

Cayden MacQueston

Professor Davis

English Composition 110

24 March 2025

Technologies Effects on Conversation

The technology that we have now has allowed individuals and society to remain connected at all times with one another. Through technology it has given individuals who share the same interests the ability to stay connected while also allowing things like companies and corporations to stay connected and meet on a global scale. Technology showed its importance and proved to be crucial in being able to give a line of communication and interaction during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Technology was there to keep people connected to friends, family members, even able to make new acquaintances all over the world. Day to day conversations and communication in today's world are highly reliant, impacted, and intertwined with technology.

In the article “*Making Conversation*” by Kwame Anthony Appiah he talks about the importance of being able to have a meaningful conversation with the people around us, while the idea of respecting others’ perspectives and the importance of acknowledging different viewpoints in a conversation, creating a space where genuine communication can happen. Humans connect with others and remain connected through conversations where ideas are shared, creativity blossoms, likes and dislikes are expressed, making conversations are an important part to human existence, “a large part of what we do we do because it is just what we do” (48). Interaction with technology occurs on a daily basis and attempts to refrain from using technology are difficult, from buying gas to groceries technology is intertwined in almost every interaction for many people on a daily basis. Conversations have evolved over time from solely face-to-face

interactions or written correspondence to technology influenced interactions like video calls, emails or text messaging which have considerably increased the speed at which conversations and the sharing of information and viewpoints occur. It can be noted that the most impactful way technology impacts day to day life is allowing us to stay connected with people we know and care about as well as new people through fostering conversation, “So I’m using the word conversation not only for literal talk but also as a metaphor for engagement with the experience and the ideas of others” (55). The use of technology does not change the importance of being able to have a conversation with one another. Technology is instead used as a tool that increases the speed and quality of conversations and human interactions that we have with one another. It allowed us during the global pandemic to stay connected with those that we care about and still allowed us to meet new people in new ways. Social distancing was difficult with isolation, but technology allowed communication and interactions that we need that come with being social in the society around us. Technology does not change the importance of conversation skills, meaning the ability to effectively communicate needs and ideas as well as the ability to actively listen to and interpret information received.

In contrast Sherry Turkle in the article “*The Empathy Diaries*” talks about the importance of having a face-to-face conversation with another person, she describes it as one of the most humanizing things that we can do as a human. Turkle continues to explain that technology is engulfing society and our world as a whole and significantly impacts individuals’ abilities to have meaningful conversation and interactions with others, “Students don’t seem to be making friendships as before. They make acquaintances, but their connections seem superficial” (345). Turkle continues to talk about spontaneous conversations in public or even face-to-face conversation at home is less and less common and awkward or forced at times. While technology

has certainly affected and changed the way that we as a society interact with each other it certainly has not forced relationships and acquaintances to be superficial or fake, while she likes to focus this idea, “But these days we find ways around conversation. We hide from each other even as we’re constantly connected to each other” (344). Technology has certainly affected and changed the way that we as a society interact with each other, it certainly has not forced relationships and acquaintances to be superficial or fake. Engaging in conversation with unknown individuals like at the grocery store or gas station can certainly be awkward, however those conversations blossom out of necessity and end quickly. Individuals don’t need a long-drawn-out interaction when trying to find the maple syrup in the store, nor do individuals need to utilize technology to ask an employee to find the needed item. When reflecting on my personal experiences, I find that it can be very awkward to start a random conversation with unknown individuals, even in classes at times. Conversation skills are something that my generation at times lacks and at times trying to start a conversation can absolutely feel forced.

I'm fortunate enough to be an only child as well as having the opportunity to grow up with my grandparents in close proximity who were raised without the constant influence of technology and in order to interact with them face-to-face conversation is almost required. My grandfather's thoughts certainly are in line with Turkle as he constantly boasts that human beings are supposed to have face-to-face conversations, as it is how we were intended to interact, and rejects the idea that technology improves communication. Now that I’m away at college, two and half hours away from home my grandparents and I use FaceTime, the WhatsApp to talk, as well as email is how I'm able to keep in touch with them. Technology has absolutely morphed the relationship I have with my grandparents, however, if video chatting and emails did not exist my grandparents would have said goodbye to me in August and not had a face-to-face conversation

until winter break. Despite their resistance to “screen time” and technology to interact they certainly have embraced the change to technology facilitated conversations in order to stay in contact with me.

Technology has advanced conversations forward and has made positive impacts and increased the amount and quality of interactions that individuals have with one another. No one can deny that conversations are the center of communication between individuals. Turkle and Appiah’s ideas of being able to have a constructive conversation is being able to have it with another person. Technology has allowed us to be able to have a deeper connection with others and make connections with people no matter where you are in the world. It has open doors for everyone in many different aspects, from personal to global, political, the doors that were made because of technology would certainly not be here today if technology hadn’t advanced in the way that it did.

Works Cited

Appiah, Kwame. "Making Conversation." *Emerging Contemporary Reading for Writers*, by Barclay Barrios, 5th ed., Bedford St. Martin's Macmillan Learning, Boston, 2022, pp. 39–55.

Turkle, Sherry. "The Empathy Diaries." *Emerging Contemporary Reading for Writers*, by Barclay Barrios, 5th ed., Bedford/ St. Martin's Macmillan Learning, Boston, 2022, pp. 343–354.