Envisioning Technology Part One: The Xbox One

A major part of people’s lives that I feel goes unrecognized is the role that technology plays in our society today. Technology makes it possible for us to do our daily tasks as efficiently as possible. The reason that many people do not give technology so much credit is because they do not understand how it works. They just know that it can assist them in doing duties quicker. I believe that it is important for people to notice how important technology is and that if we did not have advanced technology, every facet of our lives would be extremely different.

One specific technological interest that I have had for quite some time now is playing video games. My preferred method of playing video games is through the Xbox One. The reason why I enjoy using an Xbox One so much is because it is not just a platform for online gaming - you can use it to watch Netflix, watch Blu-rays/DVDs, play CDs, socialize with friends, go on the internet, and much more. Personally, I primarily use the Xbox One to play online video games, as well as watch Netflix. Simply explained, the Xbox One is a gaming console that allows the user to play video games with friends and talk with them through a microphone. The user utilizes a wireless controller to peruse through the Xbox One features and play video games. One can acquire video games either by purchasing them directly from the online store on the Xbox One itself, or one can go into a store, such as GameStop and purchase the physical disc for the game. There are different game types that would interest different types of people, such as strategy, shooter, sports, etc.

I enjoy the hobby of playing Xbox because I feel as though it is a great way to relax. I usually enjoy it most after I have been studying for a while and just want to unwind and not think. It is a great way to relieve stress. I was first drawn to playing video games in the fourth grade. Me and my friends would all go over to one person’s house and play on the GameCube, an older gaming platform. I immediately enjoyed it and wanted one for myself. A couple years went by and the infamous Xbox 360
was released. My friend, Michael, bought one and I tried it out and enjoyed it very much. I was able to convince my parents to buy me and my older brother an Xbox 360, where we played almost every day. While I was in high school, the Xbox One came out, an updated and allegedly much better version of the Xbox 360. I figured since I enjoyed the Xbox 360 so much that it was only right that I purchased an Xbox One.

Another thing that makes the Xbox One a unique console is the technology behind it. Compared to its predecessor, the Xbox 360, the Xbox one has improved its technology in multiple ways. According to an Article written by Rupal Bansal titled “Xbox 360 vs. Xbox One”, the Xbox One has one hundred and eighty more gigabytes for storage in the hard drive than the Xbox 360. Simply put, this means that the Xbox One allows the use to download much more content (which could include games or apps) than the Xbox 360 allows. This plethora of storage allows the user to download content worry free because they do not have the concern of running out of storage. In addition, the article gives a reason for why the Xbox One is the superior gaming console, “It offers better graphics, faster processing, more storage, and more advanced controllers than the Xbox 360” (Bansal 1). With more storage, better graphics, and better controllers, the Xbox One provides people with the ultimate gaming experience.

The Xbox one has improved my hobby of playing video games dramatically due to some technological updates from the previous model Xbox. According to an article titled “Xbox One: Hardware and software specs detailed and analyzed” written by Sebastian Anthony, “The Xbox One is powered by an 8-core x86 AMD CPU” (Anthony 1). In simple English, this means that the Xbox One is using one of the most advanced central processing units (CPU) and graphics accelerator units (GPU) on the market. This results in the Xbox One having much better graphics and faster movements than the Xbox 360.

The updates in technology between the two models of the Xbox have impacted my video game experience greatly. I now am able to connect with my friends in a much easier fashion and enjoy our online gaming experiences together. I no longer experience glitches in online play or any type of lagging while I play. However, there is one downside to the Xbox One that is relatively important. The downside
is that the price of the Xbox One is one hundred dollars more expensive than that of the Xbox 360. Even though these one hundred dollars might be a deal breaker for some customers, I view it as a fair price markup for the improvements made to the console and its multimedia content.

In the future, I could see the Xbox One evolving into a multimedia platform where it includes more social media aspects. In addition to skype, I feel as though the Xbox One may begin to integrate social media applications such as Instagram, twitter, and snapchat. I think that because the Xbox One already has such a great video gaming experience and has many applications that allow the user to watch their favorite television shows or movies that the next logical step would be to expand on the social media aspect. This update would definitely be beneficial to Microsoft’s business because it will draw in more teenagers who can just buy one system to fill all of their online needs.

Overall, Microsoft has done a great job of being able to improve my hobby of online gaming. They continue to make innovative updates in a short amount of time, improving the graphics of games and much more. The technology of the Xbox One has changed the way that me and many other online people now experience online gaming.
Works Cited

Bansal, Rupal. “Xbox 360 vs Xbox One.” Xbox 360 vs Xbox One - Difference and Comparison | Diffen, Diffen LLC.

Envisioning Technology Part Two: The Dark Side of Technology

While technology advancements can be very exciting and help make our lives better, many people overlook the potential consequences that may lie behind the fancy features of the newly released product. Many people, including scholars and directors, have tried to touch on what all of this new technology may result in. I believe that there is one television show in particular that does a phenomenal job of discussing the potential consequences that come along with new technology.

The television show I have chosen to write about is *Black Mirror*. Black Mirror is a British science fiction television show about how new technology can affect the near distant society. It focuses on unexpected consequences that these new technologies can have. The specific episode I want to focus on is the first episode from season 2 titled “Be Right Back”. In this episode, a character whose name is Martha is dating another character named Ash. Ash is killed in a horrible car accident and while Martha is mourning over him, she discovers some interesting news. Martha’s friend informs her about a new online service which allows people to communicate with their loved ones who have passed away. After persistence from the friend, Martha finally decides to try out the service. Martha uploads all of Ash’s old emails and social media accounts to the service so the service can try its best to imitate Ash by learning how he talked. Later, Martha uploads photos and videos of Ash to the service so it can duplicate Ash’s voice so that Martha and this artificial intelligence service (imitating Ash) can communicate. This communication with the artificial Ash actually helps Martha feel a little better until she drops her phone. She begins to panic until the artificial Ash tells her about an experimental stage of the service. The experimental stage is where the user receives a synthetic body that is supposed to replicate your deceased loved one. After following the service’s instructions, Martha is able to turn this synthetic body into a replica of Ash that looks identical to him. However, there are some downsides. The artificial Ash does not have all of the personality traits that the real Ash did, and it lacks many human qualities, such as not needing sleep. Martha quickly becomes uncomfortable around the artificial Ash and tries to get rid of him, but it does not work. To end the episode, Martha locks the artificial Ash in the attic and only allows her daughter to see him on weekends.
The piece of technology in this episode that was most intriguing to me was this online service that allowed people to communicate with their dead loved ones through the use of emails, text messages, phone calls, and more. In real life, the technology is not yet available, however developers in South Korea are working on an app called “With Me” which utilizes 3D scanning to replicate those who have to deceased to allow people to communicate with them. According to an article on the NY Post titled, “New app lets you talk to the dead”, an app that lets people speak to avatars of dead relatives and take selfies with them is being developed in South Korea (Fonrouge 1). The way the app works is while the person is still alive they go to a place where they can get 3D scanned so an avatar is created. Then if that person dies, other people can bring up their avatar and communicate with it or take pictures with it. The developers in South Korea are succeeding and believe the “With Me” app can be fully functioning in the near distant future. In the show, people do have to pay to use this service and they have to pay even more to get the synthetic version of the deceased loved one. Therefore, in the show, this technology is only available to those with money.

In this Black Mirror episode, the service can help solve problems to an extent, while creating new problems along the way. This is shown by Martha being relieved that she can still be in contact with her loved one through emails, text messages, and phone calls. However, once Martha purchases the synthetic version of Ash, some new conflicts arise. Martha quickly realizes that the artificial version of Ash will never be the real Ash due to a lack of certain personality and human traits. In turn, this just hurts Martha more, as she is being reminded constantly from the artificial Ash that the real Ash is dead and that he can never be brought back to life. No synthetic version will ever be good enough to Martha as the real-life version of Ash. In the real-world, this technology seems as though it can solve problems. The app “With Me” will help people still communicate to replicas of their deceased loved ones. However, I predict that with this app, the same problems that the service in Black Mirror created will arise. I believe that once the app releases it will be great at first to be able to communicate with your dead loved one, however I believe that ultimately the app will just hurt the person more because it will be a constant reminder that their loved one has passed away.
The service in the show ultimately just ends up making Martha sadder because she realizes she will never have her real boyfriend back. Martha actually becomes so disturbed by the synthetic Ash that she locks him in her attic and only allows her daughter to see him on the weekends. As mentioned earlier, I believe this type of technology (“With Me” app) will have the same effect on people in real life. The person will take comfort at first because they can communicate with their deceased loved one, but in the end, the person will just end up being hurt even more than they were initially because the app will serve as a constant reminder that your loved one is never coming back.

I believe that this technology is unethical because it will end up hurting people more than helping them in the long run. I believe that the dead should remain dead and that if someone is ever missing their deceased loved ones that they can “bring them back to life” through the use of pictures and old memories they had with their deceased loved one, not technology. I do not think this technology could be used in ways that would be considered unethical because ultimately it is someone’s decision whether or not they would like to create this replica version of their loved one that passed away. I do believe that people should be forewarned about possible problems that the app “With Me” may cause in the future. In 5 to 10 years, I believe that this technology will evolve and that the app will be produced and be successful in the short run. However, I believe after the app has been out for a couple of years, people will quickly begin to realize that they really should not try and replicate their loved ones that have died. This will result in the app plummeting and becoming significantly less popular.

In the near future, I am sure there will be a ton of new technology that everyone will be super excited about because they claim they can revolutionize your lives. However, what I think the world will ultimately end up realizing is that not all of this technology is ethical and that it should not be used. I believe that *Black Mirror* does an excellent job at pointing out the consequences that come along with new technology.
Works Cited