To Buy or Not to Buy?

In Wendell Berry’s article, “Why I Am Not Going to Buy Computer”, Berry expresses his ideas and reasoning on why he would not buy a computer. He continues his article by replying to people who do not believe in his ideals. However, we agree with his principals because technology may not be as eco-friendly as it seems (especially for the poor), has changed our traditions and morals, and as a result, computers may be a danger to our society. These things contribute to the complete eradication of our culture.

In Wendell’s article, he explicitly expresses his values on the importance of avoiding computers and giving money and attention to corporations who do not share his values or commitment to the environment. He does this by supplying readers with his “standards for technological innovation in his own work”, which are direct reflections from his and his wife’s experience on working with a 1956 Royal standard typewriter. Berry also includes important issues that matter to him, such as peace, economic justice and family and community stability. His wife is “politically correct because she breaks a writer's “direct dependence on strip-mined coal””.

In a sense, Berry’s indictment of technological innovation is correct when his morals are applied to the problem. Berry is an activist for economic justice, and he believes that because most electrical power comes from strip-mined coals, there should be more done to prevent mountaintop coal mining. An example of a time when technology did more harm than benefit for me was when my parents first got me a computer. Once they brought the computer home I started playing bunch of games. I would wake up very early to play games and my parents would have to reprimand me because I don’t spend enough time on study. Now that I look back I regret all those time I spent playing those games because all technology did to my life was distract me from the priorities that would impact my future.

We consent with Berry’s perspective on his judgement because all of his viewpoints are correct (in our opinion). His viewpoints are valid and should not be bashed on for saying why he would not like a new computer. An example of a technological advancement would be matches. We used to use rocks to start fires, but nowadays, paper matches are lighter, much smaller, and are more efficient. Thanks to Joshua Pusey, book matches, which were a lot lighter and efficient than original matches were invented in 1889. They were a lot cheaper since there is not a lot of material used to make them and are also easy to repair. When one match fails, there is another one that can replace it. Matches evolved to be better than the last and will continue to evolve until they are more cost and environmentally efficient.

Through this reply to Wendell Berry’s belief, we also support the idea that technological advances does not always mean that there is an improvement. There is always a trade off when there is a technological advance because we are giving up another valuable skill. That is why Berry came up with his own list of qualification of what exactly a technological innovation is and its requirements to actually be used by him.