Why? Perhaps we fear seeing something of each other's souls, something past the avatars, the convenient smileys, the anonymous posts, the calculated identities, all absolving us from responsibility for our actions because of this double or triple virtual disconnect. Perhaps by looking into each other's eyes we will remember that we are each

other's keepers (cf. Gen. 4:9), that we are responsible for each other, that "our rights" must firstly be the rights that protect *others*.¹³ In this mutual seeing we shall find the condition for mutual support and transformation, which requires honesty and vulnerability, but, then again, convenience and relativism have always been forms of moral solipsism: "Do as *you* please so long as it doesn't hurt *me*."

¹ Geoff Ward, *Endnotes: David Foster Wallace* (London: BBC Radio, 2011), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DljS4K2mQKY>.

² See Stephen Sparks, "Semiotics and Human Nature in Postmodernity: A Consideration of *Animal Semioticum* as the Postmodern Definition of Human Being," *Semiotica* 179, no. 1 (2010): 259–294.

³ John Deely, "Solipsism," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement 2012–2013: Ethics and Philosophy*, ed. by Robert L. Fastiggi, (Detroit: Gale, 2013), 4:1439–1441.

⁴ Cf. W. Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).

⁵ W. Norris Clarke, *Person and Being* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University, 1993), 20–21.

⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a.29.3.

⁷ Of course, for Aquinas a person is not always a human being; personhood also encompasses angels and the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. But regardless, every person is semiotic.

⁸ Susan Petrilli, "Modeling, Dialogue, and Globality: Biosemiotics and Semiotics of Self. 2. Biosemiotics, Semiotics of Self, and Semioethics," *Sign Systems Studies* 31, no. 1 (2003): 96. Analogously, for Aquinas, justice decenters the human subject by submitting the subject in a relationship under God—and by grace, equal to God—because the emphasis of the relationship is on God; hence the notion of a decentered humanism has a long history within Catholic thought. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae.81.1.

⁹ Not necessarily a tangible, physical construct; it may also be a mental construct, e.g. latitude and longitude lines.

¹⁰ Cf. Petrilli, "Modeling, Dialogue, and Globality: Biosemiotics and Semiotics of Self. 2. Biosemiotics, Semiotics of Self, and Semioethics," *Sign Systems Studies* 31, no. 1 (2003): 81–84; this modeling encompasses all tool use.

¹¹ Tim Clancy, "The World as Hypertext" (paper, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA, February 7–8, 2014), 5.

¹² Aquinas defines the person as *dominus actus sui*, "the lord of his own action." In other words, the person is free for self-determination. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae.6.2.ad 2; cf. Clarke, *Person and Being*, 27–28.

¹³ Another implication of this line of argumentation is that I believe any attempt to ground so-called animal rights stands or falls on a defense of the rights of the *other as other*.

5. GLOBAL NETWORK

Obsession

Meggie Tennesen

To be a human in the age of technology is to give up autonomy and become one with the technology. According to *Time* magazine, there are 7 billion people in this world, and 6 billion of them have a cell phone subscription. Meanwhile, only 4.5 billion people have access to a toilet. I find something fundamentally wrong with that. More people are concerned with staying connected than with health and sanitation. Poor sanitation causes innumerable devastating diseases, but do we take notice? Many of us do not. If any problem is not on a screen in front of our faces, it ceases to exist. We filter it out, unless it affects our Wi-Fi connectivity.

Our societal obsession with technology blinds us to many aspects of the human struggle. We are so concerned with having the best of the best – the most recent iPad, the newest computer, the iPhone 6 – that we do not stop to think about how things are made. According to an article in *iDigital-Times*, “of the big electronic firms like Apple, Microsoft, Sony, and Samsung, only Nokia can prove that it pays its factory workers a living wage.” Of 39 of the world’s big-

gest technology companies, only Nokia was able to prove that their factory workers can provide for their basic needs with their salaries. Many electronics factories in China are even using child labor. There is a law in China that states that children under the age of 16 cannot work. Still, some families are so poor that they need an extra source of income. Under these circumstances, children under the age of 16 work anyway. The government calls it “Educational Labor” – but it is often abused, with children working 14 hour shifts in hot factories with little food or water. This is where many of our favorite technologies come from.

There are the companies, and then there are the people that make the product. The public sees the companies, owners, and products, but no one sees the people behind it all. These laborers live in a different country, and they work for incredibly low wages and for incredibly long hours, so we can have our tablets, computers, and cell phones. Companies remain competitive by pushing their factory employees to produce great quantities at the

lowest cost. They produce new and exciting products for consumers, and we get so engrossed with the glass and the touch screens and the megapixels that we eventually lose sight of what truly matters. We rarely wonder where the newest gadgets come from, who makes them, and whether those laborers are earning enough to sustain life and, at the very least, provide for proper sanitation.

Our constant technological connectivity does not need to be the cause of blindness to the plight of others. We should connect more and reach farther away from ourselves. We need to read the news and keep up with the timeline of our global community. We need to recognize that the people who make our life with beautiful, functional devices possible are the same people who live without basic amenities.

Being a human in the technological age requires an ever-expanding reliance upon technology. Can we do this without losing that uniquely human connection?

Tabloid Justice

Caroline Rourke

The roots of the American news media, of the “watchdog press”, and of the freedom of speech stretch back before an America even existed. Freedoms of speech and expression have been violated, argued for, and upheld in a number of Supreme Court cases throughout our two centuries. This is not a tradition to be taken lightly. Much like the American news media. Have you ever stopped to think about how much power the media has? Take a moment and think about Casey Anthony. George Zimmerman. Darren Wilson.

Media makes and breaks reputations. It provides the information upon which American citizens base their opinions and beliefs. Newsmakers are tasked with deciding what stories air and which ones fade into the background. The public has a right to know. But, to a degree, the public only knows what the media tells them. It’s a grave responsibility that brings with it a dangerous power. (Everybody remember “the Maine?”)

Modern technology had taken our individual accessibility to levels that, 20 years ago, were

unfathomable. News is everywhere. When harnessed correctly, more news in more places should mean more informed citizens, right?

Right. In theory.

Historically, the media has experienced a great deal of leeway under the First Amendment. But, what happens when the media’s First Amendment right to free press comes into conflict with, say, your or my Sixth Amendment right to a fair trial by a jury of my peers? Are all amendments created equal?

One hundred years ago, a duel between constitutional rights was almost unheard of. There was no television, and newspapers were tasked with the molding of opinion. The general public’s accessibility to breaking news was fairly limited. Considering that *The Washington Post* sends me minute-by-minute updates via iPhone, I feel safe in saying that accessibility is no longer an issue. Don’t get me wrong: I love having breaking news in the palm of my hand. But, if I were to be a defendant in a high profile trial, would I really want my potential jurors to have unfettered access to outside

opinions that could corrupt their impartiality? It's a hefty assumption to make (of the media's influence and of civilians' susceptibility), but at the rate technology is advancing, I think it's one that merits consideration.

Let us examine the Sixth Amendment for a moment.

"In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense."

A public trial... by an impartial jury. When the jury has no access to the presentation of public opinions of the case, everything works. In the 21st century, we encounter a serious issue. What are we supposed to do if the media's right to publicize trial details could potentially alter a juror's impartiality? Do we sequester the jury for every high profile case? Where does it end?

Revisit the Anthony and Zimmerman trials, and the Wilson grand jury verdict. Americans

know these names. But we know them for the heinous offenses they're associated with, not for the people they are.

Isn't the media supposed to tell us who they are, not how to feel about them? Now, for the rest of their lives, these individuals will be in the limelight. One toe out of line, and I'll get an alert on my phone from CNN. People are accused of unimaginably horrible crimes. Sometimes they are guilty, but sometimes they are not. The process of determining guilt is not an easy one. I'll venture to say that a slew of 140 character surface level assumptions and Facebook status indictments do not help a potential juryperson to remain impartial.

Fortunately, studies conducted on the impact of media on potential jurors have proved inconclusive. Yet, I am frustrated. Half of me would love to believe that the media is, partially, at fault for the judicial upsets that have occurred in recent years. The other half of me wants to believe that jurors, being civically and morally responsible American citizens, know better than to let media bias affect the ways in which they conduct their civic duty. Both of these expectations are clouded in naïveté. Maybe I should take a different approach. Maybe the country should take

a different approach. We conduct research and studies to explain and to justify this idea that the media is at fault for problems within our criminal justice system. We should stop explaining and start asking the important questions. Why does the media report sensational headlines? How might juries be potentially affected by a one-sided news story? What can we do legally, what should we do ethically, to make a difference?

If there is a direct connection between the media and juror bias, I cannot say. But, think of the impact the media has on us, the unsuspecting pool of potential jurors. We put people on trial every day. We pick sides, we form opinions, we agree and we disagree. It's politics. It's human nature. And it's supposed to be good for society.

But, when do we question the ways in which the media could be detrimental to the formation of honest and accurately informed opinions? I'll hazard a guess that a lot of American citizens do not. How many times have you heard someone spout off an opinion that is, word for word, what the local nightly news anchor said that evening? How many times have you done it? I have.

Be wary, America. Technology will continue to advance in ways it scares me to imagine. Our society has a need for speed. Fast

food; fast service; fast news; fast communication. With every new gadget or idea, our need only intensifies. Impatience has become habitual. We devote time, money, and talent to expediting every activity and responsibility that makes up our daily life, so that we have more time to do more things. They say there's an app for everything and, to be honest, I think "they" are correct.

Think before you consume. Under our law, American citizens have equal rights to justice and to fair treatment. Until we all have the right to equal justice, we cannot rest. Technology can be good. We, the people, are left to decide. Use technology to spread the message of social justice or to sentence our fellow citizens others to a trial by social media. You choose.

Technology: an Avenue for Human Expression

Chelsea Gibson

Whenever I watch movies like *I, Robot* or read about cars that park themselves, it seems that the accomplishments of humans are less impressive than those of machines. In moments like these, I must stop and remind myself what I think is most amazing about humans. Humans are incredible in the way we find passion in our world and work to solve problems. Technology does not subtract from the expression of humanity, technology actually helps expand our modes of expression.

Technology allows us to connect intention and action. Any time that I want to create change, technology connects me with other people that will work with me toward my goal. Modern technology allows one person to distribute their desires and intentions to thousands of people almost instantly. Each person's spark of passion and problem-solving capacity – the essence of humanity – has the opportunity to spread around the world and actually turn into something tangible.

In my own life, I have been able to communicate my passions with many people using modern technology. Personally, I want to see the end of human trafficking in the modern world, a passion that was ignited by technology. I learned about modern-day slavery for the first time from a documentary showing organized by my church. My church distributed information about the event via Facebook, Twitter, email, and video streaming at the church. Ever since I watched the documentary I have been involved with International Justice Mission, a human rights agency in Washington, D.C. Through the years, I have participated in many campaigns, all of which advertised via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and email.

Technology offers a new strategy of raising awareness through social media. This December, I am participating in an Instagram campaign called "December." I am going to wear a dress every day of the month to celebrate the dignity of women everywhere. As a college student, I am so thankful for a social media

campaign like this because I can show people what I am truly passionate about just by using my smartphone for a few minutes every day. Additionally, I can raise funds for International Justice Mission through “Dressembler’s” website. Technology makes it easier for me to show what makes me human, and for me to share that with the people in my world.

One of my favorite things about Gonzaga is that I get to meet passionate people that are ready and willing to work for their dreams. Technology allows me to connect with great quantities of individuals who are cut from similar cloth. Walking around campus, I am aware that I am a part of a Jesuit, Catholic, Humanistic community, and I love that technology is such a large part of what we do here. In fact, when I really think about it, the only reason I am lucky enough to go to school here is because I applied using the common application website. I never could have predicted how that website would give me an opportunity to grow as a human, and I look forward to discovering more technological avenues for acting on my passions.

Spread the Word

Charé Gilliam

Among a multitude of transformative effects, technology has allowed people to reach others instantaneously and to share ideas at a far faster rate than ever before. This is even more evident in the past few months as we witness more people working for social justice. News of Black people being killed by police and the ensuing outrage has been plastered across television and social media. The vigor in which people have been calling for change within the criminal justice system has been steadfast and has shown no signs of abating. Indeed, it seems that technology has been able to inspire what no one ever predicted: change. No, not change in the sense that our world has evolved. Instead, it seemed to help mobilize a new generation to see structural racism and work to end it.

Structural racism is by no means a new phenomenon. It has been ingrained in American culture and institutions since the beginning. However, it seems that more and more people are becoming privy to it through the use of technology and its incredible knack for spreading stories like

wildfire. People across the world now know the city of Ferguson, MO, and the name Mike Brown. They are talking about issues of police brutality and mobilizing in order to enact reform within the criminal justice system. What started out as just a cry for justice within one city has quickly escalated into a movement that we have not seen since the protests against the Vietnam War or even the Civil Rights movement. Technology has helped spread throughout the country and the world news of a disproportionate amount of Black men being killed by police in America. In fact, protests have occurred as far away as London. Indeed, this issue will not be going anywhere for a long time.

In many ways, technology has placed the impact of structural racism at the forefront of everyone's mind. Although everyone now knows about the issue, not everyone believes in the cause or views it positively. For every individual who posts about equality and fighting structural racism, there seems to be another who wishes to maintain the status quo. There is someone who sees no racism and is color-blind. There is always someone

who says that police officers are just doing their jobs. Last but not least, there is always someone who is outright racist. Via technological platforms, the cultural divide becomes clear. Arguments erupt on television shows, Twitter, and Facebook due to the inability to agree on the issues. As great as technology has proven to be in informing the public, it has also revealed an ugly side of human politics. Technology provides everything instantaneously and anonymously. It makes life easier in many ways. But, we can make dozens of posts about Eric Garner and Mike Brown, but when do we stop sharing and start acting?

Thank you to all who made Charter possible!

Thank you to all the students and professors who submitted their thoughts, reflections, and research to this year's edition of Charter. We could not have done it without your support.

Special thanks go out to Joanne Shiosaki, Manager of Student Publications, and Dr. Robert Donnelly, Advisor to Charter, for their continual support and guidance.

If you would like to contribute to next year's edition of Charter, we would love to hear your thoughts! Stay posted for next year's theme. Tell us what you think, and get published.

E-mail your questions, comments, and submissions to charter@zagmail.gonzaga.edu.

