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ENG110

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Technology and Human Connection or Optimism and Caution: Both Sides of Technology

Technology today is undoubtedly an undeniable force that shapes how people live, think, and even interact with one another. In *Technophilia* by Kevin Kelly, he believes that technology can expand the human potential, as well as fostering innovation. In contrast, *The Empathy Diaries* by Sherry Turkle, she warns people how the ways of technology can diminish and weaken human relationships and genuine empathy towards others. Both of their perspectives seem opposing to each other; however, they are both able to capture the essential truths about the impact of technology today, and the role it plays in society. I do agree with both Kelly that technology is a powerful tool that is able to help enhance human capabilities, however, I also agree with Turkle's perspective since technology also has many challenges accustomed to it that need to be addressed to be able to maintain and preserve meaningful connections with others. By looking closer at both of their arguments, examining one's optimism and one's caution, it can help us better understand how to embrace these advancements seen today, while avoiding their negative effects on people today.

While looking at Kevin Kelly's views on technology, it is shown how he argues that technology today is a driving force that can help expand the human mind and protentional. In *Technophilia*, he argues that these technological advancements seen today have helped propel society forward. With pushing society forward, it can help enhance efficiency, and even global communication. Kelly also believes that instead of fearing technology, it should be embraced as a helpful part of human evolution, and that we will learn to love it more down the road. Kelly states that "Technology does not want to remain utilitarian. It wants to become art, to be beautiful and 'useless'" (Kelly 6). He is implying that technology is not only used for practicality, but also used to express ourselves, and creativity. Instead of viewing technology as something for only functional purposes, Kelly views it as further extension of the human imagination. He believes that overtime, today's society will accept technology more and embrace it further than it has been today. (add quote and analysis). His perspective on this challenges Turkle's argument, as he argues that technology should not be feared, but should be seen as something that is able to enhance efficiency, as well as creativity within us.

In comparison to Kelly's overall optimism, Sherry Turkle puts forward a more cautious perspective on the impact of technology on people, especially how it affects

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human relationships, and even empathy which contrasts with Kevin Kelly's optimism. In *The Empathy Diaries*, Turkle argues that although the internet has made it easier for communication, and in some ways connection, it has also led to a steep decline in meaningful face-to-face interactions, which are essential to human life. Participating in meaningful face-to-face conversations are a gateway to developing genuine emotional connections. She emphasizes how "we struggle to pay attention to each other, and what suffers is our ability to know ourselves" (Turkle 349). Her argument shows how people start to rely and become more dependent on communication through technology, ending with them losing the ability to engage in deep and meaningful connections that can lead into further connections with others. Her claim as to how face-to-face conversations impacts our ability to know ourselves implies that technology does not just affect the growth of connections with others, but how we view ourselves, and our personal growth. Without these meaningful in person interactions, people will eventually find it harder to understand their own emotions and themselves. She also believes and warns us that with the progression of technology and how its evolving, there will be a rise of virtual relationships, and it can get rid of our ability to have empathy with each other and even engage in meaningful conversations. She expresses, "Those who understand how conversation works – no matter what their ages – need to step up and pass on what they know" (Turkle 350). Her statement is a call to action for everyone. It urges those who still believe in face-to-face conversations to preserve as well as teach others how to obtain the skills that are needed for empathetic conversations. Turkle overall argues how important and crucial it is for today's society to protect and help others with these real-world conversation skills. **These skills are fundamental to maintaining the mutual understanding and emotional connections that digital technology tends to overthrow.** While Turkle overall emphasizes all the potential harm of how technology affects personal connections with others, **Kelly has a more optimistic view and highlights the positive views on technology today.**

Kevin Kelly and Sherry Turkle offer very different, but also complementary views on the role and impact of technology in modern society. Kevin Kelly believes that technology is not just a tool to use, but something that can help the people for a greater good. He often in his paper explains how in the future, we will learn to love and grow with technology. Whereas Turkle argues that getting too involved with technology can alter the way we approach certain social situations. If we get too sucked into technology, then we can lose ourselves, and how we socialize with the people around us. Kelly states many strong arguments within in paper, *Technophilia*, regarding his own love and passion for technology, and how it will be able to further expand in the future. Kelly puts in his own perspective many times, and expressed "The net is now vastly wider than me, wider than I can imagine, so in this way, while I am in it, it makes me bigger too. I feel amputated when I am away

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from it” (Kelly 5). The feeling of as if technology is a part of you, and when it is not in your possession at the time it feels like you lost a vital part of yourself is an amazing way to explain how we feel towards technology today. We rely on technology for daily tasks, like using our phones for alarms to make sure we wake up on time, using our computers for school, and even turning on the television or doomscrolling on our phones if we are bored and need a change of pace. When we go without technology, we feel as if we have lost a part of ourselves. Turkle challenges his ideas by explaining how we need to embrace not using technology all the time and not needing to rely on it as if it is a part of our body and without it, we struggle to function as a human. She expresses how we must find a balance within ourselves and how we approach technology. Turkle states how

“Weather patterns may be changing across the planet in alarming ways, but then you are faced with a beautiful sunny day, one of the most beautiful days you have ever seen, and somehow this makes it easier to put the problem out of mind. Similarly, we now rarely give each other our full attention, but every once in a while, we do. We forget how unusual this has become, that many young people are growing up without ever having experienced unbroken conversations either at the dinner table or when they take a walk with parents or friends. For them, phones have always come along” (Turkle 351).

Turkle voices her concerns loud and clearly for all to hear. She expresses how many of the younger generations today do not know what life is like without a phone or even technology in general. She believes that if people continue going down the path of relying so heavily on technology and not modeling actual conversations with others for the younger generations to come, there will be a hefty price to pay. From my perspective, I do believe that younger generations should be shown how to be away from their phones and be able to converse freely with others without the constant checking of phones.

Within both passages contrasting so highly of each other, yet also having complimentary viewpoints, it is clear that they are both sending strong messages to everyone.

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Overall I feel like your essay is very strong, you have very good quotes that you are able to explain and add relevancy to your paper.
I think you should maybe try to condense a few of your sentences since there are a few that seem to run over 3 lines.
Also I think you should try to add in your own opinion on where you stand with some of the points the authors make.

Works Cited

