Generations of Digital Divide and Their Meanings

Do you ever feel the urge to suddenly drop everything that you are doing to reply to the vibration on your thigh letting you know that you have received a message? Or you may be a working class citizen that does not have the time to stop, so you refer to multitasking? “No matter how proficient we think we are at multitasking, studies show our ability to accomplish tasks accurately and completely only diminishes the more we try to do at the same time.” (Rushkoff pg. 35) After doing research and interviewing friends and family members on their own definitions of the digital divide and digital literacy you will agree that technology has grown to be a part of our daily lives, whether it’s an email, work purposes or a school curriculum.

To fully understand the five responses that I had taken down from individual interviews, you should be enlightened on what the digital divide means to Mossberger and Tolbert; "patterns of unequal access to information technology based on income, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and geography.” After reading New York Times article “The New Digital Divide” It’s come to notice that a house holds income plays a critical factor whether they have access to the internet, and if they do is the connection top notch or just getting them by? The world has become so dependent on the digital access that our students are getting education online; people are less likely going into their future job location to ask for a job application, or why leave the house when you can just shop online. For the busy working class or multitasking people there is even Cyber Monday, which is the Monday after Thanks-giving. The world has evolved around the new technology that allows the world to be connected all by the touch of your fingertips with a smart phone.

The next few interviews will include five people from the age of 9 years old to the age of 74 years old. They we’re asked four simple questions; “Do you have an account to any social networks?”, “Do you own a smartphone, or any technology that has access to Wi-Fi?”, “How do you feel about social networks?”, “Are you familiar with today’s technology?” The first person that I had interviewed was my grandmother Jeannette Austin who is now 74. Jeannette’s response to the first question was “No, I do not have any accounts to social networks, and I sure as hell don’t want anyone to know my fucking business.” My grandmother has no cell phone and only has an Ipad for her to look up things like quilt patterns and sometimes look at her email. She feels that people are far too personal on social networks. When it comes to technology my grandmother is far from today’s modern technology, an example for this is how she is amazed that the mouse to her Ipad is at her fingertips. The next interview took place with my 54 year old father, Mark. My father has no email, and no account to any social networks. He says that once in a while he will go onto his wife’s Facebook, and instagram but that’s it. Mark says he has a real basic cell phone but it’s mainly for work purposes and to keep in touch with family and friends. My father thinks social networking like Facebook is good because families and friends can keep in touch, but yet he thinks the younger generation is far dependent on it. According to mark the only technology he is familiar with would be the tools he uses to build homes. My third person was Nathan who is 28. He says he will never have any account on any kind of social networking because it’s too much drama, he says people forget the saying “ stick and stones may break my bones but words never will” I do have a smartphone, that’s only because I got a upgrade for free. Nathan is much alike my father, he is unfamiliar with today’s technology, and is working 6 days out of a week to remodel homes. My second to last interview was with Jake who is 19. Jake has many social networking accounts, including, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vine etc… He has the iPhone 4, and a laptop that are both linked with internet access. Jake likes social networks because he is able to keep in touch with friends from previous colleges, and high school and he can communicate with family members while he is at college. Though Jake did say he thinks that this generation is decreasing their personal skills to have a face to face conversation with someone, which creates an awkward moment. When asked if he was familiar with today’s technology, he replied I know the basics of a lot but I’m not really good with in-depth workings. The last person I interviewed was my nephew Tanner who is 9 years old. Tanner wishes he could have a Facebook, but his parents don’t allow him to have any social networking accounts because they believe he is too young to be sucked into the virtual world. My nephew received a tablet from Christmas, and uses the internet to help him with homework, and plays games off of his tablet. When I asked Tanner how he felt about social networks he said that social networks are cool, and I like how my mom posts pictures of me and being able to read what my family comments on it. Tanner doesn’t know too much about today’s technology that involves computers, but give Tanner a new game console he will show you the in’s and outs of the game.

When asking each person I interviewed, no one really knew the real definition of digital divide. I see that the older generations say they want nothing to with the access of social networking but they do without even noticing that they are emailing, and browsing the internet. Technology has become a part of everyone’s lives because it’s easier, and faster. How much longer will it take for the older generation to come to peace with today’s technology? The more you reject it, the faster it will program you.

Bibliography

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