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Media Studies 255

December 11, 2018

Media Studies 255 Final Exam

Read all the instructions in the final exam instructions carefully before beginning! You’re required to write into this document, and adding the necessary pages. Re-save this file as your own, and submit it to me on December 11, 2018.

**Essay Question I.**

**New technologies have always produced unintended consequences. One result of this would be how UX designers and engineers face a number of new ethical challenges today with the rise of technology regarding our interaction with it and dependence on it.**

**What is the primary job of a UX designer? Discuss the principle ethical quandaries faced by UX designers. What is persuasive design? Discuss the ways you feel this positively and/or negatively affect user behavior.**

When using an app or website most people don’t think about all the work, people and time that went into creating it. Although the internet is expanding, and anyone can access information on the process and experience of creating an app, the people behind the scenes have a responsibility that most people don't necessarily grasp right away. These people are called User Experience Designers (UX Designers), and their main job is to improve the usability, accessibility, and pleasure provided in the interaction between the user and the product. They are the people that create the designs and interface for things like websites, apps, and games. The reason their job is a lot more complicated than one would think is because apps, websites and games highly influence social behavior, therefore, they need to put a lot of time and thought into their work.

A good example of the impact of a UXD is when looking at monitoring software, particularly kid trackers. This is an application that parents use to monitor their children hoping to enhance discipline and improve behavioral habits. This can affect both the child and the parent in negative and positive ways, the parent will feel more comfortable knowing that their child is safe and behaving properly, while the child will most likely lose trust in their parent and try to sabotage the software to get their privacy back. This situation is similar to one in a show streaming on Netflix called “Black Mirror”. In one of their many dystopian future episodes, a worried mother implants a chip in her daughter and can see and monitor what she sees. This negatively affected their relationship to the point where the daughter beats her mom with the tablet that controls her chip in order to escape its dominance. Although this is an exaggerated version of consequences that come with a development that is so invasive, it resonates with a lot of viewers because it speaks to people's’ underlying concerns with new technologies. It is also not too far off from the direction our own technology is headed, there have already been developments in this field. Products like Vuezone and MOTOSafety already provide parents with the ease of knowing where their kid is and what they are doing at all times. UX Designers can only hope that their designs don’t end with the same results it did in the episode of “Black Mirror”.

UX Designers are tasked, from the beginning of an idea to the finished products distribution, with making sure that the targeted user will love and consistently use the product. Unfortunately, they know that no matter how hard they try to create every product with the user’s best intention, there will always be a new product or idea that will nudge the user in the opposite direction. They use different techniques to elicit the desired action from certain groups of users, they look into things like persuasive design, and behavioral economics, sociology, and psychology to make sure they know what the users want and need. Although UX Designers know they have certain responsibilities they don’t limit themselves because the fate of positive or negative experience solely depends on the user's decisions while using a product.

**Essay Question II.**

**The rise of digital technology has had a massive impact in the international creative community. Small digital video cameras and editing software have made it easier than ever for aspiring filmmakers to make a movie. Inexpensive recording software has done the same for musicians. Digital photography now rivals the traditional chemical process for resolution, while image manipulation is simpler and more sophisticated than ever before. Ultimately, the Internet provides a worldwide platform for artists of all stripes to share his/her work.**

**What are some of the core characteristics of the digital world? Discuss how these have impacted the arts. What are some specific developments that have impacted artists? In what ways are they unrewarding and in what ways are they beneficial?**

Digital technology has been such an important development in the modern world, most of our social norms and habits come from the development of digitization. The digital world has changed everything from the way we speak to the way we learn and even the way we treat our relationships, it has seeped into every aspect of everyday life.

One of the core characteristics of the digital world is that it is electronic, meaning that a lot of things one would normally have to do physically can now be done electronically. One of the main areas that have been affected by this is the art world, artwork can now be transferred from the physical world to an electronic one. Things can be manipulated and remixed and created from scratch with an ease that was never experienced before the digital world. Another core characteristic is that it is networked, meaning that it can be moved over worldwide electronic networks including the internet and mobile networks. This is significant because things can now be shared across the world in an instant, the content can be interactive or changed by others with little consequence. The last core characteristic is that it is interconnected, meaning information can be moved between many points. There has been lots of evidence that this is both a good and bad thing, good because more people are now informed on a wide variety of things, bad because information can be altered, and people will be led to believe things that are not necessarily true. For the arts, this can also mean a number of things mainly that artwork is now open to modification, other artists or people, in general, can alter your work. Sometimes this is done purposely to see different forms of art from all over the world, other times it is done without consent and could be turned into a legal issue.

These core characteristics all impacted the art world in one way or another. A specific development that has impacted the arts is the creation of social media, which has turned communication into an interactive dialogue, allowing for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. This is beneficial to the art world because people can now find their niche and create in their communities of interest. It can be unrewarding because people can now criticize each other's artwork and alter it in ways the original creator might disapprove of. An example of this can be Soundcloud where people go to share music, they have created using their personal recording and editing systems. This app is the home of an entire community where people can mix, master and engineer each other's songs and beats to create their own. The app has launched countless careers in the rap industry and inspired millions to start their own. However, it experiences the same downfalls as most social media where people take each other’s work without consent and even leak unreleased music from famous artists. The digital world has had a great impact on all aspects of life, including those of artists who now have a new outlet and way to express themselves.

**Essay Question III.**

**Human enhancement technology converges nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology and cognitive science to improve human performance, attempting to temporarily or permanently overcome the current limitations of the human body through natural or artificial means.**

**Discuss some specific developments in human enhancement technology. Do you have trouble with the idea of these technologies making us stronger, faster, better? Do these advancements come at any cost? Such as privacy issues or a question of morals? What technological innovation do you think we need most and why?**

For a very long time people have fantasized about having superhuman abilities, for centuries, there have been fictional stories where people can do things that are beyond our current capacity. More recently movies have portrayed distant futures where people have developed technologies that have advanced our normal capabilities, making it seem like this is centuries into the future. However, human enhancement technologies have been in development for decades and have had some breakthroughs that most people didn’t think would happen for a very long time.

The recent developments in human enhancement technology are targeted more to medical breakthroughs, like organ transplants, treating illnesses and disabilities and enhancing human characteristics and capacities. 3D printing has been used in the development of new tissue engineering where organs and body parts are built with rapid prototyping techniques. Another development in human enhancement technology is powered exoskeletons, they “dramatically enhance strength and endurance and allow you to carry more supplies when on foot” (Bohan). This can be a huge advantage to the military because soldiers will be able to carry more supplies with them and use their enhanced abilities in combat.  Electronically augmented senses are also another development, this includes everything from eyesight, to brain power and having the ability to know what someone else is thinking. An American author named Michael Chorost wrote about having the future ability of allowing one person to communicate electronically with another person by having a device that measures their neural activity. This would allow a person to know the other’s feelings and physical sensations, creating something he calls “telempathy”.

To many, all of these advancements in human enhancement technologies can seem a little alarming and might make some paranoid, but they seem to bring a promising future. Media will always make new technologies out as something that will eliminate a natural human ability, but these new advancements will help humans reach heights they had only ever dreamed of. I view this as a positive thing and something to look forward to, these new developments, like the internet once was, will seem scary at first and many will try to oppose it but eventually will be invited because of all the benefits it will bring. Some of these developments might unfortunately cost people's’ privacy but a lot of recent developments have done the same, some people will avoid these new technologies and other will be open to it which is how things usually go when something new is developed.

Out of all these innovations, organ transplants would most likely be the most important. This innovation will allow humans to fix any defects we are born with or acquire throughout our lives and it will also increase the amount of years we live. Through things like 3D printing, we would be able to have prosthetics built with synthetic skin and implants that would cost half the price of what they normally cost. All other enhancements can stem from this because it includes every part of the human body. The future of human enhancements as well as the development of new technologies will bring wonders to the human society.

**Citation**

**Essay Question #1**

An instructor’s lecture: DeFelice, A. “255\_WEEK09\_UXD”. Kiely Room 315, Queens College, NY. 30 Oct 2018. Powerpoint/Lecture.

**Essay Question #2**

An instructor’s lecture: DeFelice, A. “255\_WEEK10\_TECH&ART”. Kiely Room 315, Queens College, NY. 30 Oct 2018. Powerpoint/Lecture.

**Essay Question #3**

An instructor’s lecture: DeFelice, A. “255\_WEEK12\_CREATIVE-FUTURE- THINKERS\_”. Kiely Room 315, Queens College, NY. 30 Oct 2018. Powerpoint/Lecture.

Bohan, Elise. “10 Human Body Modifications You Can Expect in the next Decade.” *Big Think*, Big Think, 5 Oct. 2018, bigthink.com/10-human-body-modifications-you-can-expect-in- the-next-decade.