MEDST 225: New Technologies

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Within the early 1940’s the idea of Collaboration and Brainstorming technologies were first conceived with the idea of simplified exchange of data on the go. It was Vannevar Bush, an American engineer, inventor and administrator, that first spoke of an invention known as the “Memex” in 1945. The memex was designed to be a personal computer that would store each of the books, records, and communications of the owner so that they may be more easily referenced as well as accessible. With the concept of simplified exchange of data, the memex was meant to be a collaborative database to assist the memory of the user and would inspire what would become the future of later collaborative technologies.

It wasn’t until 1968 when Dr. Joseph, Carl Robnett Lickidler, an American psychologist and computer scientist, spoke of the computer as a communication device that could be used to help users collaborate online. During Lickidler’s term as head of the United States Advanced Research Projects Agency (otherwise known as ARPA) that lead to the creation of the ARPANET as the basis blueprint for the internet. In 1969, the idea of collaboration between computers became more relevant with the interconnection of four university computers and the ability to expand network sizes in the 1970’s. This collaboration of computers with one another became known as “office automation” that would create, collect, store, manipulate, and relay basic information digitally. A main example of office automation could be found in the local area network (more commonly known as LAN) that connected computers within a limited area to one another. Originally, LAN networks would require the same Ethernet cables connected to collaborate between a unit to another but with the later advantages of wireless connections and hotspots, wired connections do not nearly limit the uses of the collaboration as they once did. The advantages of office automation would include completing tasks faster, eliminating the need for larger staffs, a lesser storage requirement for data, and the ability to update date simultaneously if one of the users are not available.

From 1974-1978, the New Jersey Institute of Technology would develop the first real-time surveys, threaded replies, and group structured would be created through the electronic information exchange system (otherwise known as EIES). In the 1980’s the technology of EIES would be known as “groupware” as systems made by a computer would unite and support groups of people with a common task or goal digitally. A common example of groupware functions is similar to that of a message board or modern day multi user messaging apps. EIES would also help create what would be known as “EIES soap opera’s” where users would show stories written by multiple service users alerting many to the work-life balance issues they dealt with. Despite the innovations of EIES as a system, the system was shut down in 2000 due to New Jersey’s Institute of Technologies inability to support multimedia or file sharing capabilities.

In 1990, the creation of Lotus Notes, Microsoft Exchange Server and Outlook would rerelease the popularity of the groupware software. During this time period as well, collaboration as well as brainstorming became far more popular with the formation of online communities and the term of “social software”. Social software was a term used to describe how the new technologies would support group interaction and how the creation of online identity became more relevant. In 1997, the creation of AOL instant messenger (otherwise known as AIM) would unite many individuals of different interests to communicate more easily regardless of their goals or interest.

From the 2000’s to current day, the collaboration technologies as well as brainstorming technologies have innovated into many different social media websites as well as different applications. In 2004, Mark Zuckerberg would release the website of Facebook that was originally intended to become a way for former classmates of a college to interact, but would in time evolve to include modern business communication for different projects instantly. In 2007, the creation of Dropbox by two MIT students, would allow access of various businesses to create data storage units for users to access equally. In 2016, Avid Pro Tools, a computer application used by many audio producers and engineers as one of the best recording systems, upgraded to the capability of allowing musicians and producers collaborate from their own separate computers.

In retrospect, collaboration technologies do today still follow the idea of simplified exchange of information as Vannevar Bush originally imagined but also became far more innovative across all user’s interests. Today, distance is not nearly as much of an issue as in the 1940’s because there are many different units of communication to express one’s ideas while receiving feedback. With access to the internet, users today are able to communicate with other like-minded individuals across the globe instantly and progress their ideas in the same time period. In conclusion, the collaboration technologies and brainstorm technologies have improved to an extend that they are no longer a means to spread information wirelessly to one another but have become an essential way for users as a people to adapt and evolve through one another more easily.

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