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**MEDST 255- FINAL EXAM**

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**Essay Question 1**

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.

New technology regardless of what it may be will always produce unwanted consequences. Many of these involve a number of ethical challenges such as our interaction and dependence on them. We as a society have become very dependent on our technology. While offering tech that will better improve our lives by making tasks that were once time consuming, easier, this has allowed for more free time in the day-to-day lives of people. The people behind the scenes of this new technology are the UX designers. They want to ensure that the consumers are happy and that the products are making money.

The primary job of a UX designer is the “enhancing user satisfaction by improving the usability, accessibility, and pleasure provided in the interaction between the user and the product” (Week 9, Slide 3). They have techniques used to test to see if their product(s) are indeed up to par. Some examples of the techniques are that they are creating personas, scenarios and storyboarding, usability testing, and beta testing. The principal ethical quandaries faced by UX designers are human costs and de-valuing work, ‘de-skilling’, influencing user behavior, the erosion of privacy, and the dangers of distraction. Human costs and de-valuing work is a main quandary faced by UX designers. We have people such as Tian Yu and the other 17 workers at Foxconn who attempted suicide because the workplace they were in was terrible. They were treated like machines, not as human beings. We have big companies overworking employees and de-valuing the work they do, all because they cannot keep up with these machines. “The accumulated effects of endless assembly line toil, punishing work schedules, harsh factory discipline, a friendless dormitory and, rejection from managers and administrators, compounded by the company's failure to provide her with income, and then her inability to make contact with friends and family, were the immediate circumstances of her attempted suicide” (Chan). Foxconn is clearly a company who does not care about its employees and is only focused on getting most business possible.

‘De-skilling’ is among one of the other quandaries that UX designers must face. People who have worked in a certain field for years are now being replaced with less-skilled workers and technology. We now have the power of technology where machines are able to operate machines just like a human. While people may think that technology is able to make less mistakes, there is always the possibility of malfunction.

Influencing user behavior has also become one of the problems of UXD’s. They may have a product that for example that can track someone (Week 9, Slide 18). Parents may want to keep tabs on their children and having an app or device to do so may seem like a smart idea. The parents believe that they are doing what is best for the child. As a child myself, I understand why my parents would want to know where I am. The world has become a dangerous place and parents are always going to be concerned. However, this opens the door for lack of trust, miscommunication, and acting out. The child may feel that they are under constant surveillance and feel that they can’t be trusted. They may take measures such as disabling their locations, lying to their parents, and sneaking out. This goes for a real-life example of the app Find Friends on the iPhone and the map on Snapchat. Some people aren’t even aware that they are sharing their locations, which is very deceiving on the behalf of the application. Continuing the same example of monitoring your children, the erosion of privacy is another issue. Constant surveillance is being used in apps. The apps are designed in order to take your information, collect it, and send it to whoever is tracking you. While again there are pros of this such as knowing if your child is safe or not, there are cons. Just like influencing user behavior, the erosion of privacy allows for the feeling of mistrust, and lack of communication between parent and child. The dangers of distraction are also a major threat to human capability. People’s attention spans are diminishing, and social skills are going with it. Technology has allowed for increased amounts of unsociality. While these UX professionals are aware of the quandaries they are faced with, should they take responsibility in these situations? I believe so because ultimately, they are the ones helping to sell these products that are impacting our society.

Persuasive design is the practice of influencing human behavior through products or services. It basically allows for the identification of possible obstacles and emotional triggers through psychology. With persuasive design, you are able to get the right response to a product. A UX designer may use persuasive design to see how a product makes a consumer feel. Depending on the response wanted, the product or service will be geared to that intended audience. I feel that this has both positive and negative effects on user behavior. Users rely too much on technology. It has become more of a necessity than something that is for leisure. People cannot do without it and this in my opinion stems from the persuasive design of these products. Again, while technology does have its benefits, the issues that have risen due to the abundance of it has caused many problems.

**Works Cited:**

“255\_WEEK09\_ New Media for Good and for Naught – Ethical challenges for the UX Professional and Beyond”. Kiely Room 315, Queens College, NY. 27 March 2018. PowerPoint/Lecture

Chan, Jenny. “A Suicide Survivor: The Life of a Chinese Migrant Worker at Foxconn.” Truthout, 25 Aug. 2013, www.truth-out.org/news/item/18391-a-suicide-survivor-the-life-of-a-.

**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 have impacted the arts. What are some specific developments that have impacted artists? In what ways are they unrewarding and in what ways are they beneficial?

Digital technology has become a part of our everyday lives. It has also played a major part in the world of the international creative community. We have iPhones, professional cameras, video cameras, and the most revolutionary technology, the Internet. All of this technology has allowed for advancement in the creative industry.

The core characteristics of the digital world include being electronic, networked, and interconnected. These three core characteristics have positive and negative qualities about them. The electronic material is obviously something created online instead of a hard-physical copy. You are able to create something from scratch, edit something that already exists, and even combining everything to have a new final product. The problem with electronic creations in the digital world is that it is much harder to decipher if something is original or not. It is very easy to manipulate a something that has been created online to make it look like the original. Also, it can cause an issue where people who have developed advanced skills in art forms such as painting or photography are no longer valued the same. This specific characteristic has impacted the arts I would say in a beneficial way, but the artists who have been doing this work for ages may disagree. I feel that having electronic help has benefited the art world because it is easier to keep a work of art in one piece and not deteriorate overtime. I also feel that with the help of electronics it allows for a more advanced maybe even clearer versions of art forms such as photography and videography. The artists who have done this without technology may feel it is unrewarding when a piece of equipment is doing all of the work in a matter of minutes, but they have spent time creating works of art by hand. The labor that goes into creating something and then seeing the final product is very rewarding and to see a machine do it with no heart and soul, take away from the process.

Continuing with technology being the artist, having material in electronic form means that it can be networked and interconnected. Having material on the web allows for forms of art such as photos, videos, and music be accessed instantly. We are able to edit and change this material as long as it is online. We are also able to share it with friends and family. The information on the Internet that can be accessed by anyone is at the risk for it to be unoriginal. The moment someone clicks share or post, it is available to the world. While we may think that we only share our information with our friends or followers, all it takes is one screenshot or screen recording and boom it’s for the world. This has impacted the arts I would say in a negative way because everything is available for people to use as their own. People want to maintain a certain image and if you have something that may add to their image it is easy to just take it and use it as their own. This is very unrewarding to artists because they have put in time and effort to create something beautiful, and for what? For someone else to take their work and claim it as their own? It is very disappointing that the art world has been turned almost upside down because of technology.

Art will always be a form of creativity and expression. It is a place that has no rules or boundaries. If you can create it, then anything is possible. Electronic ar5t may have changed what it truly means to be an artist, but I believe since technology doesn’t seem to be going away, we need to embrace the direction it is going in and do the best we can to also maintain the traditional ways of expression.

**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 technological innovation do you think we need most and why?

Human enhancement technology takes nanotech, biotech, information tech, and cognitive science to improve human performance. Whether it temporarily or permanently can overcome limitations of the human body, these technologies combined have great effects on humans.

Specific developments in human enhancement technology starts with 3D printing. “Human enhancement is any attempt to either temporarily or permanently overcome the current limitations of the human body through natural or artificial means” (Week 12, Slide 17). 3D printing is the process of making three-dimensional solid objects stemming from a digital file. The objects in 3D printing are made by layering the material until he object is fully completed. 3D printing has helped in many fields of study including paleontology, archaeology, forensic pathology, crime scene investigation, aerospace, cars, industrial work, personal, military, and biology. In the field of science, 3D printing has helped with medical enhancements such as organ transplants, powered exoskeletons, and electronically augmented senses, treating illnesses and disabilities, and human characteristics and capacities. 3D printing tech is one of the biggest human enhancements today. Having the opportunity to help someone who has lost the ability or never had the ability to do something is remarkable.

Michael Chorost believes that “the future is not about giving our bodies ways to do things they already do, it’s about ways to give our bodies entirely new things” (Week 12, Slide 19). An example that he has is for one person to be able to communicate electronically with another person using a device that measures neural activity. You are then able to know the other person’s feelings and/or their physical sensations. The name behind this concept is called “telempathy”. This leads to the next human enhancement which is the ability to know someone’s thoughts. We have fields in this world such as the medical and military fields that would need to know what someone is thinking right away. For them a tool like Michael Chorost has proposed would be worth so much.

Like most objects that are not in the norm of things, human enhancements such as 3D printing and having access to someone’s brain may not be favored by everyone. It comes with a cost and the issues of privacy and question of morals. I personally believe that if someone who has come with the misfortune of losing something like their hearing, or are in organ failure, has the opportunity to brought back to good health and can be done so with a device like 3D printing, then it should be done. If the United States military was put in a do or die situation and fellow soldiers needed to know critical information regarding a mission or attack, then having access to each other’s thoughts and physical stimulations is important. However, I don’t believe that if 3D printing does come to be more than what it already is should be used to be better than someone else. A perfect example would be if a swimmer had lost an arm and was now given a 3D printed arm. Would it be fair for that person to compete again knowing that he or she has an unfair advantage? The pro is that the person is now able to live a normal life. The con is that it may not be ethical for that same person to compete if the arm is made with anything that a regular human arm cannot do. For the example of being able to essentially connect to someone’s brain and read their minds, feel what they feel, if that is used let’s say for torture, then the question of morals plays a huge role. Would it be right to use this new tech to force someone to show how they feel or to get something out of them? That would be a complete invasion of privacy. If we have this advancement to do something good like helping our soldiers, then it should not be used for something as cruel as torturing someone.

The technological innovation I think we need the most is 3D printing. I believe it has a great beginning and with time will only be able to get better. With each new human enhancement comes the debate of whether it will be used for good or will it be used in ways that it wasn’t meant to do. Human enhancement technology does take nanotech, biotech, information tech, and cognitive science and converges them all to improve human performance. Many technological innovations will come and go, and will always come with positive reinforcements as well as negative backlash, but as technology continues to evolve I just hope that people continue creating things that will benefit others in a positive light.

Works Cited:

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