

Dear Mr. Berry,

In this year alone, the recorded ownerships of personal computers has reached 15% of all Americans, as reported by the United States Bureau of Labor. It is highly likely that computer ownership will continue to be an accepted part of modern society, much like the technology of the past. Like Wendell Berry, we recognize the threats of the computer's increasing presence in our daily lives. Berry's words provide a fresh perspective on the role of technology in our world. He notes in his renowned yet controversial essay, "Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer", his personal reasoning for sticking to pencil and paper rather than modern alternatives. His strong argument resonates with readers dependent on the products of our increasingly technological world. Technology should be approached cautiously, with knowledge of its effects.

As an environmentally conscious individual, Berry takes precautions to ensure that his lifestyle is one that prioritizes the state of the planet. The manufacturing and discarding of computers utilizes nonrenewable resources that ultimately pollute our earth; a topic Berry touches on in his list of requirements for an unlikely, ideal replacement for his typewriter. Not only are the effects of the computer's production process important to Berry, but the amount of energy used by each model. He notes that the new technology should use less energy than its predecessor, making it both efficient and environmentally friendly.

The constant replacement of older models creates a cycle that is costly and ultimately detrimental. Consumers may feel obligated to purchase new devices as they are released. Berry recognizes this consumer "propaganda" and the negative impacts this has on the customers' wallets. The demand for computers will, without a doubt, continue to increase each year, making it beneficial for manufacturers to increase the price. Not only is this problematic for the consumer, but it promotes an aspect of technology Berry advises we avoid: costly products with no real worth.

Berry stresses that no computer or future technological innovations should stand in the way of any existing good in the world. In recent years, the telephone has become more mobile and easily accessible, making communication less personal. It seems likely that this is the direction that we will head with the computer, as email becomes a more recognized form of communication. The fact that email uses letters on a screen to display a message rather than someone's unique voice on a telephone makes

communication even less personal. This further validates Berry's opposition to purchasing a computer of his own.

With regard to the inevitable growth of computer usage worldwide, we strongly advise that consumers of technology consider Berry's perspective. As of today, there are no technological innovations that have met, much less exceeded, Berry's standards. Granted, as technology continues to develop and grow, there will one day be a machine that Berry would deem acceptable to replace his trusted typewriter.

We highly anticipate the response of Mr. Berry, as we respect his work immensely.

*The Wendell Barry Fan Club*  
United States  
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