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My Digital Literacy Experiences

My experiences with the digital world are a little bit different than the average 20-year-old’s experiences; this is because my parents did not really encourage learning about technology and how it worked while I was growing up. They were very old fashion because my dad works at the Richmond Times Dispatch and as most know, the newspaper is a dying field due to technology. Of course my dad did not want us to support any type of online news sources or really anything that put his job at risk unless it was needed for school. My parents were the types of people who believe, “technology is going to corrupt the new generation.” Growing up I had only one computer in the house, which my sisters and I were able to use for school purposes. Once I was a sophomore in high school my sisters and I all started fighting over the computer for schoolwork. That is when my parents broke down and invested in a laptop and another printer. It took my sisters and I a good long time to get used to the new technology of the laptop because we had not had much experience with it. Even in my classes, we used laptops some times and I would hate it because it was difficult for me to understand and my classmates would always try and help me. It was embarrassing! This is why my personal definition of digital literacy is being fluent with any form of technology that is not involving pencil and paper, and anything that takes me out of my comfort zone.
My journey with technology continued in high school with the invention of Facebook and other types of communicating through social media. Once we got a laptop I was able to expand my horizons to an extent and I did get a Facebook account, and I remember that even something we consider the “norm” now, was such a challenge for me to figure out. Even though people thought social media was a bad thing about six or seven years ago, I am really happy I was able to participate in it because social media is such a big part of my generation. I also feel it was a stepping stone for me because social media opened doors to other types of technologies and some of the everyday software that I use in college now. Things like smartphones, software I needed for my ITE class, blogging, you name it. But it is important to understand the history of how even simple technologies have advanced our society. In “From Pencils to Pixels” Dennis Baron puts so much emphasis on the pensile as he states, “The pencil may seem a simple device in contrast to the computer, but although it has fewer parts, it too is an advanced technology.” Baron is suggesting that we cannot continue to move forward at the pace we are if we cannot even remember where we have been and remember some of the little technologies that society takes for granted today.

Even though I am excited for all of this new technology, there are some fears that come along with it. The first one being the particular job field that I am pursuing, education. With all of this new technology, what does that mean for future schools? I know there are already parts of Georgia that only have distance-learning classes. This concerns me on so many different playing fields, I am worried about what this means my job will be like 10 to 20 years from now and if I will like it as much. Barbara Jones-Kavalier and Suzanne Flannigan point out in “Connecting the Digital Dots,” that
technology proposes to be a problem to the younger generations when they explain, “Our research suggests that the lack of education related to literacy is problematic, and the situation is exacerbated in the field of education” (8). Technology has already made such an impact on the way we teach children and it is only going to change more than we will probably ever be able to predict. I prefer the hands on projects and I am able to teach and get my points across to students better in a face-to-face atmosphere. If that changes I will have to either learn a whole new teaching style and adapt when I am 40 years old or the school system will simply let me and all other older teachers to get a new generation of teachers in that were trained in the new ways of life. Another issue I am concerned with is what will that mean for our youth? Most teachers will agree that you need that face-to-face time with students because it creates social skills that all people need in the work force and that is not something a machine can teach a child.

Finally, one of the more important things to me is just the fact that I fear technology will move too fast for me to handle. It seems like every time I get used to a certain software the next big thing hits the shelves or something needs to be updated and then it takes time getting used to missing word here all over again. Society is aware that the advances in technology are moving so rapidly. Baron expresses, “Complaints that handwriting is a lost art will be drowned out by complaints that keyboarding is a lost art, because more and more people will speak their text messages and search queries into their smartphones—a practice that will be called spexting. No one will speak into their phones to make phone calls, which is what phones used to be for. The phone’s keyboard will atrophy, and people’s fingers will forget how to type.” Baron points out that soon there will be no such thing as making calls and writing by hand will no longer be needed.
I cannot imagine not being able to call my mom, dad, and sisters after I move out or being able to talk to my significant other after a long day. I like hearing people’s voices, it is comforting to me and I believe that the future generations will still need the skills of how to talk to certain people; they need to understand how to speak and carry themselves in order to have an articulate conversation with their bosses, professors, and anyone of power if they ever want to be successful.

These are only a few of the general questions and concerns that people have for our future. There is now no doubt that technology is improving the world in ways people of the early ages could have never imagined in their wildest dreams. But now the question is ultimately what is the price that we will pay for it and can these threats be foreseen and prevented from ever occurring? Maybe society truly wont know until we get there, but it looks like that is a chance we are going to have to take, mostly because we do not really have a choice. Technology is developing whether we like it or not.
Works Cited
