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New Technologies 255 Fall 2018

12/11/18

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.**

Technology in this day and age is undoubtedly influencing every aspect of our lives. Especially now more than ever we are performing tasks using technology, and one of the biggest benefits is that it facilitates people all over the world in carrying out ordinary activities which otherwise would be done the hard way. With all that is available to us like social media, forums, GPS ect.. professionals like user experience designers are there to work out the kinks. The primary job of a UXD is enhancing user satisfaction by improving accessibility, usability, and pleasure provided in the interaction between the user and the product. For example someone designing an app would hire a UXD in order to maximize the over all usability of the product ensuring that the app will interact with its users in the most efficient way possible. Also one of the most instrumental aspects of their job is to make improvements such as updates to clear up glitches that produce problems in the product. Some techniques that a UXD uses are task analysis or user scenario, flow charts, wire frame design, they even make personas to help ensure it is a real life situation that someone will encounter. Although there are many positive aspects of UXD there are ethical quandaries that have unintentional consequences producing real issues affecting everyone. Principals such as human cost, devaluing work, deskilling, influencing our behavior, erosion of privacy and the dangers of distraction are already eminent. In the case of Foxxcon human cost and devaluing of work pushed factory worker Tian Yu and 17 others to attempt suicide. A large company like Foxxcon was dependent on human labor, and in order to keep up with production goals they strategically tailored everything down to the second of the day. Management enforced punishment-oriented corporate culture, unrealistic production quotas, and conditioning “work philosophies” to meet goals. In this unhealthy situation human costs significantly outweighed any technique to become more efficient. It has come to a point where technology is starting to affect people because UXD’s are trained to predict any and every variable connected directly to how people will then respond to a product. The persuasive design concept focuses on influencing human behavior through products or service characteristics (cite). Since most technology is interactive UXD’s must study social and psychological aspects for maximum usability. These characteristics become dangerous when applied to massive groups of people because it can yield unexpected and even negative outcomes. In a situation where persuasive design comes into effect in a regular persons life is when someone uses Facebook. This social media site would not be as popular as it is today if users didn’t generate it’s content. When this content is liked, shared, commented on, or even watched it gets stored and reviewed by analytics, which then starts generating specific material for the user to enjoy. Although this idea seems great for advertisers and others alike it becomes problematic when the user isn’t really navigating the page the way they would normally, instead they get bombarded leading them down a rabbit hole that isn’t even of their own making.

**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 come to have significant impacts on our world, especially in this day and age where convenience and accessibility is key. One field that has been strongly affected is the international creative community. Now more than ever people who once had small ideas can branch out, build, and most importantly make their dreams a reality. Digital technology has massively changed art and entertainment industries mainly because of its inherent characteristics of being electronic, networked, and interconnected. By being able to turn physical art into an electronic form gives professional and amateur artists an enormous opportunity to extend the impact of their creations to where they didn’t exist before. Take the film and photography industry when digital forms came out everyone was trying to get their hands on tech because all the techniques of a professional was formatted in the most simplest ways that literally anyone can create work on their own. By being networked the creative community can spread their art world wide through the Internet and mobile devices becoming instant and available to millions of people with just a click. For example an author who is publishing a book is not only limited to the physical version anymore, an e-book can be digitally formatted to make purchasing this item more accessible to potential customers. The same thing can occur with music, reproducing songs by recording and posting on a social media platform can extend an artist’s impact significantly than only doing live performances. Finally it’s interconnected, putting any kind of work up on the Internet opens the work to public interpretation, and even modification. For instance the popular social media platform Facebook has been so successful due to being interconnected, it brings people together and promotes user generated content for those who want to share, communicate, discover new ideas, or even those who are looking to bring attention or traffic to their work. Creating a place for engagement has inspired up-coming professionals and gives them a viable outlet to enter the market with advantages of reduced start up capital due to the affordability of equipment, large-scale exhibition and distribution thanks to the network and even an abundance of feed back from it being interconnected. Although the benefits seem endless the digital transition brings up unforeseen circumstances that have to be taken into account. Issues one can encounter when engaging with the digital world include the question of authenticity whether or not people consider the artist or art work to be real, some people argue that the spotlight of those who go through years of practicing technique and training is stolen because digital technology can attain the same results with a far less skilled artist. This also changes perspective on the overall quality of the work; is a digital work valued as much as a human created work? Other issues people get into deal with bringing work into a space to be experienced, many museums in small cities are ill equipped and do not have the right equipment to support the work itself to be displayed causing that to become a barrier to those who would like to bring their art to be experienced by the public.

**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?**

It’s hard to imagine the future of our world when so many life-altering developments are in the works. Take the generation of our parents, the color T.V. was not released until the mid 1960’s. If someone were to tell them in sixty years there would be the Internet, driverless cars on the road, and automated speech/ face recognition services most of them would laugh and mumble something biased against robots. One could say they have added to the increased phenomena of science fiction’s dystopic features where technology develops to a point that it gets to be out of control. However, as Neil DeGrass Tyson proposes maybe all the chaos can be bypassed between then and now by making mid course corrections ensuring the safety and success of the process. Currently developments in technology like 3D printing, Bio-printing, and nanotechnology has sparked new innovative ways to fix issues that would otherwise leave people fresh out of luck. Human enhancement technology can help people treat illnesses, disabilities, and even just become an accessory to expand our capabilities. For example our healthcare system has been working with 3D printing in a medical setting to provide those who need specific implants and prosthetics the option to have one scientifically made instead of having to wait for a transplant/donor. Another groundbreaking development in the world of 3D printing is Lee Cronin’s findings on reactionware in the realm of synthesizing prescription drugs. A world where machines can make controlled substances and other medication within the comfort of your own home will definitely come with pros and cons. Benefits are enormous for one the democratization of digital chemistry can help regular people do away with the inconvenience of calling your doctor to order a new prescription that has to be made then picked up at the pharmacy. Or even in a situation where an astronaut can be in space and develop a sickness that needs pharmaceuticals to be cured. Ethically speaking a world where important things like drugs becoming available at the touch of a button is highly dangerous, things like heavy monitoring must take place, along with correct security measures have to be taken in order to ensure the safe and regulated use of such a product. One of my favorite innovations of technology is that it can alleviate those who are physically limited and give them the opportunity to be whole again. An explanation of this is book author Michael Chorost experience with technology through his lost of hearing at age 36. Luckily he was able to have a cochlear implant that embedded a small computer chip in his head to get back his hearing. This tech was able to stimulate auditory nerve endings to trigger sounds that can be processed by the brain to create a meaningful connection. Chorost also brings up the idea of “telempathy” by using a device implanted in ones body to communicate electronically with another person, and one day possibly even allowing people to share feelings through this technology. Although “telempathy” is out of our reach at the moment, it can be beneficial to the military to keep tabs on soldiers in risky situations but also bring up serious costs. Humans were made with a maximum capacity and there is only so much information that we can retain at any given point, technology has given us the opportunity to be super human but relying so heavily on these new innovations can take away from normalcy promoting a non stop needing of connection to perform simple tasks. In regards to humans merging with technology it can be seen as a double edged sword, the benefits are endless meanwhile the costs could create a tragic loss of privacy or even ones sense of self.

**Citations**

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Essay Q2:

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