Classism

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Assignment 2

Classism is a real problem in our country where prejudices for or against people belonging to a social class. I chose classism because I have personally been through different social classes and grew out of them towards the higher classes. Seeing firsthand how each class looks at technology and the values they put behind each piece of tech. Typically I have noticed people from lower classes spend their money on high dollar TV’s and little on networking and internet technologies. The higher classes buy more advanced technologies like iPhones, Smart watches, and FitBits.

The digital divide is the gap between people who have access to new technologies like, computers and the internet, and those who do not. Classism is a major contributor for why the digital divide is as big as it currently is. Major advisors and companies focus their technologies on those who can afford new devices yearly. Like Apple, companies are developing new phones or devices that do virtually the same exact thing but at higher prices and quicker processors. People who belong to the lower classes are slower at adopting these pieces of tech but to buy the iPhone 4 today you are looked down upon from the other classes as slow or behind the curve. As the internet grows and web 2.0 takes over, internet viewing devices need faster and faster processors and better cameras to upload such content, especially in 1080p. Spending $600 on a new unlocked phone today is a much bigger impact on those belonging to the lower class than those in the upper class.

86.3% of households earning $75,000 and above per year had Internet access compared to 12.7% of households earning less than $15,000 per year [1]. Those statistics do come off as being obvious but to most Americans who earn less than $15,000 a year, Internet is not a necessity for them. They see the Internet service as a luxury where the other side see it as a necessity for their growth. 20% of rural residents are offline, compared with 14% of both urban and suburban residents [2]. This has a lot to do with where these people live, as most low income residents tend to live in rural areas than in suburban areas. Typically, these places either don’t receive good connections to the internet or at all.

From the information I have gathered, it comes to no surprise that family’s with little funds cannot afford internet services to their homes. Google has done a great job at providing faster internet for the masses, besides not actually fully accomplishing this, and lowering the prices nationwide. Companies like Time Warner Cable, AT&T, ComCast, and many more have increased their speeds and lowered their pricing scheme to prevent their customers from switching to Google. Even though they did not actually cover the U.S. like they expected they do offer free 5Mbps speeds to anyone within their reach.

If we condone classism and do our best to provide internet to the rest of the world we will have more users who can learn new traits they had no interests in before. Google is trying to increase its market share by expanding the internet to areas where it is considered offline. By doing this they get their name recognized as the leader of the internet and the hero they never knew they needed. Google will also increase their ad revenue as they attract more users to their search engine and services. They realize there is a limit on how many ad’s a single user can ingest and to increase their revenues they must increase their user base. To continue classism will only limit the growth of the internet and the collective knowledge of the world. We must break free from our echo chambers and hear what the rest of the world has to say to their peers. The internet is a basic human right and it must be shared with everyone.

Bibliography

[1] <http://legacy.earlham.edu/~beckmst/DigitalDivide/DigitalDivideUS.htm>

[2] <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/11/08/whos-not-online-5-factors-tied-to-the-digital-divide/>