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Technology: Its Impact on Education and Culture

Technology is capable of greatly impacting some of humanities biggest problems, both positively and negatively. Some major areas that technology can greatly impact include education and culture. I believe that the best way for technology to solve some of humanities biggest problems would be to lower the barrier for accessing knowledge. Technology has already begun solving these problems through making information more easily accessible, although misinformation also flows through these services. Technology has also allowed for culture to spread rapidly and allowed for social protests to gain traction; however, it has also allowed for radical groups to gain traction.

Technology can potentially solve most of our biggest problems by spurring widespread interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics allowing for the next generation of scientist to be greater in size and diversity. This can be and is being done through the lowering of barriers for education using the internet. Services like YouTube have set the barriers for self-motivated education at the level of having a device that can access the service and the internet (Jaworski; Kohler and Dietrch). Other services, like Starlink, are expanding the accessibility of the internet which would allow underserved communities to access all the information online and allow for the development of a larger and more diverse generation of scientists (Crist). These new scientists could help develop new solutions for the issues plaguing us now and any new issues that may plague us in the future.

One major global issue technology has impacted both positively and negatively is education. Services like YouTube have made quality educational videos easily accessible through channels like Crash Course available to millions globally (Jaworski; Kohler and Dietrch). The sheer volume and variety of educational content and how they are presented have allowed students to pick and choose videos that best suit their style of learning (Kohler and Dietrch). These videos also allow for further learning through discussions in the comments sections or through the viewing of similar videos suggested by the service provider (Jaworski; Kohler and Dietrch). Through the comments sections of these videos, students may even petition the creators of the videos to explore a topic they wish to know more about (Jaworski). These videos have not been limited to students self-educating, they have also been used by educators to spark interest or even craft a better learning experience (Jaworski; Kohler and Dietrch). Although technology has a great potential to disseminate factual information, it also has a great potential to disseminate misinformation. The same systems that allow services like YouTube to recommend videos for students to continue learning about a topic recommend viewers who have watched videos with misinformation to other videos with misinformation (Goujard). However, the companies that own these services are putting in an effort to limit this unintended side effect of their recommendation system through changes in their policies even if this solution may take time to be fully implemented (Pruitt-Young). Technology is capable of greatly impacting major global issues like education both positively, through the dissemination of factual information both in and out of educational settings, and negatively, through the unintentional dissemination of misinformation.

Technology has had and will likely continue to have a major impact on cultural relations, beliefs, and perspectives. Technology has always had a major impact on culture, from the inception of reading and writing to the invention of the printing press to most recently, electronic media (Fruedi). Technology has had a major impact on cultural relations as it has allowed people to stay connected with their friends and family regardless of the distance between them, find lovers online, and has even led to the evolution of language through texts and online messaging services (Fruedi; Miller). It has even allowed strangers with similar hobbies and mindsets to gather (Miller). This has allowed for likeminded people to gather for social protests such as the Arab Spring and Hong Kong protests (Fruedi). However, technology’s ability to connect likeminded people has also allowed for technology to connect radicals and polarize people (Fruedi; Thompson). Technologies like social media have become rife with extremism as it connects people with other ideologically like-minded people leading to group polarization (Thompson). This technology does not necessarily even need other people to radicalize people as it allows people to endlessly explore and self-radicalize (Freudi). Technology has a powerful impact on culture, it connects us to those we love and allows us to organize for social protests; however, it also allows us to trap ourselves with likeminded individuals and can lead to extremism and radicalization.

Technology can and has helped change things for better and for worse. In education, technology has allowed for interested people to seek education for themselves online; however, it has also allowed for the dissemination of misinformation. Culturally, technology has allowed for the rapid mobilization of protests but has also allowed for the rapid spread of extremism. I believe that technology is a profoundly flexible medium that has and will continue to impact all facets of society and can change them for better and worse.

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