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Whether we like it or not, technology is all around us. Going through my morning routine, I can count many ways that technology has embedded itself as an essential part that I cannot function without. I wake up to my phone alarm, start playing music from my speaker, use my electric toothbrush, and take my computer off the charger as I pack my bag to go to class. As the years have gone by, this incessant use of technology has only deepened. Technology can now be used to perform essentially any task we can think of. In discussion about these impacts of technology, there are older generations who take the glaringly negative view that increased technology use only causes deficit in necessary human functions like empathy, such as Sherry Turkle, a social science professor at MIT in her essay titled, “The Empathy Diaries.” Conversely, there are younger voices in this conversation who take a more complicated stance on technology, like English composition students at the University of New England, Kaia Anderson in her essay titled, “Helping the Addict: A Call To Action” and James Terault in his essay titled, “_____”. All of these essays approach the dilemma of the impacts of technology in differing ways, and what the future looks like for those who are so reliant on it. After analyzing these sources, I believe that since technology, mainly the internet, is so embedded in our lives, it is bound to come with a balance of benefits and drawbacks, especially in the context of communication and distraction. The drawbacks begin to outweigh the benefits once our incessant use of technology goes unchecked, and there is a greater presence of these detrimental impacts. Debate arises in these

ideas, however, with how close we are to this “point of no return” and if rectifying these habits is even possible

Paragraph 1: Technology has harmful impacts, but is also a vital tool and has some advantages

- Turkle quote: “...we often find ourselves bored because we have become accustomed to a constant feed of connection, information, and entertainment. We are forever elsewhere. At class or at church, or business meetings, we pay attention to what interests us, and when it doesn't, we look to our devices to find something that does” (Turkle, 344)
- Turkle is saying that the internet has made us bored with our everyday lives, and increases our distraction from the world around us by providing a quick and easy way to get stimulation. This need for constant stimulation pushes us further away from each other and further into isolation due to technology
- I understand where Turkle is coming from, and speaking from personal experience, I can attest to the fact that technology is making us more distracted. I am embarrassed to admit that on many occasions, I have opted to scroll mindlessly through social media rather than strike up conversation with people around me. There is something so addictive about having access to vast amounts of information, all tailored to your specific needs. Why would someone want to put in all of the effort to find stimulation in complex and unpredictable conversation when the ease and familiarity of the internet is right at our fingertips? Conversely, despite Anderson agreeing with technology making us more distracted, she believes that this is a separate issue from communication. In fact, she believes that technology is beneficial in this way, and increases communication.
- Anderson quote: “Having access to a near limitless amount of knowledge in the palm of our hands had led to once unthinkable advancements in human efficiency and

connectivity. Questions can be answered in mere seconds; calculations done in half that time. We can talk, text, or video chat anyone at anytime, anywhere.” (Anderson 2)

- Anderson is saying that technology’s emphasis on efficiency has allowed for an increase in connection and the transfer of information. The internet has become a way for old friends and family to stay in contact, and even for new connections to be formed between people who would otherwise have never come in contact otherwise. Additionally, the internet allows for more people to educate themselves and be more informed about important topics. This increase in accessibility is so important because it gives previously under informed demographics, like teenagers, a better chance to participate in important conversations and have their voices heard
- I think
- Terault quote: “ I have spent a lot of dinners sitting at the table watching as my friends – rather than strike up a conversation – look at their phones the whole time. It’s very strange to watch as they talk to 50 different people but don’t say a word outside the phone. However, I can consider myself lucky, as those times have passed. I have reached a certain age along with my friends that we talk together much more now, not looking at our phones nearly as much, and my family has never had that problem, especially at the dinner table.
- Terault is saying
- I think/going further