Television, Education And Technology In Todays Society Essay, Research Paper

Humanities, 371

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Television, Education and Technology in Today?s Society

The advance of mass communication is natural in a technologically advanced society. In our country?s short history, we have seen the development of the printing press, the radio, the television, and now the Internet, all of these, able to reach millions of people. Equally natural, is the poisoning and corruption of these medias, to benefit a few. Television and the Internet don?t have to be a weapon against us, used to sway our opinions to conform to people who care only about their prosperity, and not ours. We can stop being motivated by technological advances; instead we can laugh at it as a cheap attempt to persuade our minds.

We often hear phrases like, ?television has changed the world?. America is a society where everyone owns at least one television set, and is the most used appliance in households where watching it daily has become routine. Nowadays, people don?t find the time for an art exhibit, crafts, or even a candle lit dinner. Deadlines, cell phones, basketball games, the internet, fast food and total chaos, seems to be on everybody?s minds. Today, the majority of parent?s work, and watching television is considered by most good quality family time. It?s a time where families catch up on each other?s lives, and are entertained without incurring the expense of going out to a movie.

The television also doubles as an inexpensive babysitter. Children keep their eyes glued for hours on end to the magical box. Not only, is the television an inexpensive baby sitter it?s educational, with programs such as Sesame Street giving children opportunity to learn at home through imagery in an entertaining way. While, the children are glued to the set parents relax and enjoy themselves. Classrooms are being forced to move from the printed word into the world of entertainment in hopes of keeping the attention of children. In Neil Postman?s Amusing Ourselves to Death, he aims to demonstrate the overpowering influence of entertainment and materialism on our daily lives, along with the negative effect on humanity. One aspect that Postman gears his defense toward is visual imagery. Public discourse as he calls it is ?conducted largely through visual imagery, which is to say that television gives us a conversation in images, not words?(Postman, 7). Television depends on the visual image more than the content of information being processed. Sadly, the image conveyed often takes precedent over the viewer?s common sense. Unfortunately, future generations will suffer from the negative impact of television at a more extensive level. As we view it as a source of entertainment, they will rely on it as a convenient source of knowledge, a home teacher. Television has become the means by which we view the world, and interpret right from wrong. Spoken communication is not only no longer necessary, but is slowly failing to survive in a world monopolized by the visual medium. As Neil Postman states, ?television is our culture?s principal mode of knowing about itself. Therefore, ? and this is the critical point ? how television stages the world becomes the model for how the world is properly to be staged?(Postman, 92). This holds true whether it be religion, education, politics or the news media.

Religious services normally preformed in churches, can now be viewed on your television, with the addition of guitar music, and silly costumes, again to entertain us. Postman makes reference to ?a Roman Catholic priest mixing his religious teaching with rock?n?roll music?(93), while another priest wore a baseball hat during a public function while being telecasted. Postman?s comment was ?whereas the latter believes that you don?t have to be holy, the former apparently believes you don?t have to be holy at all? (93). Evangelists preach in elaborate settings all paid for by their followers that were deceived out of savings to reach salvation in the kingdom of heaven. Followers are paying to be entertained. Believing in your god, praying and living a good life is all that?s needed to live with God. How na?ve can humanity be?

The use of the Internet plays an integral role in the education of students worldwide. The distance between people now becomes non-existent with this new form of communication. It allows students who cannot reach an educational institute for various reasons to receive an education through programs such as “distance education”. A student no longer needs to physically be in the classroom to learn with this program. The Internet also allows students to learn from other teachers and students, with a wide range of experience and skills, around the world. Research and discussions can be done with other students worldwide while home schooling becomes increasingly popular as the Internet opens up the windows of opportunity for students to learn in more innovative and efficient ways. The above statements are some of the pros of ?distance education?, now for the cons. Imagine setting in front of a computer screen, with no one setting next to you, no teacher, no sound, no socializing or interacting with fellow students. Students lacking motivation will find difficulty completing the classes. Recent study?s at the University of Illinois found that ?high quality online teaching is time and labor intensive? and is therefore ?not likely to be the income source envisioned by some administrators? (Digital Diplomas reading, 2-3) Internet classes are a big business run by people with power to dictate our education, offering classes to fit ?industry?s needs.? Rapidly expanding technology, competition, and social and economic needs have transformed higher education into a matter of necessity. It will be essential that administrators, teachers, students, and higher education officials develop new tools and techniques to meet the standards of higher education. Administrations sensitivity to the needs of faculty is a must to generate capable full time staff, as they are the fuel of our future.

In conclusion, I feel that the advance of technology is a good trend for our society. With each new change brings endlessly new possibilities. Which of these possibilities will happen and how the resulting technology is used plays an integral role in the lives of people today and tomorrow, and therefore needs to be carefully considered. Technology is something that deserves both our appreciation, as well as critical consideration in order to maximize the benefits it provides and minimize the destructions it can cause. We can be the masters of technology, and not let it be the masters of us.

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