

Abstract:

This paper reflects on my evolving relationship with literacy and technology, from early childhood doodles to encounters with computers and digital devices. It details my initial literacy struggles, which I overcame thanks to being introduced to technology, like Smartboards, in the learning process. I also discuss my parents' initial reluctance toward technology and emphasize the importance of adapting to new tools while valuing traditional literacy skills. I delve into the societal impact of technology, particularly the challenges social media poses, including information accuracy and cyber harassment. It's also important to acknowledge the need for responsible online behavior, look forward to the future of technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), and recognize concerns while advocating for adaptation and responsible AI use. To summarize, this paper offers a personal perspective on the dynamic interactions between literacy and technology, emphasizing the coexistence of traditional and digital skills in today's world.

My Story with Language and Technology

One of my earliest memories of literacy was when I first started doodling on the white walls with my colorful crayons. I don't quite remember what my end goal was; all I remember was that it was fun. However, I know that enjoyment carried over when I first started to write. Or at least attempted to. As with most of us, I knew nothing about literacy at the time. I did learn how to talk, observing and copying the movements of the mouths, the sounds that came out, and the meaning behind the spoken words. While I eventually liked writing, I struggled with vocabulary and was behind my peers. The

intense pressure from my teachers did not help, and the environment, mainly the classroom, made me so uncomfortable that I couldn't focus correctly and learn how to read or write complete sentences. I recall that the best way for me to learn was by observing and speaking when it came to pretty much anything. That included learning languages, specifically English and Spanish. It wasn't until Kindergarten that my teachers took the time to help me with my studies, and from there, I could finally enjoy reading and writing. They understood some students had more difficulty with writing, so they had us practice on school laptops. In addition, this was the time when technology was incorporated into our education system in the form of Smartboards. At the time, this was when presentations and touch screens really combined to give education a new perspective. It was fun, it was engaging, and it was new for us students who never saw such a thing. It was also then that I became a little more aware of the technology around me.

Before Kindergarten, I vividly remember the computer we had, or rather the two computers we had, both of which were Dell desktop computers. They were big, took a while to boot up and run, and overheated quickly. We did have a television, the big one that required a thump on top to get the signal back. We used it to watch shows, play movies, and keep up with the news and weather. But having a computer, let alone two, felt exemplary. Back then, they were a source of entertainment to me. I did not personally use them, but I did enjoy watching my sister and cousin use them, mainly when playing games. Around when I was in Kindergarten and becoming more aware of the technology we use, I began to notice my sister using the computer for something

other than gaming. I recall her working on a paper, for what I do not remember, but she was entirely focused on the screen and the frustrations she sometimes had trying to find the key with the specific letter she was looking for. This was not the last time I would have an experience with computers.

During my third or fourth grade, my class was introduced to the computer lab in our school. According to the teachers, a computer lab was made to familiarize students with modern computers, learn how to use them, and prepare for when we got personalized laptops. The computers in the lab were much better than the ones we had back home, as they were the recently released Unibody iMac. Along with the Nintendo DS systems, Apple products were all that was talked about in school, to the point where students would ask teachers if they had any Apple products themselves, mainly the iPhones. Along with this came the new common of touch screen phones, again mainly from Apple with its first iPhone. The Nintendo DS system also had touch screens, but they were for entertainment systems rather than for communication or education, so they were lesser known. As mentioned before, laptops were used during Kindergarten to assist us with learning, but they weren't just used for that grade. In fact, laptops were essential in our education, as we used them throughout Elementary school for reading, writing, and mathematics. With digital technology booming in the 2000s, especially in 2007, it was no wonder I adapted pretty quickly to all the wonders new technology brought. My parents, not so much.

Being a bit old-schooled, they were concerned that technology would hinder my education and were reluctant to have me near them. This was a time when they still used flip phones rather than the new touch-screen phones that were currently being sold. They were convinced that education through oral and literacy was more effective, and I am inclined to agree. Writing by hand exposes us to critical thinking and improves our memory, problem-solving, creativity, and handwriting. Technology does offer different methods when it comes to education, but there is also the fact that only some are used to it and may come up with more problems than actually solving them. Having said that, it's also essential to learn how to adapt to new technologies and embrace them. We've done this for thousands of years, so it should be no different when it comes to digital technology. They can even complement each other in some ways, such as providing the necessary digital tools for brainstorming new ideas, editing and revising work, publishing, and collaborating with others. Learning how to use digital technology can be overwhelming but not impossible. This is proven by my parents, who were reluctant to use digital technology, now embracing it more than ever. This started when they themselves got their own touch-screen technology and began experimenting with them. Ironically, they received touch-screen smartphones before I did. When I did get my first phone, the Blackberry, it had buttons and no touch screen, and funnily enough, my parents were confused when they tried to zoom in on a photo on my device, having gotten too used to touch-screen smartphones.

Technology, in so many ways, shapes our lives. This includes writing, entertainment, social media, education, etc. With that being said, it's also important to

be aware and understand the hazards of digital technology. A significant impact it has caused is social media. Social media has become a hub for information to spread, whether they are accurate or not. Depending on what is shared, it can either elevate someone's social standing or completely devastate their reputation. Again, the information surrounding said person or party does not always have to be true. Cyber harassment also plays a significant role in this situation. I myself have never experienced any type of online harassment or have done it, but I have witnessed many individuals who have experienced online harassment, even driving them out of social media entirely. Due to this, many people, social groups, and corporations often have to watch what they say online as it reflects on them. While social media is the type of digital technology I use, it's not something I wholeheartedly approve of. With digital technology having successfully integrated into society, it's also time to look into future technology. More specifically, the use of AI technology. We've already seen some examples of this, ChatGPT being the primary source, and there have already been rising concerns about using such technology. Loss of jobs, bias, privacy, security risks, and misuse of AI technology are but a few of the concerns that are steadily growing. However, AI is still in its developing phases, and there is room for improvement. With that time, we can learn to adapt and embrace new technology much like we did with recent technology. We've done this for thousands of years, so it should be no different when it comes to AI technology.