

Tyler Pelletier

Professor Miller

ENG-110

1 April 2025

Impact of Modern Technology on Human Behavior

The human mind, once untainted by the power of digital technology, has been infected by this ever-growing wave of technology that has no intention of slowing down. The subject of technology and its effects on humans is documented by Nicholas Carr and Kevin Kelly in two drastically different ways. Nicholas Carr is an American journalist and writer who has published books and articles on business, and culture, but most of his work is centered around technology and the consequences it has on the human mind. Kevin Kelly is the founding executive editor of Wired magazine and a former editor and publisher of the Whole Earth Review. Carr uses his platform to argue in "Is Google Making Us Stupid" that the internet is negatively impacting our ability to concentrate and think deeply, leading to a decline in our cognitive abilities. Conversely, in his article "Technophilia", Kelly argues that technology is best understood as a natural force, an extension of life itself, and that we should embrace its inevitable trends and see technology to accelerate human evolution, rather than a destructive force. I believe that the use of digital technology has become too constant and too immediate which ultimately is causing irreversible damage to human behavior and impeding human potential.

Humans in the 21st century have transitioned from creative and robust thinkers to automated robots. In Nicholas Carr essay "Is Google Making Us Stupid", He argues that technology has

Commented [TP1]: if ever talking about AI use mom's story of grading

Commented [NK2]: I like that you showed their views on the topic up front while introducing who they are, rather than only introducing them and then showing their views later on. Also, there is no "u" in Nicholas

Commented [NK3]: Nicholas

Commented [TP4]: talk about the growth of other tech in the past compared to now (iphones not changing)

Commented [TP5]: specify this

Commented [NK6]: Only need his full name once

created an automation of the human mind which has led to a decrease in deep reading and deep thinking. Carr writes that, “Taylor’s system [A concept with the objective of improving economic efficiency, especially labor productivity] is still very much with us; it remains the ethic of industrial manufacturing. And now, thanks to the growing power that computer engineers and software coders wield over our intellectual lives, Taylor’s ethic is beginning to govern the realm of the mind as well” (6). In other words, Taylorism, a practice used during the Industrial Revolution to maximize efficiency, is becoming a prominent aspect of the way the human mind completes cognitive tasks with an emphasis on getting as many assignments or jobs done as quickly as possible, severely limiting the actual understanding of the subject or task. Kevin Kelly takes a different approach to the effects of technology on the human mind. In Kelly’s article “Technophilia”, Kelly embraces the addiction to technology and is in support of the effects that technology has. He writes, “Today, at the start of the 21st century, there are tens of millions of species of tools and technologies at loose in the world. Assuming a modest increase of only 5% additional new tools and artifacts every year, by the end of the century our planet will be overrun by manufactured by possibilities” (6). In this quote, Kelly is discussing the phenomenon of technological growth and the idea that it will always be growing while the need for it will remain stagnant. While the overall arguments of both pieces differ greatly, both quotes work together in formulating an argument centered around the use and need of technology. In my time of using technology, there has been an emergence of roughly 10 new iPhones produced. This was not because the technology has gotten much better, or the need for new phones was in dire need, it was because Apple knew their users would purchase the phone simply because it was new and shiny and said iPhone. I think that this occurrence, talked about by Kelly, provides the cause behind Carr’s claim that efficiency is prioritized over quality. Companies, such as Apple, rush to

Commented [TP7]: Need better quote

Commented [NK8]: Maybe tie it back to how Taylorism has automated the mind

Commented [NK9]: Only need full name once

produce new products as fast as possible. I feel that because of the constant supply of new and improved technology, there is a significant increase in the usage of said devices and in turn a decrease in the required cognitive abilities.

Commented [TP10]: explain this in context of my life more

Digital technology and its relationship with humans have always been growing but recently has grown at alarming rates and has become a dependence. This idea was seen in Kevin Kelly's article where he explained to readers his love for technology. In Kelly's article, he writes, "We keep specific technology around not only because it may be useful, but because we like to have it around. The gear, devices, networks form an interdependent ecosystem of interrelated parts, and we have a technophilia for its survival" (7). In this quote, Kelly discusses the role of technology, claiming that we humans keep it around because of the ecosystem that it forms around us, almost creating a security blanket, ultimately idolizing technology and the relationships humans have with it. Conversely, Carr discusses technology as a parasite that is infecting the human brain, and the reliance on it has detrimental effects on the human mind. In his article, Carr writes, "The process of adapting to new intellectual technologies is reflected in the changing metaphors we use to explain ourselves to ourselves. When the mechanical clock arrived; people began thinking of their brains as operating "like clockwork." Today, in the age of software, we have to come to think of them as operating "like computers"" (4). With this quote, Carr is explaining to the reader the effect of digital technology on the human mind using common and relatable anecdotes. As a user of technology myself I can understand how Kelly manufactured his claim. Most everyone I know are proud owners of the Apple Ecosystems who dress their devices up in the trendiest cases and some even match their cases to their own outfits as if they were dressing their child for the day. This is the security blanket that Kelly was talking about. I feel, however, that this has become more than just being enthusiastic about technology.

Commented [NK11]: only need full name once

Commented [NK12]: Carr

Needing your phone to match you is a sign of an addiction to technology. I find this addiction to be rampant in today's world. Oftentimes, I will attempt to have a conversation with my friends or even my parents and it feels as though I am speaking to a brick wall as they will be on their phones, their computers, watching the television, or sometimes a combination of the three. I believe that the availability of technology has created a virtual bubble that prevents face to face communication and diminishes the human mind. Experiencing a technophilia for digital technology's survival, feeling as though it is absolutely essential to proper human function is an addictive belief and one that, if continues, will allow for technology to completely take over their lives.

Without a doubt, technology is an aspect of society that will be prevalent for years to come and as it stands today, certainly has its benefits. But where technology, more specifically digital technology, goes awry is when its use takes precedent over natural cognitive thinking.

Commented [TP13]: for second paragraph

Commented [NK14]: Good job connecting the point to your own experiences.

Commented [NK15]: I feel like you could connect it with your claim a bit more.

Commented [NK16]: This is a very good start. The main thing I would focus on is sometimes it felt like the point of the essay was lost. You bring up really strong ideas and sometimes they aren't used to their fullest potential.