

This entire semester has been an absolute dumpster fire. Even before this quarantine began, I was having some mental health issues that have only been made worse by the current pandemic. However, after much discussion with my doctor, self reflection, and a medication update, I am now doing much better and have since adapted to the quarantine lifestyle, if there even is such a thing.

I have taken online classes before and, under normal circumstances, consider them to be a cheap excuse for having more students able to take a class without spending money on classrooms and desk space, so I was a bit weary and downtrodden to learn that this class was going digital. However, after taking this class online, I must say that I can understand the appeal of digital classrooms because, despite this semester, I did in fact learn quite a bit.

I learned about the various theories in digital technology, which is quite astonishing. I learned about the long tail theory of technology usage, and how I fit into the various categories of tech usage. I learned that I generally am one of the later to adapt to a new technology. Due to the price, I am always a bit reluctant to spend lots of money on technology that winds up not performing at the advertised speeds. Coming from a rural area, I never really had a reliable internet connection. We had an internet service, but it was ridiculously slow. Now they have satellite internet and get a whopping 50 GB of data each month. This is part of the reason why I live in Chico, 30 minutes south of my parent's place, so that I can have some better internet.

I also developed a greater understanding of technology policy. I learned more about Title II Net Neutrality, which forces internet service providers to keep the web open for all websites, as well as efforts to block it by former Verizon chairman and current FCC head Ajit Pai. I had learned a bit about this previously from watching Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, and had already signed the petition asking Mr. Pai, and the oversized cowboy hat we elected to congress Doug LaMalfa, to keep Net Neutrality. I don't think they got my emails.

I believe that internet access should be a public utility, just like water and electricity. This was necessary *before* COVID-19 hit, but the current pandemic has highlighted this digital divide more than ever. More than ever, people need the internet to do their jobs. It shouldn't be provided by buses in low income communities, it shouldn't be limited to satellite-internet only, it should be everywhere. It would help lessen the digital divide in this country, and has the potential to be an investment with high returns, as the more people with access to the internet, the more they will be able to use products that are connected to the internet.

Of all of the most bizarre trends we have covered in this class, the Internet of Things is the most strange to me. I can only somewhat understand the appeal of wifi connected things. It is bad enough that my phone data is being sent to various advertising agencies, I don't need a wifi scale to also let the world know what else it can sell me. It is an amazing feat, building the internet of things. It is weird as all get out, but it is amazing.

This semester has been a rough semester overall. But, in spite of everything, I thoroughly enjoyed this class. I was able to get my life in order and my head on straight, as well as learn a bit about some cool technology. Thank you, Dr. Meadows. Have a good summer!