Matt Ritchie
CS 456
Exam 2

1.   I do not believe it is possible for information to be truly free on the internet without the whole thing going to heck in a handbasket. For information to be truly free would mean that anyone could say anything without censorship even if it were not true, because information does not always have to be fact and truly free information very well contain a lot of bias and lies. This would lead to a lot of false information and spoofed content on the internet, which would eventually get so cluttered and confusing that it would be almost unusable to anyone trying to find out the facts. If information ever does become truly free on the internet, I believe that there will have to be some sort of logging system to keep track of who posts what. One such system could, for everything posted on the internet, keep a record of the Mac ID the computer that posted it as well as the name of the computer's owner or company where it gets used.

        True net neutrality, as discussed in class, means that all data being transmitted is equal and that every packet should be treated the same. This would mean that applications which require a lot of data, i.e. Netflix or YouTube, would experience much lower speeds and annoyingly long buffer times. In contrast, things that require smaller amounts of data, like loading web pages, would be able to move much faster because they have an equal claim to the bandwidth. Most of society would be unhappy under these conditions, as they impede the internet as they are used to it. However, the original purpose of the internet was the swift communication of information. If we take this to be the basic purpose of the internet, then a government-enforced net neutrality would improve the basic purpose of the internet because the transmission of written knowledge would be given a higher priority in the data stream than it has now, and therefore be delivered much faster.

        Private companies such as social media and news sites do not strictly have an obligation or responsibility the monitor the content that is submitted to them or display on the internet. However, they must implement some form of censorship if they value their continued existence. For example, news sites not necessarily need to post articles containing true information or take a neutral stance in a conflict such as hate speech, but the public will no longer see them as reliable and thus may demand that they check their facts or quit using the service altogether. Likewise, a social media site primarily used for adult content may a sharp decline in their users if they decide to band such content going forward. Therefore, it may be on a site by site basis, but the public will demand change if there is an undesirable change in content that the private company hosts on their website.

Matt Ritchie
CS 456
Exam 2

2.   I do not feel that technology has changed what it means to be human, so much as it has changed how society gossips. Certainly, bullying exists, but the majority of society retains at least some amount of consideration for others feelings, which can be shown civil or polite interactions between people despite the fact that they may have negative feelings for each other underneath. There is no denying that hurtful content can be spread around online, but I do not see this as any different than spreading gossip in person or talking about people behind their backs. Technology does bring new forms malicious behavior into consideration, such as deep fakes or other information altering tools, yet the pre-internet analog of such behaviors would be akin to starting rumors that are blatantly false or outright malicious. Participating in these online or offline forms still harms your reputation as a good person, but the line between acceptable and unacceptable behavior is and always was subject to personal perspective and debate. I feel that our online personas are already indistinguishable from our real personalities However, as I talked about before, our somewhat anonymous online personalities are only one part of who we really are. Surely the anonymity of the internet tends to draw out the negative and sometimes spiteful side of people, but this side of us that we normally keep hidden is still apart of who we really are. The way we go about social interactions may have altered a bit, but with all the pre-internet and post-internet analogues in behaviors, I do not feel that what it means to be human has changed very much.

3.	There is no doubt the technology continue become more advanced as time goes on, similar to how new technologies are continuously integrated ever more tightly into society as the public relies on these new tools more and more. Currently artificial intelligence software is constantly being improved, however it does not get any more rights than a printer does. If it ever it's the point of receiving rights, I believe that would only occur when generalized AIs reach human enough functionality to go seek out new tasks and work that they can perform instead of just the specialized tasks they are created for at the present. That level of advancement may bring about societal changes and call into question how we should use such technology, but at that point the advanced technology would still be more of a companion rather than a problem even after evolving past a simple solution. Technology itself will become the problem when it crosses the line from working with us as equals to taking care of us as our superiors. The clearest picture I can paint about such a world would be a dystopian future where humans rely on technology so much that they struggle to live, if not simply die, if the technology were to be suddenly removed. For example, that one Disney movie where the humans were living on a gigantic spaceship and the robots did absolutely everything for them. In that example, the spaceship eventually returned to the ruined Earth and the humans had to rebuild on land, but they still relied upon the robots help to reestablish civilization despite their success. This means that if all of their robotic technology had perished as well, the humans would not be able to cope, and simply die off. Given our current society, I see that the advancement of technology, in respect to tools containing AI software, contains a self-limiting factor such that unless the very nature of our society changes, the technology will never become our equals nor will it be able to become our superiors. We may end up creating hyper-advanced tools that can perform tasks completely for us, such as fetching groceries, cooking meals, or perhaps even getting us to our jobs before we fully wake up in the morning, but it will never progress beyond that as long as we humans remain unaccepting of what is different. Humans discriminate against each other over such small reasons that there would be a technological plateau where we will not allow computer-driven systems to surpass as long as we do not accept each other, let alone allowing computer systems to be considered anywhere equal to even the lowest humans. Therefore, I believe technology will naturally remain beneficial to society by itself in the form of advanced tools, because until we solve our own issues racism and discrimination, society as a whole will likely not dare to attempt the creation of artificial people. Ironically, the biggest hindrance to technological advancement past a certain point will likely turn out to be human issues with other humans.