PENCIL & PAPER

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Growing up at the start of the technology era, I feel that technology has grown, as I have
grown. My literacy of technology began as a child with a typewriter. While I was growing up
technology also advanced, with the production and evolution of the personal computer to
smartphones and tablets. As time went on my digital literacy grew as technology advanced in
order to keep up with what many of my teachers were requiring of me. Throughout my life
technology has benefitted me with organizing my tasks as well as keeping me in contact with
long distance family and friends. However, I still find that using the old fashioned pen and paper
helps me in many situations.

In elementary school in the 1980s, I hand wrote reports or project materials. In middle
school, I remember using a typewriter to type reports because I liked how neat the papers looked
despite the challenge of correcting mistakes. Even though I typed them, I always had to hand-
write them first. As I continued into high school, my parents finally purchased a computer. It
was not so much of a necessity as it is today. It was nice to type papers and easily check for and
correct mistakes. I often did not hand write them before sitting down at the computer. We also
did not have Internet, so we strictly used it for creating documents. When I originally went to
college, laptops were starting to become required of students, so I began to learn about the
internet and becoming more comfortable with other processing programs such as Excel. My
digital literacy only grew from there.

I remember vaguely, my parents getting a car phone when I was in middle school, though
I do not recall us using it very much. In high school I had a pager so my mom could let me know
when I needed to get in touch with her. Cell phones were not around yet, so I often used a pay
phone to reach her. Cell phones were finally coming out while I was in college and becoming
more popular in my early 20s. When I finally purchased a basic cell phone it was very
convenient to contact people quickly no matter where they were. As time has gone on over the last few years, smartphones have become popular and almost a necessity. Even cellular companies are making basic phones obsolete. I finally caved a little after the smart phone craze began. I encouraged others to join in because of how convenient it was to do everything from your phone. There were apps for everything including Facebook and many of the other popular social media sites that began coming a few years earlier.

When I was close to 30, I was introduced to social media. Myspace was the craze and Facebook was just coming out on the internet. I was a little late to becoming aware of social media but once I joined, I was engaged all the time. Because of my job at a remote summer camp, it was a great way to keep in touch with friends back home. Around the same time, other social media sites like Flickr, iTunes (and all that goes with it) and many other websites were starting up and becoming popular. I was not as familiar with these sites but was definitely enjoying Facebook. Over the last several years there are so many social media sites and apps that are now a part of society all over the world.

Now that it has been a few decades since technology has really taken off, I have found it has been very helpful in many cases but also a burden in others. As an adult, I have been committed to many things and with more commitment comes more communication. Having so much technology at your fingertips makes things much quicker to accomplish. Barbara Jones-Kavalier and Suzanne Flannigan state that “new media is nothing if not simply another way of viewing our world” (10). However, you fill your empty time with more things becoming busier than ever. Smartphones make it easy to communicate, keep track of tasks and calendars, and so much more. They can connect people with friends, family, coworkers, and volunteer groups at the tap of a finger. This can cause lack of focus on the task at hand. When your phone chimes
that you have a new message or, for example, you remember you need a recipe, you forget about what you are doing because you can accomplish the new task right away. There are constant distractions that come up with having a device that does everything. It can keep you well organized, but can also create more work as time goes on and as more tasks are added to the pile.

Now in my mid-30s, I have more understanding of technology that is out there and continue to grow my digital literacy. However, there are still some old fashioned things I am using again that help me limit what I am able to do at any given moment. I use a paper calendar so I cannot overbook myself. It gives me more time to think about tasks requested of me so I am able to say no to activities that may put more stress on me. I also write my papers with pencil and paper before typing them. This allows me to get my thoughts out and choose the most pertinent information to include. I then type the paper and can easily move paragraphs or sentences around, check for spelling errors and some grammar mistakes. I still, however, print my paper to check, and recheck, for those same mistakes that Word will not catch.

Do not begin a paragraph with a quotation; add a signal phrase to transition from the previous paragraph and indicate a change in voice to the quotation. Something like this: Dennis Baron claims that “The computer…promises, or threatens, to change literacy practices for better or worse.” (Baron 1). There are definitely pluses and minuses to the technology of today and with the technology that is still to come. I will continue to learn about new technology and take with me the parts that I can benefit from. People will need to find the ways to use technology in a way that suits their needs. I plan to learn what I can about the new technologies that come along but will only use what will truly assist me in my life.
Works Cited


