

Does my use of this technology encourage me to view others as a means to an end?

We are now separated more than ever from the people who produce and make available for the things we need. I can shop for groceries without ever seeing a single human being - I simply sit at a keyboard and in an hour my groceries appear, as if by magic, outside my door. It is thus easy to ignore the fact the real people were involved in the production, transport, processing and delivery of these items. Those involved cease to be people to us - to a large extent they simply cease to be. They are simply tools in the gratification of my demands, but because they are invisible, I don't have to consider for an instant the humanity of those who are essential to keeping me alive. Are they exploited, underpaid, working in dangerous conditions, unable to make ends meet despite the essential work they do? I need not worry about any of these questions because, from my lived experience, the experience of these essential others is utterly and totally invisible to me.

Does using this technology require me to think more or less?

As we have been trained over the last 20 years, less. The internet has trained us that the answers are easy and that knowledge is simply a click away. Convenience, rather than accuracy is the defining feature of our use of information technologies. This has had obvious consequences with regard to the proliferation of mis and dis information.

There are other ways to approach technology, however. Technology can make us think more. We have at our fingertips every perspective on every issue. We could be infinitely more well rounded and informed, if we used technology with the aim of learning and knowing rather than with the aim of confirmation and ease.

How will the use of this technology affect how I relate to other people?

This question makes me think most of my job as a teacher. Prior to the internet revolution of the last twenty or so years, teaching was much less dependent on technology. Lectures were given by a person who used notes and a chalkboard. The focus of this interaction was between the teacher and students directly. Now, almost all interaction is mediated through technology. Lectures are delivered through powerpoint, classes are delivered online, students have individual devices which draw their focus from other people to a screen. Technology has become an ever present intermediary that more often than not stands between us and others. In the end, our relationships with one another are less direct. Often our relations with one another are dictated by terms imposed by our technological tools, rather than having the function of the tools dictated by our needs (Canvas, grade comments etc). Questions that used to be answered through social interaction are now settled by technology in the absence of any social interaction (trivia at a lunch discussion).