Has it ever occurred to you that the use of computers consumes the lives of individuals in many ways every day? Wendell Berry’s argument against progressive technologies, computers, and their use is justified because that type of “progress” consumes individuals in a modern society, creating a culture of waste. This culture necessarily results in, as Berry points out, the rape of the natural world.

In Berry’s article, “Why I am not going to buy a computer” he speaks out against computers and new technology. He argues that technology consumes the lives of individuals in our society. While communication is an important aspect in people’s lives, the use of technology as a replacement for interpersonal communication reduces social interaction between people. Instead of interacting with families or others in social situations, the advent of technology has diminished proximal communication. We no longer feel compelled to uphold social norms and courtesies; as a result, individual markings of “character,” like patience, kindness, and courtesy, are significantly less important than in previous decades. Instead, most individuals act on wants not needs, preferring impulsivity to patience and self-promotion in lieu of kindness and courtesy.

As the value of specific positive character aspects like patience is reduced, the individuals in a society come together to create a culture of waste. As Berry points out, new technology—like computers—are disposable, designed to be used for only a few months before being replaced. Disposable technology leads to disposable living, in which people tend not to value long-lasting, quality products.Instead, we pour our money in the cheap clothing, cheap food, and cheap technology—none of which carry any intrinsic value. These products are designed to be easily replaced, simply tossed into the garbage when a new style becomes available.

Because we now value disposability instead of quality, our culture of waste necessarily results in the rape of the natural world. Landfills are tasked with containing all of the cheap, replaceable products that our society throws away. As these landfills grow, they create zones of toxicity, reducing the amount of livable land while increasing the damage our species has done to the Earth. Additionally, while we daily throw away products in search of better, newer replacements, we continue to find ways to link technological innovation to the power grid, siphoning off energy unnecessarily. As Berry notes in his discussion, coal strip mining is used to sustain our energy consumption. Strip mining, in which the top of the Earth is razed to access the coal beneath, mutilates landscapes and ecosystems. We are raping the world around us.

What Wendell Berry is trying to explain is that just because something is new, “progressive”, or technological advanced, it does not necessarily mean it is the right decision to purchase it**.** Berry knows what many individuals in our society have yet to realize—we have a responsibility to not just progress, but progress contentiously.