In Response to Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry’s essay, “Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer,” proved to be not only an interesting conversation piece, but a provocative look at how humans as individuals have opened our minds and lives to computers. Throughout this essay, Berry defends his choice to use pen, paper, a typewriter, and his wife to aid him in his writing process, instead of the computer that people were suggesting he purchase. He chose to have his wife critique his work because she knew his style, something a computer could not do. A computer identifies grammatical errors, but cannot detect the essence of the piece. Despite technology’s advantages, it does not possess the ability to judge work based on content and is not suitable for a writer’s unique creative process.

It is essential to remember that technology has its place in the modern world. It allows the user to explore places never before seen, such as the bottom of the ocean, the moon, and inside the human brain. Computers are growing in popularity, but are not yet common enough for ideal connection to others. If a computer breaks, it is somewhat difficult to find someone who knows how to fix it. In addition, a computer cannot access emotion, one of the crucial parts of writing or any form of art, and never hold the personality of a handwritten or typewritten piece. Even the paper tells a story just as important as the writing itself. The writer’s handwriting makes the piece different from any other and individualizes the creator.

Creating stories is a very organic, human process. Centuries ago, oral tradition was the most commonly used way to share ideas, and from it, masterpieces such as Homer’s *The Odyssey* have been created. New forms of creating stories have arisen throughout time, but all are personalized processes for the author. A computer does not offer that process, and the creation of the writing itself happens in some way before it is brought to a computer, which only makes a finalized, perfected copy of what was done before.

The ability to understand the emotion and depth of writing is something only a human has. A computer will not necessarily improve written work, but will make it easier to share. A computer does not have a place in a writer’s natural creative process because of this. Emotion is one of the most significant aspects of writing, and should not be compromised by use of modern technology. Despite our stance, we are typing this on a computer.