

# Candidate 1 evidence

## Discursive Essay

### Technology: our servant or master?

The prolific use of technology can be seen as helping us with things like homework through quick access to information but it can also be looked at as changing family life and communication dramatically and taking over our lives by invading our privacy.

Technology affects communication. There are lots of different ways in which you can communicate through technology: texting, social media, facetime, skype, etc. There are many advantages to using technology for communication, the main one being that it gives you access to anyone around the world for free if you have a phone that is topped up or has a contract. The technology is also instant as you can send someone on the other side of the world a message at the click of a button and probably get an immediate reply. There are down sides to communication through technology, however: people pretending to be someone they're not and talking to a teenager through social media. Teenagers are very vulnerable to people like this. Teenagers always have a lot of free time to chat and play games online, but through their phones and other technological devices they can access anything online without parents' close supervision.

The web isn't policed, so young teenagers can see anything they want to, even if it is not suitable for them. It's very hard for parents to put blocks on what their children are viewing on the internet because the process is so complicated, so underage children could potentially see anything. They can also play games which may be rated as eighteen when they are underage but, because of parents not being able to make the internet more filtered, children can play anything they want to. Today, 97% of teenagers in the US play videogames which, according to some people, can help children with problem solving; however, violent behaviour from gamers is caused by video games.

Family life has changed because of technology and not in a good way. Now that everyone is using technology to communicate with people, there isn't as much conversation between family members especially. For example, a lot of families don't even sit at the dinner table anymore because they want to watch the television, so they eat their dinner in front of the television. Individually, family members are leading separate lives in rooms apart, each accessing a different form of technology. And yet Skype and Facetime can unite families who live apart as face-to-face communication conveys body language and tone of voice.

Social media is becoming more and more popular; almost everyone is using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram these days, meaning that if someone is not involved in any social media they are isolated from everyone else. On Twitter especially you can follow most

celebrities and see what they are doing on a daily basis, which can be good fun, but, on the other hand, some children don't understand that celebrities use things like Photoshop to beautify themselves, making them more attractive and popular, and these kids look up to celebrities, causing insecurities and anxieties, leading even to eating disorders. Children as young as five years old are being treated for severe anorexia after becoming obsessed with their body image. Thirty-seven percent of girls aged fourteen to fifteen years old and 40% aged sixteen perceived themselves as too fat. On sites such as Facebook, cyber-bullying can occur-this is when someone is bullied without any face-to-face contact and it can be as serious as bullying someone physically. In February 2014, a 14 year old girl from Italy was sent death threats over a website called ask.fm, which is where everyone can write to you anonymously saying whatever they want. The teenager had gone on the chat site and poured her heart out after breaking up with her boyfriend but, instead of sympathy the un-named youngster faced an avalanche of abuse by trolls telling her, "Kill yourself", "Nobody wants you" and "You are not normal". Hannah Smith was then found hanged in her bedroom in the family home in August last year.<sup>1</sup> Young people especially are growing up constantly comparing themselves with their peers and idols and I think that more young people are depressed as a result of this.

You can store an unimaginable amount of information online such as: music, games, apps, photos. A celebrity called Jennifer Lawrence had nude photos leaked online last

year through an app called iCloud, which stores all the photos you take on your phone.<sup>2</sup> The photos went viral which emphasises the serious repercussions of storing private information on the internet. On the plus side, even if you lose or break your phone, you can back up all of this information on a computer or memory stick so that you don't lose it all. However, downloading all these apps, leaves an online footprint which could be seen as an invasion of privacy, and advertisers tempt us with more of the products we like. When going for an interview, the interviewer may look at your Facebook page to see what you do in your spare time and, if you can't make your page private, they might see things you don't want them to. By putting all of your personal information online, thieves could even find a way to steal your bank details. We have sacrificed our privacy by putting all information about ourselves on the internet. People may willingly be choosing to do this because they want to go along with the crowd and are too scared to opt out.

Another main disadvantage of the constant use of technology is the distraction it causes, in particular to teenagers who do their homework in front of the television, with their phone in their hand or with earplugs in through their iPod. This habit could carry on into class, causing the student to not learn anything at school.

Fewer teenagers, especially, read books or newspapers anymore - the down side of you being able to check everything on your phone or gadget. Because we only read small

extracts of information from the internet on our phones, instead of extended pieces of writing are we are losing our concentration, or is our focus just changing to absorb smaller, less extended amounts of information but in huge quantities?

Overall, I believe that technology benefits our way of living; we can do things on our gadgets which we would have never imagined doing ten years ago. In short, we rely on technology and where would we be without it?

### References

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/hannah-smith-case-mps-call-3140148>

<sup>2</sup> [www.celebuzz.com](http://www.celebuzz.com)

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