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DTC 101

Why do people need to have technology in their lives?

In today's society people always say that there is no getting around using computers. Others say that they will not use a computer because they do not want to be involved with the technology or they simply do not know how to use it. The real question is why do people have to and need to use a computer, internet, smart-phones, and tablets? The answer is simple, people have to use these technologies mostly because it has been incorporated into our daily lives. After research on the digital divide and digital literacy, people involved in school or work use computers, internet, smart-phones, and tablets more than the average retired person or young child. "We simply use the programs that have been made for us, and enter our text in the appropriate box on the screen" (Rushkoff Pg.19). People don't care how computers or the internet work or what goes into making the final product, just that they can use it and that it is suppose to improve their lives.

According to the dictionary, the definition of digital divide is "disparities between those who have opportunities and skills enabling them to benefit from digital resources, such as internet, and those who don't have these opportunities and skills" (Digital Divide). Mossberger and Tolbert say that digital divide has described the "patterns of unequal access to information technology based on income, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and geography..." Digital literacy is defined as ability to understand information and to evaluate and integrate information in multiple formats that the computer can deliver (Gilster). Whereas, Mossberger and Tolbert define it as relating to information literacy which they say is the "ability to read and interpret information." The basic understanding of these two concepts is that they play a huge role in people's everyday lives not only in the United States, but around the world.

To understand the digital divide we explore the access divide which is whether or not someone has access to a computer or internet and where the location of their computer is and he skills divide which is having the competence for computers and having digital literacy. Five people were interviewed age raging from 4 to 81 years old and analyzed age but also race, gender, and economic class and every person is white and middle class. Each person was asked five questions. How many computers do you have in your home? Do you have a smart-phone or tablet? Where do you use a computer the most? How often do you use the internet? What do you use your computer, tablet, or smart-phone for?

The first person interviewed was Beverly who is 81 years old and retired. She has one computer, one cell phone, she only uses her computer at home, she rarely or never uses the internet, and most of the time she uses her computer to play games or occasionally send an email. The second person was Caroline who is 47 years old and working. She has three computers in her home, one smart-phone, and one tablet. She uses her computer at home, at work, uses the internet several times a day, and she uses her computer and smart-phone for directions, texting, social networks, and games. Next was Curtis who is 16 years old and is in high school. He owns the same number of computers as my mom and has a smart-phone. Braden is an 11 year old in middle school who has two computers in his home, a cell phone, and an iPod touch. They both mostly use the computer and internet at home and school several times a day and they uses their phones and computers for the same things as my mom. The last was Brycelynn who is a 4 year old who doesn't go to school but plays learning games as well as games for fun on her computer in her home, iPod touch, tablet, and the smart-phones that her parents have. The difference between the older and younger generation and the middle generations here is that the middle use internet and computers for almost everything in their daily lives, where as the other two use it mostly for entertainment purposes.

According to a survey published in 2012, 92% of people have used an online search engine to find information in their lifetime, 78% of those people use the internet on a daily basis, and the remaining 22% don't use the internet at all. 90% say they have internet at home currently compared to may 2011 when only 88% of people had internet in their homes. Current statistics show that 55% of people have a desktop computer, 57% have a laptop computer or net book, 84% have a smart-phone, 9% have a kindle or eBook, and 10% have a tablet such as an iPod (Zickuhr, Kathryn, and Aaron Smith).

"A community or nation with a well-educated workforce is more productive and competitive..." (Mossberger Pg.5). Today's society makes it so that everyone must have an education in computers in order to be successful in school or work. Older generations struggle with technology because of the learning curve, meaning that they were never taught it growing up. If this is compared to people like Brycelynn, Braden, or Curtis it is easily seen that they are more advanced in their digital literacy. People have to and need to use computers, internet, smart-phones, and tablets in their everyday lives in order to just get by. The digital divide may mean the difference between someone having access and skills to use a computer and someone who doesn't, but in theory the more that people continue to advance their skills in digital literacy and the more programs that become available to the public for no cost, will decrease the digital divide and help everyone to be successful with technologies. However, the digital divide may disappear as the older generation goes away but there will always be those who hate all technology!

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