CS1081 TEDD INDIVIDUAL REPORT

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Individual Contribution.

During the making of this group project, my individual contributions included:

1. The idea of "War" as the greatest contributor to modern computing. I wanted to provide a fresh outlook on the prompt we received as I assumed that the majority of answers submitted for this would come in the form of individuals such as Alan Turing, Steve Jobs, George Boole etc. I felt that war was a valid suggestion as it was the catalyst which set into motion many of the key elements of the modern computing world. Technology is a fickle sector and early failures or shortcomings can lead to a competing alternative to find favour and become the preferred solution. If this had been the case with many of the technologies, we have today who's to say how the world of computing look today.
2. In addition, I was part of the presentation team for our group. As I had had previous experience in public speaking I made suggestions as to how we could best make our presentation and gave oratory tips to allow our presentation to be done in the most efficient manner.

The Telegraph as a Predecessor to the Modern Internet.

As part of our presentation our group (A6-Bit's Please) made reference to the telegraph as the predecessor to the modern internet and instant communication. I would like to further examine this point and explain how I feel the introduction of the telegraph and its spread in popularity had an influence on today's modern communication and computing landscape.

Early examples of a telegraph system could be seen in revolutionary France's semaphore telegraph system. Designed for the purpose of conveying intelligence information rapidly around the rapidly expanding country it gave the newly found internal intelligence services the ability to form an integrated network of anti-partisan units with a central intelligence bank. The idea of rapid long distance communication soon spread to Prussia where it was adopted by the Prussian government. It soon spread across the rest of Europe. This necessity for a communication system is an example of societal determinism of technology as a system was developed to fill a necessary societal void.

However, across the Atlantic it had gained little traction until the American Civil War, by which time the electric telegraph had been invented. When the Confederacy seized what little an existing network was in place at the time Abraham Lincoln was prompted to act and formed the Army Signal Corp. The telegraph can be seen as a predecessor to the modern internet in the manner in which it revolutionised communication. No longer was written word the fastest method of communication. Now a network had been created which allowed communications to be transmit virtually instantaneously across vast spaces of land which was vital in large countries such as the United States. In the US travel from one side of the country to the other would take days whereas the telegraph removed this significant delay for vital information. In this sense we can see a parallel to the internet which itself is an integrated communications network albeit nowadays more versatile. The spread of this instantaneous communication system created a self-fulfilling demand whereby the spread of this system led to a societal demand for faster and more efficient communication which I believe has contributed to the development of modern computing and internet communications.

The telegraph can be seen to show a technological influence on society. It developed a culture of instant information. It introduced the world to a new manner of thinking and changed the communication culture of the time. With an interest in such a system now developed it was guaranteed that societal influences and pressures would inspire inventors, engineers and scientists to investigate ways of improving on the existing system or even to develop a newer replacement. This is an example of societal determinism, whereby a societal desire prompted a technological development.