

STUDENT SAMPLE: PAPER #1

NOTE: On the following pages, you will find a sample paper for this essay written by a student who took the very same course that you're taking. This student was given the very same readings, film viewings, lectures, and supplementary materials that you've been given. Read this example to better understand the academic tone of the essays you'll be writing for this course, including the use of argument, organization, and evidence. Please note the format of the paper, and pay careful attention to how the entire paper is written in the third person point of view, thus creating an objective voice throughout the essay. Also, pay attention to the way quotations are properly executed and cited. For paper #1, this level of writing—which explores the given topic while utilizing the writing lessons and conventions we've covered at this point in the semester—will result in a grade of B or higher.

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English 100

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Outbreak of Technology

Author of *From Dawn to Decadence*, Jacques Barzun, writes, “The machine makes us its captive servants... we come to resemble it in its pace, rigidity, and uniform expectations” (Restak 388). Barzun’s quote emphasizes that individuals are starting to show characteristics of everyday machines. In the last twenty years, technology has spread to almost every edge of the globe — infecting educational institutes, business corporations, and every day life — and will continue to spread to all communities. It has become unconventional to see someone not glued to their cell phones, computers, or televisions. Although technological advancements appear to society as convenient and valuable, they also impose detrimental effects on people. For example, technology can cause inefficiencies in people’s brain processing, gawkiness in their social interactions, and narcissism in their personal identity. This epidemic of modern technology has become a chaotic problem in today’s society.

Modern technology has decreased the efficiency of thought processes in the human brain. Society tells people that in order to be a successful student or worker, they must be able to quickly complete multiple tasks: talking on the phone, typing on the computer, or driving to work, all at the same time. Although most believe that they are great at multitasking, studies have found that there is a significant amount of time the brain uses to switch between different jobs. Therefore, multitasking ultimately reduces the success of either tasks at hand. At the University of Central Florida, there was a study that recorded the stopping distance time of

drivers who were distracted on the phone. Pete A. Hancock, leading psychologist of the study, found that cell phones, “had a profound effect on stopping distance” (Restak 342). This proves that it is important to stay focused on one task at a time, especially when because half a second could mean life or death. While technology has alarmingly decreased people’s mental efficiencies, it has also contributed to vast social problems.

Social awkwardness is a problem for a lot of millennials, especially teens and young adults. Teens are constantly on apps like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, and can have up to hundreds of friends and “followers.” But when it comes to working and meeting outside of the online world, these teens become socially uncomfortable because they don’t know how to communicate in real life situations. “Technology [over 50 years] has separated us,” says Philip Rosedale, creator of the virtual world Second Life (Goodman). He believes that, “We’ve gone from [going to] watching movies to watching them in living rooms to watching them on our iPods” (Goodman). Rosedale explains how people have become more isolated from one another over the last few decades. Families will go out to eat and while they are waiting for their food, they will sit on their phones instead of talking to one another. Friends will spend more time chatting over text than actually hanging out and conversing. For most people today, it would be terrifying to physically talk to their crush, so instead they “like” that person’s pictures on Instagram to get their attention. Society needs to learn how to communicate and interact with one another away from the cell phone screens. This will improve necessary jobs skills and overall personal relations. However, before millennials can work on their personal relationships, they first need to confront their tendencies towards self-obsession.

Technology has become a contributing factor in today’s higher rates of narcissism. People have become all about themselves, posting anything and everything they do on social

media. They are obsessed with sharing their fancy meals, grand adventures, and self portraits with their many “followers” to get likes and comments. Their self-esteem becomes reinforced by the feedback given by hundreds of people they may or may not know, thus resulting in an identity crisis. Author Christopher Lasch writes in his book *The Culture of Narcissism*, that “The media [encourages] narcissistic dreams of fame and glory...and make it more and more difficult for people to accept the banality of everyday existence” (Stein). Society finds it hard to be ordinary and instead strive to become the next big Youtube star or Instagram celebrity. Identities become separated into “real self” and “online self” where the online identity is inflated and over exaggerated to give the impression of fame and success. It is important to be true to oneself, both online and in person, and to give more importance to what’s going on in the world and not what people are posting online.

Some may argue that modern technology, in the last twenty years, has improved society in many beneficial ways. However, technology has also hurt people’s thought processes, social interactions, and self-identities. The brain uses possible life endangering seconds to multitask. People’s interactions with one another have become gawky. Social media sites have contributed to higher rates of narcissism. There needs to be a balance in the use of modern day technology. Society needs to learn to be more versatile and less dependent on their phones and social media. Instead, people should focus on making friends in person, talking to one another at the dinner table, and finding self-esteem from their accomplishments. It may seem like technology controls most of the modern world, but it isn’t too late to make a change. It is possible for humans and technology to live together more harmoniously.

WORD COUNT: 945

Works Cited

- Goodman, R. D. (Director). (2010). *Digital nation* [Documentary]. USA: PBS Video.
- Restak, Richard. *Attention Deficit: The Brain Syndrome of Our Era*. Emerging. United States of America: Barclay Berrios, 2010. 333-345. Print.
- Stein, Joel. "The Me, Me, Me Generation." *Time Magazine* 20 May 2013: 26-34. Web.