**Technological Influence on Society**

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In modern society, technological advancements have influenced and changed how people communicate, work, and access information. The development of the telephone in the past compared to present-day mobile devices filled with instant messaging apps, has led to communication being more rapid, easily accessible, and convenient, thus, eliminating geographical limitations and providing a new level of global connectivity, however, besides the fact that technological development has become tightly knitted to not only one part of daily life but many others as well. Issues like deterioration in social skills, mental well-being, and workplace issues have emerged in addition to the expansion of technology. This paper examines how technology usage has influenced and changed communication in the modern world, the workplace environment, and the level of information access and consumption among people, and it does so by highlighting both the essential benefits and the great issues brought about by technological evolution.

The evolution of technological advancements has profoundly altered communication in modern society through its enhanced efficiency, accessibility, and significant integration in today's world. Historically, the telegraph paved the way for the telephone to emerge, which is extensively considered to be the factor significantly paving the way for further technological advancements that we see today. According to Elon University's article "1870s - 1940s Telephone," The first primary phone was invented in 1849 by Italian innovator Antonio Meucci. Within 50 years, it became an essential item for many homes and offices. The device's continuous tethering has impacted the item's flexibility and privacy. Written in the Forbes article "The Role of Technology in the Evolution of Communication" by Sol Rogers, Motorola transformed it into a mobile phone in 1973. Nokia released a mobile phone with QWERTY keyboards in 1996, and by 2010, android phones were touchscreen-only. It kickstarted a chain of developments, transforming communication forever. The infamous creator of Apple, Steve Jobs, laid the foundation for the "aesthetics of modern smartphones… before iPhone's "flip phones" and phones with a split keyboard and screen were the norm" (Rogers, 2019). From the International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, the article "How Technology Influences Communications," written by Ibrahim Alhadlaq, shares many insights. The introduction of the portable telephone, known as the cellphone, revolutionized communication, enabling people to stay connected with others from any location in many ways: voice calls, text messaging, and emailing. With internet and social media access at your fingertips, smartphones enable access to social networking sites where people can share instant messages and photos. Due to the accessibility and availability of cell phones, they have become the most widespread means of communication for many people and are a necessary item in society today (Alhadlaq, 2016, p. 960). Since the mid-1990s, the Internet has transformed how we look at communication. With the rise of instantaneous communication by electronic mail, rapid messaging, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) - allows users to make phone calls over the Internet rather than a traditional phone call line, two-way interactive video calls, discussion forums like Quora, Reddit, Facebook groups, etc. Also, because of the Internet, we now have blogs and social networking, which can be done through social media apps. The Internet has made staying in touch faster and easier and "simplified the way we process designing, editing, and producing documents with minimum shortcomings" (Rogers, 2019; Alhadlaq, 2016, p. 961). Email revolutionized the way we now preserve sending letters. Society has replaced handwritten correspondence with digital letters (emails) in personal and business interactions. Nowadays, email is commonly used in the work environment to communicate with clients and employees and by educational institutions to reach students and parents. Email has made relaying messages faster than traditional handwritten correspondences, and since most email services are free to the masses, they are cost-effective for users. Like email, social networking improved communication speed, lowered costs by eliminating physical communication methods, and made interactions overcome geographical barriers without needing postage and/or office visits. The emergence of social networking platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, now known as X, has allowed people to connect with everyone they know to total strangers. In short, Technology has improved the speed and quality of communication while also contributing to the immense reduction of the cost of communication (Alhadlaq, 2016, pp. 960-961).

In the last decade, the evolution of technology has been rapidly producing technologies that, as a society, we would not believe the possibility of the current inventions. Wearable technology was launched in 1999 with the first hands-free mobile headset through the invention of the first version of Bluetooth (Bluetooth 1.0). From there, all types of wireless wearable tech have evolved over the years. Now, smartwatches, Bluetooth earbuds, headphones, and more have given people the ability to answer calls on the go, while driving, and through normal day-to-day activities. These devices have become a major part of people's daily lives. Virtual Reality (VR) has only been around since 2016. However, it has become an additional tool for communication, especially for businesses. VR now enables people to connect in the same space across vast distances while saving travel costs and time. VR is said to help facilitate better communication by capturing non-verbal cues like tone, body language, and gestures that enhance participants' understanding of emotions and intents. VR removes all distractions and people so the user can be fully focused in the moment. It claims that it potentially increases attention span by 25% when attending meetings in the VR world compared to video conferencing. Research suggests that VR supports better retention and application of information and that it serves as a universal communication forum for overcoming language barriers and simplifying complicated technical terms (Rogers, 2019).

There is no doubt that technological advancement in society has made communication faster, more convenient, and more extensively accessible than ever before, yet with most changes, there have shown to be both negative and positive consequences on humankind's communication skills in the ability to connect with another person on a human level due to the integration of technology in our daily lives. In an article by Medium, "The Impact of Technology on Communication Skill," they go into detail regarding the negatives and positives technology has on human connection and interventions a person can take to retain a healthy balance between face-to-face conversation and technology. Society has negatively shown a dependency on technology, and we have become overly reliant on it for communication, which has led to a decline in face-to-face interactions, a decrease in the quality of social interactions, and weak social skills. Digital communication has been shown that communicating digitally has resulted in difficulty in conveying emotions, an inability to read non-verbal cues, connect with others on a deeper level, and a lack of empathy, and has resulted in a lack of emotional depth in our interactions. There are several prominent positive effects technology has had on communication. It has given everyone in the world the ability to stay connected and make connections with people worldwide that humanity could never have seen possible. Technology has fostered cultural understanding and an increase in global empathy. Technology's ability to provide instant communication and video chat has improved communication by aiding and making it easier for people to sustain long-distance relationships and maintain connections with family and friends who live far away. The article points out the importance of actively making time for quality, face-to-face conversations to maintain human connection in a digital world and suggests incorporating more opportunities for face-to-face interactions into daily life, like planning a coffee date regularly with friends. We should not get stuck in the convenience of technology and dismiss the value of face-to-face interactions, but spending time together and doing so can help prevent technology from interfering with human connection. Also, when communicating through technology, it is essential to be mindful of tone and written language and to pay attention to nonverbal cues like emojis and/or punctuation to avoid miscommunication. Also, be mindful of how much time you spend on technology, unplugging from it when necessary and prioritizing other activities. Lastly, when communicating through technology or in person, the article gives tips on how to improve your communication skills by actively listening - concentrating on what the person is saying, being aware of nonverbal cues - such as tone of voice and body language, being mindful of the use of language in written communication, and continuously practicing in "improving our communication skills to be able to strengthen our relationships, both online and offline" (Frost, 2023).

In the last two decades, digital technology has played a significant role in how society accesses information. The digital world has transformed how people produce, deliver, consume, and process news received worldwide. A LinkedIn article, "How Digital Technology Changed the Way We Consume & Process News," written by Urszula Gajko, discusses how the digital age has changed news consumption, the ability for anyone to share information on any social platforms, the effects of information overload on people today, the issue of algorithms, and the ultimate component to tackling the negatives. The advancement of mobile technologies and smartphones has gradually dominated the local news channel and the average morning paper when it comes to getting caught up on world news. Social media and sharing platforms like Facebook, Twitter (Known as X), YouTube, and more have given society constant access to information. From Pew Research Center, an article by Elisa Shearer, "More than eight-in-ten Americans get news from digital devices," shares that digital devices have become the most common way Americans access their news, divided into a few different pathways. In this article, Elisa Shearer notes:

The platforms that Americans say they prefer to get their news on are, "Roughly half (52%) of Americans say they prefer a digital platform – whether it is a news website (26%), search (12%), social media (11%) or podcasts (3%). About a third say they prefer television (35%), and just 7% and 5% respectively say they prefer to get their news on the radio or via print" (Shearer, 2021)

However, with the Internet spreading news faster, the ability to access information in a matter of seconds, given by multiple different avenues simultaneously, has resulted in a new phenomenon that occurs when users consume too much information. It can cause the user to experience the stress of **information overload**. Information overload can cause the user to feel more confused rather than informed on a certain topic, impair focus, and even trigger or increase anxiety. A statistic provided in the article states, "According to Pew Research, 20% of individuals feel overloaded with information. This means 1 in 5 people are operating in a state of mental fog" (Gajko, 2024). Today, apps and social media have the power to determine and personalize our news feeds according to our interests by using previous searches and tracking our behavior as information to tailor specifically to you because of algorithms, leaving a person stuck in an information filter bubble. To escape that bubble, we need to know what both sides of the story say about an issue by actively taking control of our digital media and news consumption and stepping out of the filtered bubble. To combat information overload in general, the article states that the best way to clear our minds is by taking a couple of hours a day to unplug and be surrounded by the real world.

Not long ago, most businesses filed documents, stored them in folders, and kept them in cabinets; now, work environments have become paperless and entirely technologically run. The evolution of technology has completely transformed the way society operates now; it has introduced a new way to work (remote working), a new integration of AI, has evolved office dynamics, has shown disadvantages and advantages, and has raised concern about security and privacy, according to the article, "How Has New Technology Affected the Modern Workplace?" by YAROOMS. This transformation began in the '60s and '70s when the workplace functioned solely with typewriters, rotary phones, and filing cabinets and was manual labor. By the ‘80s, the introduction of personal computers shifted workplaces to become digital, and by the ‘90s, the Internet, mobile phones, and email reformed communication. The growing focus on always staying connected began to take shape, enabling instant messaging and remote collaboration; however, it caused blurred lines over work-life boundaries in society. In this new millennium, cloud computing tools like virtual private networks (VPNs), Zoom, Google Workspace, and other project management platforms have paved the way for optimized workflows and flexibility in work arrangements that enable employees to work effectively and collaboratively from anywhere, which led to the rise of remote work, Technology in the workplace has proven to show "enhanced productivity, improved communication, enabled remote work, and opened up new avenues for innovation" (YAROOM, 2024). The same claims are made about artificial intelligence (AI) tools, which free employees to concentrate more on strategic tasks. Space management tools and apps are now crucial in businesses to help optimize "office layouts, automate desk bookings, and track space utilization... allowing companies to make data-driven decisions, monitor occupancy levels, assists in contact tracing... and helps reduce costs... and creates safer work environments to overall better employee experience" (YAROOM, 2024). Some disadvantages of having tech in the workplace are shared in a blueprism article written by Junaid Zahid, "The Impact of Technology in the Workplace." It expresses that upgrade interruptions on systems can hinder workflow, there can be dependency risks on technology systems, which can affect productivity if systems fail, and too much digital communication can cause workers to become averse to face-to-face communication, leading to communication breakdowns that slow down business productivity. The advantages are enhanced communication, faster workflow, increased productivity, and maintained compliance by ensuring a workplace always meets the influx of regulatory requirements and a consistent approach to all work. Technology reshaping work environments brings new security and privacy risks when working digitally by increasing risks of data breaches, employee privacy violations, weaknesses in cloud and IoT devices, and cybersecurity threats. To prevent those risks, companies "must implement strong security measures like encryption, multi-factor authentication, and a "zero trust" approach while respecting employee privacy" (YAROOM, 2024).

In short, these findings demonstrated the multiple impacts of technological advancements on society’s daily life. From the effects of digital communication and the internet, the positive and negative impacts on humanity, the shift of modern life being fully ingratiated in a digital world, influencing the way we access and consume information, the strains of information overload and algorithms, to transforming our work environments, its advantages, and the challenges that result because of technology and the resolutions that can be taken.

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