Envisioning Technology

Part One: Your Interest(s)

I have played tennis for most of my life and enjoyed playing on school teams. Technology has allowed tennis players to explore the sport in new ways. Depending on the type of racket you choose to play with, technology allows for you to pick one based on your preferred technique. There are rackets with different weights and sizes for all types of players. There are various types of strings that you can put on your racket to create a different kind of shot. When I played growing up, my coaches would tell me to use a heavier racket with tighter string tension for a more powerful shot.

Technology has played an important role in tennis because it has allowed players to personalize their game. I find it fascinating how many types of rackets have been made for every type of play. In addition to rackets, the technology with tennis shoes, tracking equipment and ball machines has allowed tennis players to have more control over their technique and improve their own style of play. In the article, “Tennis Pushes the Technology Limits” discusses the use of racket sensors that allow players to track the speed of the ball, spin, shot type, and accuracy. The article also explains the use of smart phones to control ball machines as well as wearable sensors for players to track speed and spin of the ball during play. These inventions have impacted tennis positively because it allows players to track their progress and set goals for the future based on the data that the sensors collect. For example, players can set a baseline ball speed that they want to hit and they are able to actually reach this goal by using a tracking device to observe results after every practice. The QLIPP racket sensor is one of the products that is able to perform these tasks. This device reads, “shot type, speed, spin, and ball contact accuracy.” It also measures, “where you catch the ball with your racquet and how often you hit the racquet’s sweet spot.” The QLIPP is just one of several devices that are able to track this information.
The Lobster Phenom is a device that allows you to use your smart phone to control the ball machine. In some cases, ball machines are hard to control at first because you manually have to move the machine to where you want the ball to go or adjust the speed. The Lobster Phenom is a tool that makes practicing with a ball machine much easier because you can control all of the settings from your phone. It is common for tennis players to film their practice sessions or matches in order to go back and tweak technique. From the article, an invention called the PlaySight Smart Court is a device that “uses six HD cameras and sensors to provide real-time and post-match statistics.” This is important because players have access to statistics, which they can use to improve at later practice sessions. Coaches use this technology to examine their player’s game and give feedback about how to improve and hone in on a particular technique.

On the other hand, these types of technology can negatively impact tennis because it can cause players to focus too specifically on certain areas rather than improving their game as a whole. Tennis is a very individualized sport and players have the freedom to control all parts of the game. This technology gives them the opportunity to work specifically on a skill, or they can choose to use more simplistic methods of training. In some styles of coaching, this type of technology might be distracting to the player and cause stress to them on only one part of their game. Similar to other types of technology such as smart phones, there are so many different types of brands to choose from that it can be difficult to find the right one. The article mentions at least a few types of same technology for tennis players. This can make it difficult for players and coaches to choose which device will work best for their style of play. It may take several trials of different devices to find the one that works best for the player’s needs.

In the future, I think this technology will greatly impact the game of tennis and how it is played. It will revolve around which racket has the most advanced technology in order for the player’s game to benefit the most. In addition, shoe technology and racket sensor technology will also influence how playing is approached. I predict that more devices will come out on the market and one will become the most popular to buy. This is similar to how most people own an Apple smartphone when there are many other brands available. The upside to more products becoming available, further exemplifies how tennis is
a very individualized sport. Players are able to choose their own technique court etiquette and if they want to use technology to benefit their game. Overall, I see tennis evolving into an even more individualized sport that creates more opportunities for every style of play.

Part 2: In the Media

Ozark is Netflix series that focuses on drug trafficking through Mexico to the United States. Marty Byrde, a financial advisor in Chicago, puts himself in the middle of a drug trafficking operation. A client decides to hire him for financial needs but Marty later finds out that he has been helping this man make money through illegal drugs. The drug lord suspects that Marty and his business partner are working with the FBI and threatens to kill them both. In order to protect his family, Marty makes a deal with the drug lord that he will move his family to the Ozarks in Missouri and sell drugs to keep his life.

In the season one finale, episode 10, Marty’s family has had enough with living in the Ozarks because they come from a big city and had to make the transition into a more rural lifestyle. They become agitated with Marty’s plans to sell drugs and want to move on with their lives. On the other hand, Marty is struggling to keep up with the amount of drugs he needs to sell. Marty’s boss is very angry at how the operation is going and comes to visit the Ozarks due to his unhappiness. Marty wants his family to have a fresh start while he continues to run the operation, therefore he has a private investigator create fake identities for his wife and children to run away.

Throughout the episode, Marty uses many different cellphones in order to communicate with his wife, children and the drug lord. He uses many different phones, so people are unable to track his location completely. Cellphones are still widely used and influence how humans communicate. They are commonly owned by majority of the people in the United States and create a more technological form of communication instead of face-to-face interaction. In this episode, cellphones made it easier for Marty to avoid the authorities and his boss. It was easy for Marty to access cellphones and use multiple of them even though he was in a rural area of Missouri.

Cellphones are solving problems because they make it easier to track criminals with GPS. In a University of Pennsylvania Law School journal called, “Mobile Phones and Crime Deterrence: An
Underappreciated Link” the writers explain the decline in crime due to the advancement of mobile devices. In the journal, they make the point that, “Mobile devices provide additional surveillance of motivated offenders which is a form of increased guardianship for suitable targets of crime.” Mobile devices allow authorities to track your movement throughout the day, which can provide them with the evidence they need to find the source of a crime. In Ozark, Marty is tracked by the FBI and they continually visit his house for questioning. They were aware of his illegal activity and used the location on his mobile device to track where he travels to catch him in the act. This technology is solving problems for police because it is easier to find a person without having to conduct a search. In Marty’s case, he is manipulating the actions of the police by using more than one cell phone in order to keep his location inconsistent. Based on this example, cellphones are also creating problems in the real world. The use of multiple phones can lead to a situation like Marty’s, which makes it harder for authorities to catch a criminal. In reality, Marty’s cell phone use would be tracked more closely by authorities and his case would have been investigated sooner than in the show. The relationship between technology and crime is shown throughout the show because communication plays a large role in how the characters interact. Technology plays a large role in how the characters are involved in the show because they communicate through cell phone use.

I believe that the use of cell phones in Ozark is unethical because of the crimes that the characters commit through this form of communication. Marty and his boss use the cell phones to threaten and harm people. Generally, cell phone use that does not involve criminal activity is ethical, but in this case technology is being used for the wrong reasons. In 5 to 10 years, I think that cell phone will continue to advance and become a main source of communication. The show is based in present years, which means that the advancement of technology is similar to the real world. Therefore, cell phone use could also continue to influence Marty’s crimes. Ozark represents how technology can be used for evil in society. Although the use of technology is seen as unethical in Ozark, it also plays a role in protecting Marty’s family. At the very end of the episode, Marty uses the cell phone to set up fake identities for his family and tells them to flee to safety. Realistically, cell phone use can be used for protection. For example,
when people use their phones to call for help or dial 911 are ways that technology is used for the good. The show demonstrates how technology can be used for the good and evil through the actions of the characters.
Works Cited

Klick, Jonathan; MacDonald, John; and Stratmann, Thomas, "Mobile Phones and Crime Deterrence: An Underappreciated Link" (2012). Faculty Scholarship. Paper 426.
