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The Impact of Technology on Society: Past vs. Present

Technology has developed greatly from the past to the present time and has affected many people in society in many different ways. The invention of cars and developing medical technologies have positively impacted society. Although technology has advanced for the good it has also advanced in a negative way for society because of smartphones becoming addictive, virtual reality absorbing peoples lives, and artificial intelligence learning and advancing.

Thousands of people in first and second world countries own smartphones over 60% of the population. For example, the United States which has 81.6% smartphone users and Russia which has 73.6% smartphone users. When phones were first invented in 1849 by innovator Antonio Meucci, the only phone use was to call people. As phones developed eventually you could text people, then take pictures, and then get connected to the internet called smartphones. Many people use smartphones everyday and for long periods of time which absorb a lot of the time in their day that could be used for many other important things. In the website Exploring Topics, Howthward states “Globally, people average 6 hours and 40 minutes of screen time per day” which is longer than a school day. When phones were first made people weren’t able to be distracted by them and they only had one use and purpose to communicate but as they advanced you could do much more than just calling such as watching videos, banking and playing games. It is always nice to have a break from reality but for long periods of time is poor for you and your health. Smartphones also emit a type of visible light called bluelight which has the most energy and shortest wavelengths. This bluelight damages our skin and our eyes which is poor for our health. That is why I think technology has advanced poorly for society.

In 1968, with the help of his students, a Harvard University professor invented the first head-mounted display device in 1968 for use in realistic simulation situations. It was referred to as virtual reality or VR for short. As VR developed into the 1970’s to 1990’s the use was mainly for military, flight, medical, and automotive industry design training. From then to now the use of VR and VR headsets have been able to help with the airforce and to “drive” Mars rovers from earth. It has also developed widely for the use of video game simulations and can be bought by almost anyone who has the money. In VR you can do anything you want including playing video games, art and design, play sports, explore the world, shop, attend concerts, talk and build relationships with AI and much more. You could live a whole virtual life in a virtual world all through a VR headset. Although this sounds cool it can be very addictive and cause lack of social interaction as people spend so much time in the virtual world. Higher Colleges of Technology research10 states, “The negative impacts of VR gaming addiction are like any media addiction. As with any media addiction, playing VR games for hours can cause serious mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety, attention deficit disorder, and in many cases, autism spectrum traits and features, obesity, sleep problems, increased aggression. The main impact of playing VR for long hours is that it may damage the brain in a way that people will not be able to distinguish between VR and reality.”. The information about what VR can do to your brain and your body is not only concerning but non desirable and I see this as a very big negative effect on society.

Many types of technology have developed throughout history, especially the advancement of automotive technology, manufacturing, robotics and artificial intelligence. For example, before the invention of the wheel, horses were the main way to be used as transportation and just as humans being swapped out for technology so had horses although they were still used. These are major technological developments throughout history that have advanced so much for today's society. Although all of these types of technologies have made positive effects, they have also caused unemployment for many people in these industries. In the article What Is Technological Unemployment, Marshall Gunnel states, “Factories started to replace human labor with machines for repetitive and physically demanding tasks. This shift wasn’t just confined to manufacturing, though. It soon spread to other sectors like [telecommunications](https://www.techopedia.com/definition/5570/telecommunications), banking, and retail, where processes became increasingly computerized and automated.”. Today, for example, when checking out at a local grocery store such as Walmart or Shoppers there are very few registers open with humans working them, which is caused by the mass majority of self checkout registers. Many other industrial industries have been advancing to use other Technologies in the workplace other than manual labor such as robotics being used for welding, automotive and other types of factory workers as robots are more precise when doing these jobs. Banktellers and clerks, drive-throughs, receptionists, taxi drivers, phone operators and many more other jobs are being taken over by Ai and other technology.

In conclusion, there are many important reasons to consider when thinking about how technology has developed and advanced for society in a positive and negative way. When viewing how technology has changed society with its developments you can not ignore the disadvantages, health damaging and addictive behaviors because of them though. They are very important changes in our society and I hope that in the future there will be more change and development that will become more positive.

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