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Literacy Essay

Almost everything we encounter in our daily lives involves reading as well as writing. Think about text messages for example, when we receive a text we’re reading and when we respond back we’re writing. No matter how small or big that text message is we’re acting on both our reading and writing skills. Ursula K Le Guin once asked “How much of anything can you do in the e-world without reading” (Le Guin)? The answer is pretty much nothing, reading is undeniably one of the things we do every day, it’s inevitable. People assume that as technology advances, it’ll affect literature by replacing books, libraries, librarians, etc. In her blog, “The Death of the Book” Le Guin discusses and elaborates on the two sides of this idea that books are dying. Her understanding of reading in today’s technological society can relate to my ideas and experiences with today’s reading and writing.

According to many, books are dying. On one hand Le Guin agrees, she says if “the book” literally means physical books then yes this could be true; books are dying. As technology advances, people are provided with more efficient resources. For example, e-books; they’re considered to be more efficient, reliable and less expensive. E-books might be easier to access for some people since you can access it from places like a phone, computer, tablet, etc.

Cruz 2 Le Guin also states that books dying could also refer to literature. Meaning books have a direct competition with the everything else given by the internet. According to Le Guin, “…its competition from the wonderous, endless everything-else-you-can-do-on-your-iPad…” Meaning people have a choice whether to read or not and most people choose not to read because of what the internet can provide instead. For example, why read the book when you could just go on the internet and watch the movie that was based on the book? This is the competition that’s “murdering” the book. On the other hand, Le Guin states “having books available in two different forms can only be a good thing.” Meaning the internet is a place with endless resources and that can be a good thing. By having e-books, this only increases the accessibility of a piece of literature. Although technology can help access literature faster and efficiently Le Guin also mentions that books will never be disposed of. She informs that there are people who truly enjoy having and reading from physical books because the original text is better and authentic. A book might hold more “valuable” information than something that was produced on the internet. In the end Le Guin explains both sides of the statement that books are dying but takes a firm position in the fact that real books will continue to live for many more years regardless of the advances in reading in today’s technological society.

In my experience, technology has always been useful for me by providing numerous and endless pieces of literature. During my academic years I’ve written multiple essays and I’ve turned to the internet, as well as technology devices in general, to form my essays and obtain information. However, I do enjoy reading from actual books as well as marking almost all the pages with annotations. Annotations allow me to me organize my thoughts and questions. I annotate to summarize what I just read, to define unfamiliar vocabulary and to jot down any

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question or thoughts I have of the text I just read. I prefer reading from an actual physical book because its original. Le Guin mentioned in her blog that one of the disadvantages of reading from the internet is that the literacy texts, like the e-book, could be altered which damages the integrity of the text. There are many piracies and mash ups of books and literature out there in the internet that are different from its original text and because of this the original text loses its value because less people are understanding that “textual integrity matters” (Le Guin). Another example, one of my favorite books is Fahrenheit 451 and they recently made a movie based on the novel. I was able to watch it and although it was a good movie, it wasn’t the same as the book. This is also like what Le Guin mentioned when she said that literature is competing with everything else you could do on the internet. People would rather watch the movie than read the original text. In my experience technology has benefited me greatly when it comes to efficiency and reliability, but books aren’t dead. Just like Le Guin said literature as in writing and reading are simply taking on a different shape.