CUNY Queens College

Final Exam

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New Technologies MEDST 255

Professor Defelice

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Read all the instructions in the final exam instructions carefully before beginning! You’re required to write into this document, and adding the necessary pages. Re-save this file as your own, and submit it to me on ***MAY 14, 2019.***

**Essay Question I.**

**New technologies have always produced unintended consequences. One result of this would be how UX designers and engineers face a number of new ethical challenges today with the rise of technology regarding our interaction with it and dependence on it.**

**What is the primary job of a UX designer? Discuss the principle ethical quandaries faced by UX designers. What is persuasive design? Discuss the ways you feel this positively and/or negatively affect user behavior.**

Most people are not familiar with the term UX designer, also known as “User Experience Designer” and often assume that it has something to do with graphic designs. With the advancement of technology, the interactions between the product and consumers increase and more tech companies desire UX designers that would improve the experiences of the user when using their product. The word UX “is the experience that a user has while interacting with a product” and while the UX design is the process that determine the type of interaction the consumer will have with the product (Babich).

The UX designers’ role is to help create a product that will be enjoyable, accessible and an overall positive experience for the user through series of tests and research.

Product research is the first step of a UX design project and creates a strong foundation that allows any decisions that are made to be based on information found through research. Product research is important because it collects data on users that reveals their behaviors, needs and wants that can influence the type of products that are designed. UX designers gain insights and deeper understanding on the industry through product research and identify certain opportunities that can help with their product.

The next step for the UX designer is use the product research results and create fictional personas that represents a group of users that they are potentially designing for. Personas are used to identify patterns in their users and take on the behavior and choices made by real audiences which allows for the UX designers to create scenarios. Scenarios are detailed narratives that show the day to day lives of a persona and how such apps, websites--thinking about all the possible ways the users would interact with the product.

Then the structure of the website and apps are created that allows the users to locate what they are searching for is known as “Information Architecture”. Once the “menu” button is finalized, each screen and step taken by the users are shown through wireframes and this is the backbone of the product design. Prototypes are made to reveal what the final product can look like and gives the customer a sneak peak of how the actual product will look and function. Finally, product testing or beta testing allows for the designers to observe what problems users experience when using the product and gather information that would help them to make a better experience for the user.

Influencing user behavior and erosion of privacy are some of the ethical quandaries faced by UX designers. UX designers can have the best intentions in creating a product for a specific user but doesn’t consider the negative effect it can have on the user’s family. For example, monitoring software and kid trackers both invade the privacy of the user’s children and modifies their behavior because they are constantly being watched. Even though it can be used as a safety tool, ultimately the trust between the kid and the parent is trust because the kid has been violated of their personal space. Over the years, erosion of privacy has become a big issue in the lives of those who own a piece of technology in their homes. Data is being stored every time someone visits a website and are used without the consent of the users. People are constantly under surveillance that watches their every move despite not doing anything wrong.

Persuasive design is when a product or service’s characteristics alter and influence human behavior. Media Technologies like the TV, advertisements, etc., have the effect to impact a person’s behavior in a positive or a negative way. Social media has become a toxic environment where influencers have the power to influence the behaviors of their followers and anyone that sees their posts. Personally, whenever I go on *Instagram*, things that I would never buy would suddenly look amazing to me because some model is wearing it and I get pressured in buying that item. Nowadays, everything is monitored whether online or when walking down the street, people are constantly being watched by cameras and data. This creates an environment of “good behavior” and people are less motivated in committing a crime because their every move is tracked. This can be a positive outlook on how safety is the outcome of such product and service, that can influence a person’s bad behavior to a good behavior.

**Essay Question II.**

**The rise of digital technology has had a massive impact in the international creative community. Small digital video cameras and editing software have made it easier than ever for aspiring filmmakers to make a movie. Inexpensive recording software has done the same for musicians. Digital photography now rivals the traditional chemical process for resolution, while image manipulation is simpler and more sophisticated than ever before. Ultimately, the Internet provides a worldwide platform for artists of all stripes to share his/her work.**

**What are some of the core characteristics of the digital world? Discuss how these and new tech developments have impacted the arts and creative culture. What are some specific developments that have impacted artists? In what ways are they unrewarding, and in what ways are they beneficial?**

The core characteristics of the digital world is that it’s electronic, networked and interconnected. Materials these days are no longer in their physical forms but in electronic and a physical copy is not required for it to be considered an artwork. Such artworks can exist in the electronic world by taking a recording from the physical world onto digital devices, drawing digital graphics from scratch and manipulating or remixing electronic information that already is made. Materials in electronic form can be moved worldwide electronically through the internet and mobile because it’s networked. Content is instant and available, can be downloaded and formatted to any devices, people can interact with the artwork and put their own remix on it as well. Lastly, the digital world is interconnected because information can move between many points in the internet, and unlike the radio and television, the public can give their feedback and allows them to interact with the artwork. Due to the rise of artwork going completely digital, it is getting harder to distinguish the fake from the real online and people start to question everything.

With the advancement of hardware, software, and networks, the art culture spreading through different outlets of social media. *Instagram* and *Facebook* have become a platform where users can directly interact in a conversation with one and other which allows for creativity to be passed around. New communities are formed based on shared interests, new tools that raises awareness, a debate and dialogue atmosphere, etc. Technology gives a new meaning of the way music, books and performances are being shown or distributed because it is accessible and available for the masses to see and no longer limited by location. Digital transition allows the artists to replace all the physical goods into an electronic file where it can be transferred through networks. Also, there are some art forms that only exist because of technology and uses programs like photoshop to enhance the digital artforms.

The impact of the digital technologies on film and TV is that more users are switching from the big screen to the small screen. When I was younger, I used to love going to my local movie theater every week but, because of *Netflix*, *HBO* and *Hulu*, I stopped going to the movies and replaced it with watching it in bed with my laptop. Online streaming services put many places like *Blockbuster* out of business because people no longer wanted to go out of their way to rent a DVD, when it was faster and easier to go straight to the website to pay a monthly fee without leaving your house. Music has also been impacted by the digital technologies where people stopped buying physical CDs of the artist album and use apps like *Spotify* to listen to music. With music displayed online, people can download it illegally and share it with all their friends resulting in the artist losing a lot of money for their work which can result in a P2P scare again.

Overall, platforms like *Instagram* and *Facebook* gives people a place to display their talents, creative works for public to see an interact with. Music and movies can be shown and listened to faster in the digital world and reach across various regions of the world. But, if you put your work out publicly, there are consequences that come with it because you won’t know what anyone will do to it.

**Essay Question III.**

**Human enhancement technology converges nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology and cognitive science to improve human performance, attempting to temporarily or permanently overcome the current limitations of the human body through natural or artificial means.**

**Discuss some specific developments in human enhancement technology. Do you have trouble with the idea of these technologies making us stronger, faster, better? Do these advancements come at any cost? Such as privacy issues or a question of morals? What are your thoughts on the premise of these technologies making us (humans) more connected to technology? What technological innovation do you think we need most and why?**

With the advancement of technologies, human enhancement technology is saving lives and improving the conditions of people worldwide. By converging nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology and cognitive science to improve a human’s performance can be a very positive thing that can help those who need it. Temporarily or permanently healing someone from their illness, disability, or in Yan’s case, from his addiction would be necessary and only can happen through technology.

Personally, I wouldn’t want these enhancements to be used on every human being on this earth that desire to be stronger, faster and better because no one would be left fully human. I believe that when it comes to medical necessity, this technology should be used and for those who can’t fully use their body. I also have the fear of those taking advantage and misusing this piece of technology to improve their own being in order to enhance themselves even when they don’t need it.

In “Experimental Brain Implants Studies as Opioid Deaths Rise”, Erika Kinetz covers a story about a man from Shanghai, China who has lost everything due to his drug addictions. After years of doing drugs, he had lost his wife, money and his healthy body. Yan is sitting in the hospital waiting for the doctor that will drill two holes in his skull to give him his treatment—deep brain stimulation. “The hope is that technology will extinguish his addiction, quite literally, with the flip of a switch” and allowing him to live a normal life before all the drugs (Kinetz). Yan is the first patient to receive DBS treatment for meth addiction and the article uses the word “troubled man” to describe him because of the type of people who are chosen for this experiment (Kinetz).

With the rise of new treatments and medical advancements, there are a cost-risk factor involved for those humans that are being tested on. Performing these experiments on those who have lost everything and are hopeless, shows that they have nothing to lose even if it doesn’t work. “Before there were brain implants in China there was brain lesioning. Desperate families of heroin users paid thousands of dollars for unproven and risky surgeries in which doctors destroyed small clumps of brain tissue” (Kinetz). Despite trying to heal their physical conditions, the doctors failed to pay attention and treat their psychological, biological and social factors that caused these addictions in the first place.

I believe that in technology that heals and only for those who absolutely need it medically. The line between needs and wants to have become blurry and people would do anything to get the latest piece of technology. Technology is crippling people from going outside, thinking for themselves and influencing their behavior because we allow it to consume us even when most of us can live without it. We need more medical technology that is FDA approved and not experimented on those who are desperate but creating safe tech that would cure an illness or enhance the condition of a limited human being.

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