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Digital Technology Culture 101

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Baby Boomers vs. Xyz Generations

Who would have known that 67% of adults, ages 18 years and over, use Facebook? According to [www.pewinterest.org](http://www.pewinterest.org), last accessed on April 21st, 2013, it states that “As of December 2012, 67% of adults are using social network. You would think that adults are just over age and coming to their dying days, and could care less about technology. After the statistic just stated, do you still think they are in their death beds waiting for their calling? No. Digital divide and digital literacy has actually brought life to the baby boomers generations and even before that such as the silent generation. Adults these days have all kinds of social networks, from Facebook to Twitter, to Instagram to Tumblr. Adults are on there for reasons like personal entertainment, communication, and even reuniting with long lost family or friends. The five people I have interviewed range from the baby boomer generation to the X-generation, Y-generation, and one person from the Z-generation. The two main questions that I asked were what does digital divide and digital literacy mean to them, and what do they use their digital technology for the most. You will see how adults now days have similarities to what they think of digital divide as well as digital literacy to what the famous authors such as Douglas Rushkoff, Karen Mossberger, and Barbara Jean Monroe on what they have to say about digital divide and literacy.

To begin with, we will start from the elders, otherwise known as the baby boomer generations. The first person I interviewed was my Pastor, Lafitaga Lafitaga. He was born in the year of 1956, which makes him 57 years of age. Pastor Lafitaga retired from the Air Force in 1996, after 20 years of service to the United States. The way that Pastor Lafitaga put digital divide was the usage of analogs on the airplanes back then to right now. Back then, airplanes in 1976 did not function the same way that they do now. From buttons to wheel turning to functioning the plane has changed over 37 years since he’s retired from the Air Force. Another way that he put digital divide was the modern ways of looking at numbers and mathematical equations or a new way of looking at things to being easier of accomplishing and expecting end results to be the most accurate.

The second question that I had asked was what they use their technology for the most. Pastor Lafitaga’s answer was, “because we are lazy to do things on our own.” He says, “If I had technology, I would not even know how to work it. I see all the youth in our church with their iPhones, iPads, tablets, etc., and I get the vibe that they use it to get answers at the snap of their fingers.” Pastor Lafitaga sounded just similar to Douglas Rushkoff, author of *Program or be Programmed.* Rushkoff says, “We are developing technologies and networks that have the potential to reshape our economy, our ecology, and our society more profoundly and intentionally than ever before in our collective history,” (Rushkoff, 149). Pastor Lafitaga gives a context clue hunt into stating that it is like we are stuck to our technology.

The X-generation interviewee is White Sosene. He was born in 1980, and is currently in school for student teaching. The way he explains digital divide is the “haves and have not.” Basically, for those who have access to information through digital technology has an advantage and for those who do not is just as lost as a puppy dog roaming the streets. White also explained digital literacy as having knowledge in technology and how to use the different programs. White uses technology mostly for communication via email and research. With the process of becoming a student teacher, that is basically all he has time for socially.

According to the social networking project on Pew Internet by Joanna Brenner, as of Decemver 2012, 67% of adults use Facebook, 16% use Twitter, 15% use Pinterest, 13% use Instagram, and 6% use Tumblr, (Device). What does that say about digital divide? From this point of view, there are only certain elders that have the digital divide, that being people born during the silent generation. The silent generation ranges from 1923-1945, with that being said they probably had the first computers that were made that had no connection to internet whatsoever, (Lenhart). The oldest interviewee that I got was my Pastor, and all he could remember was the technology used in the Air Force.

The two Y-generation interviewees are sisters in their early 30’s, Helen and Julie. They are currently employed adults, with children. They both came to an agreement that digital divide is the switch of technology from ancient to modern basically. For example, flip green screen phones to smart phones, gas cars to hybrids and so on. The main reason why they use their digital technology is for personal entertainment. They both have smart phones and they were asked why they use their smart phones. Julie stated that she uses them because it is like a phone, computer, play station, and pager all in one. Helen said it is beneficial for today’s lifestyle, meaning that we live in the generation where we always expect to be on the clock and always need to be informed for school or even work.

The last interviewee was my brother, who is just one year younger, 18 years old. He thinks of digital divide as a wall that is held up for ignorant people over technology. He says, “I think of digital literacy as an ability or like a super power for computers or laptops or even iPhones.” The main reason for his usage of technology is for socializing mostly. It is a typical teenager to use technology to socialize over the internet. Before Facebook and tweeting, there were text messages and phone calls. “No one thought the net would end up going anywhere- ,” (Rushkoff 96). We went from having to wait for the dial up to having WiFi accessibility at food and beverage places such as Starbucks and McDonalds.

By the looks of it, the same things said from the interviewees can compare to what Rushkoff says about digital divide. Rushkoff says, “We are told that there is a digital divide between those who are connected and those who are not,” (A Digital). We all were born in different years and we all have had different perspectives on digital divide and digital literacy. For the pastor, he looks at it as an easy way out for his generation. For Brother White, he looks at it as a ‘either you have access or not.’ For Helen and Julie, they agreed as it being beneficial for those who own technology. Lastly, from a high school student perspective, which did not come by surprise, it is an ability to use technology in so many different ways and is used for socializing. Rushkoff and the interviewees can say that digital divide separates people from being informed. It is always an expectation with technology today.

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