Abstract

The use of digital technology has affected who I am as a person and the way I deal with things in a multitude of different ways. The use of technology has had the power to alter my perception, my attitude, and my personality since I was a young child. Not only has technology had the power to alter the person I am, it has also altered the people and environment around me. This narrative will display the changes and the effects that digital technology has had on my character from the early age of eight. I will discuss these changes and effects through different memories of myself; these memories involve the use of digital technology and my literary skills. This narrative will also display how the specific memories described have shaped me into the person I am today.

Briana Roldan

ENG1710

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Through Memories and Literature

While reflecting on my relationship with technology and literature, I have come to a few realizations about the impact that technology has had on my body and mind. I have summed up these reflections and realizations into different kinds of memories that I have had with the introduction of technological advances early on in my life and the use of literature and writing. I cannot recall when I first began writing or drawing with crayons as a child. Most of the memories that I will recall in this narrative are scattered throughout my mind. However, I do recall an early memory of trying to improve my literary skills. I remember starting elementary school and being sent home with this huge, heavy workbook. Any type of homework that I would be given throughout the school year was to be done within this huge, heavy workbook. One of my older sisters would have me come straight home after school every day with my workbook. She would make me sit at the dining table and practice writing out the letters of the alphabet over and over until I knew what the letters looked like and how to write them correctly. I remember specifically trying to trace the letters of the alphabet into my workbook. There were different capital letters and lowercase letters on each page. Every day I came home and did the same thing, I practiced over and over the letters of the alphabet and read books that involved different words using different letters of the alphabet.

I hated this routine with a passion. It was something that I dreaded toward the end of the school day. Now, I mentally thank my sister for having me practice every day because I love literature now, I love to read it, I love to write it. However, it seems that as time continues to pass the need to write something out firsthand is slowly diminishing with the introduction of new technology such as cell phones, tablets, laptops, and computers. The act of writing something out physically is decaying like an old tooth. Technology did not play a big role in my writing and learning process until I was around the age of eight. Any time before that, I never really watched television or played with any game consoles. I remember writing a letter to Santa every year for Christmas and the year when I was eight, I had gotten a desktop computer. It ran on Windows XP and the only way that I could connect to the internet was through an AOL dial-up connection. With the introduction of this desktop and dial-up connection came a virtual reality for me. I discovered so many things that I did not know before. I discovered that I was able to talk to people without leaving the confinements of my living room; my friends and family members, games, and different websites were all at my fingertips. I went from spending the weekend outside in the park to spending it inside on the computer. It didn’t seem like a drastic change to me at the time but now that I am reflecting on it, there was a huge change in not only the way that I began to perceive things but also in the way that the people around me began to perceive things too. Everyone was distracted by digital technology in some way, shape, or form.

I realize now that I didn’t have to dread coming home from school every day anymore because of the impact that technology had on the people around me. There were still the rules of “Do your homework or no computer and change out of your uniform!” Therefore, at that point, the routine was not sitting at the dining table practicing the letters of the alphabet; it was not reading books about the letters in the alphabet. The routine became homework, uniform, freedom on the computer. As long as my homework was done and my school uniform was placed where it needed to be, I had the freedom to play all the games and print all the pictures that I felt like I needed. Everything that I did began to be in relation to the internet. Everything that anyone did seemed to be in relation to the internet. There were commercial about the newest and latest digital technologies like the IPod touch, the PSP, the Nintendo DS. With these commercials and ads that seemed to be everywhere, I couldn’t help but want at least one of those things because almost everyone I knew had one too. As technology continued to advance, the people around me were not only sucked into this advancement but they were also influencing me to be sucked into getting the newest and latest game console too.

As soon as I knew it, I began to take my Nintendo DS everywhere. I remember my mom taking me to doctor appointments and before we would leave she would always ask if I had my games with me, because if I didn’t she knew that I would be bored. It felt like a necessity to have some form of digital technology. There was such a huge change that I didn’t notice when I was younger that I notice now; the change from asking for dolls and a new bike for Christmas to asking for new games and electronics, the change from talking to friends in person to talking to them through emails, text messages, and other forms of digital communications. As I reflect on these changes, I am realizing that the need for digital technology altered whom I was and whom I currently am today. However, there was always one thing that I didn’t allow technology to change. I made sure and still make sure to continue to read different pieces of literature. I feel like it has always been a part of who I am. I remember going to book fairs at school and buying different novels such as “Maniac Magee,” and “The adoration of Jenna Fox.” Making time to read allowed me to escape the need for digital technology; it allowed me to remember how enjoyable reading can be. Through reading, I realized that I wanted to be able to create my own reality. I wanted to be able to write stories like the novels I read and I wanted to play god with my own characters.

Even today, in our digital technological society I still try my best to not be sucked into the need to always have the newest and latest technology. Reflecting on my history and relationship with technology helped me realize that I do not want to be sitting on the edge of seat just waiting and praying to get the new iPhone or the new Samsung phone. I don’t want to be camping outside of a store, from five in the afternoon until six in the morning the next day; just to get a phone that can write for me and take better pictures than my current phone. I don’t want to allow the physical act of writing to decay like an old tooth. I want to continue to improve the skill; I want to get back to my little kindergarten self, sitting at the table every day practicing my writing. Although I do have a history with digital technology and it still does play a big role in my life, I know that I cannot allow it the power to alter my writing, my perception, my reality, or the person I am.