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Computer Remediation and Smart phones

Humanity is prone to yearn for improvement. Whether it be self-improvement, inventing something useful, or simply helping others, people are always looking for ways to improve the quality of life. Remediation is one way that technology is improved upon. Remediation, according to authors Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, is "the representation of one medium in another" (Bolter and Grusin 78). Although not necessarily a requirement of falling into the category of remediation, it generally implies improvement in the medium. One way we are seeing remediation happen in this generation is the how smart phones have remediated computer interfaces and interactivity. Smartphone’s have essentially made computers portable, made daily computing actions easier, and changed the way we interact with our technology.

When computers were first invented, they were large, clunky, and expensive. Now, smart phones can do close to everything a computer sitting on your desk can do, all while being small enough to fit into your pocket. This has actually changed the dynamic of relationships as a whole. There is no more uncertainty about answers and who is right anymore, because a quick Google search can resolve an issue within seconds. Society has become used to interacting with computers on a daily (and in some cases, hourly) basis. Computers have remediated into a small, portable part of life. Bolter and Grusin touched on this, saying that "the computer always intervenes and makes its presence felt in some way" (67). I'm not sure that this is necessarily good, nor am I sure that it is having a negative effect on society. However, one thing is certain; remediation in regards to smart phones is changing our world.

In addition to the fact that they are portable, the main draw of smart phones for most people is the fact that apps have become so useful to people. Many of the popular apps, such as twitter, Pandora, or YouTube, are all things that can be accessed using a computer. Since they are not exclusively available only on smart phones, it "ensures that the older medium cannot be entirely effaced" (79). However, many of these apps are streamlined for better performance when the user is on a Smartphone. Also, the fact that they can be accessed on the go outside of the house creates such convenience for people, and convenience is almost always considered an improvement.

Finally, smart phones have changed the way we interact with computers. Many smart phones have touch screens, which allows for more immersion in the technology. Bolter and Grusin state that "in order to create a sense of presence, virtual reality should come as close as possible to our daily visual experience" (67). By making the screen respond the same way that an object in the physical world would react, the "transparency" is increased, creating a better, more realistic user experience. Notifications have also changed the user experience, because it will let the owner know when something has happened instead of leaving the user in charge of checking to see if any interactions had happened online. This real-time updating has created a more transparent interaction by mimicking the normal experience that you have in day to day life.

Smart phones have remediated computer interfaces and interactivity. Shrinking size has created greater portability, which, in turn, has resulted in more convenience for smart phone owners. Apps have become useful to many people by increasing the area in which they can use their computer. Better interactivity has increased the transparency in which we view our phones. While perhaps they are decreasing social interactions, smart phones are now an integral part of our lives. Certainly from a technological standpoint, they are quite an improvement on the old computers.