My favorite hobby is camping and hiking. Throughout high school, I was involved in Venture Scouts which was the same as Boy Scouts but for both genders. I also got a lot of experience camping/hiking when I went out of the country on mission trips and just weekend adventures around Wisconsin or Michigan. Basically for camping, you would pack the minimal and carry around only essentials. For hiking, all you need is boots, some snacks, hydration, and nature of course! It was also important to bring warm clothing because the temperature dropped greatly at night.

To begin, I really enjoy camping/hiking because it drew me away from social media. I always wondered what it would be like without my phone for two weeks. It seems like a very long time, but truly it is not because you are distracted doing high adventure activities like rock climbing and canoeing. Furthermore, it was not a boring experience because you would constantly be with your friends. The ability to travel to different places and experience nature is an experience. Every place is different with different things to do. I also liked the fact that you obviously learn survival skills like building a tent and fire. To continue, camping also allowed me to give back to the environment in a number of ways. When I went to the White Mountains for a backpacking trip, I learned how to build a bog bridge. A bog bridge is basically a bridge made and cut from the trunks of trees. The ultimate purpose for them was to serve as a path on a trail so people would not ruin the natural trails.

To add on, camping and hiking never really involved technology but now there are really useful gadgets and gear that has been invented to make the adventure easier. Finding water when camping is
actually difficult. My troop always brought water in nalgenes but the weight of 6 nalgenes was heavy.
Also, for longer trips it was important that I did have enough water. The LifeStraw was first made in 2005
to ensure safer water for people around the world. Throughout the years, there have been enhanced
versions of the product itself. The straw is now used by itself or in a high volume water purifier. The
straw essentially “utilizes hollow fiber membrane technology which eliminates 99.99 percent of
waterborne bacteria and parasites” (Ellis). During my White Mountains trip, my alternate to the LifeStraw
was to use iodine tablets in my nalgenes. However, this only got rid of the bacteria not the small leaves in
water. It also tasted like metal! Therefore, I got this straw right before my trip to Fiji and it was very
useful when I was hiking and needed a source of water. It was neat that I could just pull it out of my
backpack and sip through it from a river. Even though this is not a technology powered with batteries it is
still a very effective and important invention that anyone can use.

Furthermore, LifeStraw is a phenomenal product because the company gives back to third world
countries. Follow the Liters is a program that has volunteers with LifeStraw and they work to provide
clean water to schools in Kenya. For every filtration product sold by LifeStraw, another product is given
back to the community (Lewon). This is crucial because kids in Kenya do not attend school because they
are sick from the dirty water. I am a huge supporter of companies like LifeStraw and Patagonia because
they use cause marketing to give back to the community. It is amazing that gear that I use for my own
hobby is promoting for a good cause around the world.

In conclusion, camping and hiking has changed my life in many different ways. I have learned so
many valuable skills to help me later in life and have learned to self reflect in better ways. The
technology/gear that is being introduced for backpackers is very convenient but also the companies that
create them have meaningful impact.
Envisioning Technology Part 2

The Netflix series *Black Mirror* is a science fiction anthology that focuses on different technologies and how they can greatly affect society. Most of the technology presented in the show is not existent but very well can be in the future with the evolution of technology. Every episode in the season is unique based on its own futuristic device. The seasons are not very long but people always want more! *Black Mirror* is the type of show you watch and at the end of the episode you are confused but fascinated by technology.

The *Black Mirror* episode “Hang the DJ” from season four centers around a very high tech dating system the characters refer to as “System.” The System uses a compatibility algorithm to match people in society together. Furthermore, there is no other form of dating because everyone in society has to rely on the device. Frank and Amy are two normal people that randomly get paired to go on a date to a fancy restaurant. When a couple first meets, they have the ability to ask the System its expiration date. The expiration date was how long the couple had together before they had to depart and continue to the next pairing. Within the duration of the time, the couple had the choice to do anything they wanted with each other. The purpose of the system was to find every person’s 99.8%, in other words, their soulmate. At first, Frank and Amy had a quick expiration date but they really seemed to hit it off. Both of the characters departed and resorted to the System for new pairings. Both of the characters resumed to have failed relationships and they each took their anger out on the System. Luckily, the System gave them a second chance and paired them together again. However, this time they both decided not to look at the expiration date. For a long period of time their relationship was going strong, but Frank got anxious and decided to check the expiration date. They both had five years together but then the System glitched and the time got shorter and shorter. As a result, they were forced to leave each other. In time, they both realized that they were meant to be with each other and felt that “the world was toying with them” (*Black
The couple rebel from what the System wants because all it did was control their lives. Therefore, they destroyed the System and ran away from the society to find true love with each other.

Furthermore, even though the device from *Black Mirror* does not exist in our current society, there is a high chance that one day it will. In our society, people resort to apps like Tinder and Bumble in order to find random dates or hookups. The differences between the apps and the device from the show is that the device had more control over the users. They were forced to go on their next date when it told them and when to leave each other for good. However, some of the apps have similar characteristics which evolved into the device in the show. For example, the expiration feature on Bumble is similar to the one in the device. The device itself is mandatory for the people in *Black Mirror* society, but Bumble is used by choice and “promotes empowerment to women” (Claire O'Connor). Also, both parties are able to communicate with each other prior to meeting each other face to face. In our society, I believe that many relationships are formed through online platforms. Many people believe it is hard to find people just by meeting them and having an instant connection. Therefore, online platforms make it easier and are accessible to people all around the world.

To conclude, I believe that dating platforms are ethical as long as the person using it has full control. Online dating platforms allow people to meet others even if they do not have a relationship motive. If people are forced to do date people it is very unethical and potentially involves an abusive relationship. Online dating will change in many ways for years to come and maybe one day there will be a device known as the “System.”
Works Cited


