

*On Route to an E-Society:*

## **Human Dependence on Technology and Adaptation Needs**

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### **Abstract**

*For years on end technology has been taking the world by surprise. The very things that are now operating machines, controlling nuclear power plants, assembling cars and running entire factories are the ones to have brought about an industrial revolution, an economic change and most importantly a social transformation. Information technology is no exception. Its evolution, advancement and results continue to spread at a record pace. Yet the integration of such technology into human social lives remains questionable. With big E now pairing up with most means of our daily lives (e.g. E- Government, E-learning, E-Commerce, E-health...etc), one is forced to ask: where would the immanent human dependence on IT lead? How much of our life should rely on technology? Which routes are the best to take to handle the information age? This paper will aim to address the issue of the growth of human reliance on information technology and the arguments in favor of technology-human adaptation. The paper will also aim to suggest potential factors which could help in bringing about a social acceptance of technology as well as measures to help IT become an integrated tool of life. The legal system and its dependence on IT is taken as a prime example.*

### **Introduction**

*“ Computers today have become an inseparable part of our lives, making that difference not just at the work place, but also in our personal lives” [1]*

As the world moves to become the internet-promised global tripe, the Information Age is sweeping along the globe brining an endless flow of e-traffic throughout. However the information superhighway is forcing humanity to ask several questions [2]: where does this highway lead? Are we becoming more dependent on computers and internet? Do we have the social culture that supports that move? To what destination are we heading as we rely more and more on computers and information technology?

Previous centuries have seen the emergence of the Industrial Revolution which brought about economic and social transformation. Today history repeats itself by bringing about a new revolution that does not know steam engines nor heavy machineries. It is the information revolution that bears every motive to confirm that information indeed means power. This revolution is promising to cause significant changes in our society. Its strength is attributed to the individuals [3] that no longer have to be the end recipients of factory products but rather producers, contributors, promoters and distributors of a technology that has the same power to work on the individual level as much as it has on the society level. Instead of machines and factories serving as the means of revolution, we are now witnessing computers transforming our world into one in which everyone can take an active role in the giving and taking of information. Before our own eyes the information revolution is promising to change the world in a way mankind has never seen just as the Industrial Revolution forever changed the face of commerce and trade.

### **Effects of information revolution**

The effects of this Information Revolution are endless. Some people are enjoying the liberty of going about their daily lives with total reliance on the internet. The list of services stretches from e-shopping to e-learning and even e-treatment. Computers are invading many homes are the globe. Students and professors alike are dependent on technology. Our lives, our media, our entertainment and our education are now dependent or are about to establish dependence on technology.

The power of internet is spreading at a non-stop rate. It is expanding the scope of human achievements and aspirations. It is equally bringing about worries and concerns. The lack of information-ready society is worrying. Human bonds are threatened as we grow dependent [4] on e-dealings. Some people have even seen a danger in the internet especially in more conservative society. They have seen a social and ethical [5] threat to human values. Some have gone to the extent of considering the internet as a threat to religious values as it offers a limitless ocean of information, a library so open, so diverse that the thought of it become incomprehensible for some.

This library has the advantages of no space restrictions, it never closes, and it contains information that can be accessed at the click of a mouse button from the comfort of one's own home, school and workplace.

But is this dependence of society community is a particularly entirely a good thing? How can society overcome its information age's fears and worries? How can an information culture be built? The answers are simple to suggest but hard to implement.

Interfamily relations within mainly the developing world are being affected. Most parents seem to view the information age and its technologies as a tool for younger generations to use. Their fear of lacking the intellectual capabilities to learn how to use computers marginalizes them. It even brings about a children/youth supremacy given the level of information technology knowledge those youth have. This supremacy in some cases, is affecting the fabrics of interfamily relationships. It is widening family divides and increasing localized and domestic digital gaps. It is affecting family bonds and bringing about a new cultural rift.

Yet this state is reversible. The words stability, economy and knowledge are the three key words needed to bring the global tripe and its global village into existence. Once stability be it political, social or even personal is there, and economies are put on the right tracks, knowledge can comprehensively be brought about regardless of age, color and sex. The three 'key words' can in no way supercede the power of global and individual will.

Until the above happens, technology and human bonds should learn to adapt to live alongside each other. While existing traditional ways of information acquisition are somewhat frustrating, its hard to see computers replace human contact. A complete dependence on computers would have serious implications on the world society. It will almost certainly bring about catastrophes [6]. Consider a world that's run by a keyboard strokes, few mouse clicks and state-of-the-art monitors. One will soon find out that in gaining convenience and speed, society may be giving up the interpersonal relationships that make life rewarding and meaningful.

Furthermore, A complete dependence on computers would have a devastating impact on literacy. Many people cannot afford a personal computer or the accessories required to have access to the Internet and e-mail. If traditional means of information dissipation are to end where can these people turn in order to educate themselves and improve their lives? People who have no way of gaining access to computers may never have the opportunity to experience the joy of reading, and thus illiteracy would spread alarmingly. We therefore have to constantly keep in mind that although computers are making information more accessible to certain segments of the population, they may deny information to people who cannot afford to plug in to the information superhighway.

Technology-humans harmony and co-existence should be brought about. Take the case of e-mail information exchange. This tool is becoming a primary means of communication between people. e-mail has enabled us to communicate instantaneously with anyone anywhere in the world. However, while e-mail can be a vital link between friends, families, and co-workers, it should not replace written correspondence. The death of the handwritten letter, which could easily be brought about by a complete reliance on e-mail, would have serious effects on our society. This, too, would create a decrease in literacy, and it may also cause a decline in the human link between people. Imagine a world without handwritten words, where would the human touch be? What would happen once servers [7,8] are for some reason, brought to a halt? Can we comprehend data loss if no back up measures were taken?

It is without doubt that e-mail allows instantaneous correspondence, but we pay a heavy price by compromising the human touch. It is therefore essential to integrate tradition and

technology in a workable mode of life. Digital superiority should not etch up our human values and human contact.

### **Information age and legal system**

As information technology boom has taken humanity by surprise, others means of life have also witnessed the same fate. The growth of information technology has already surpassed our judicial system, leaving us unsure of how to regulate the Internet preserving basic human rights such as the freedom of expression and speech.

No one could have dreamed of the world we know today with its astounding technological innovations that make information readily accessible to everyone. How do we determine what material should (and should *not*) be allowed on the Internet? Can we apply censorship? Can we ban pornographic sites and without censoring classic visual and literary art? Can we stop bomb makers, thieves and murderers from accessing the information readily available for them on the net?

The basic move to encourage a reconsideration of the position of the censorship issue would have to focus on determining where to draw the line between protection and censorship line. Thus building an acceptance and introduction of technology in the legal field equates that in other fields. It boils down to one factor: If we were caught by surprised and had the internet surpass many of our means of life, then it is time to consider a change. A change that should help bring about an e-culture.

The rise of computers as a dominant presence in our lives is exciting as it is useful, but the potential dangers that the Information Age brings cannot be ignored. Our increasing dependence on computers must be tempered with the preservation of the time-honored ideals of face-to-face human interaction and handwritten personal correspondence. The world should continue to enjoy human bonds and avoid being taken by exclusive relationships with cold, unresponsive computer screens.

The knowledge and values, technology and ordinary traditional lives should form an integral alliance so to help our changing world in a responsible, intelligent manner and avoid the dangers that accompany such a quickly evolving world. The limitless speed on the "information superhighway" should not lead us to forgetting that other humans do not enjoy the privilege of accessing technology and deserve to be supported. It should equally encourage our human-human relationships without turning our lives into e-dependent lives in which morals and values may evaporate.

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