Part One: My Interests

I have an interest in buying and selling publicly traded stocks. My interest began after watching the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street* starring Leonardo DiCaprio. I watched the movie in high school at around the same time that we began learning about buying and selling stocks in my economics class. Buying and selling stocks is when you purchase shares of a publicly traded company (publicly which means the company has opened the opportunity to purchase shares of that company to anyone who chooses to do so) at a price that you believe will later be valued higher, at which point you sell the shares to another buyer and in turn earn a profit. The interesting part about buying and selling stocks is that no one truly knows exactly when the price of a stock will increase or decrease, and therefore it is very difficult to know when to buy or sell the stock. By researching the history of stocks and learning how their prices have fluctuated in the past, you become more knowledgeable about past trends and therefore can be ready to seize on a ripe opportunity to either buy or sell a stock. All the madness surrounding the stock market is why I am so interested in buying and selling stocks.

In 1971, a brand new technology emerged that propelled the stock market in insurmountable ways. This technology was the NASDAQ, which introduced a faster, more efficient, and more convenient way of trading stocks: online trading (“Nasdaq’s Story”). The extreme uniqueness of the NASDAQ lies in the fact that it was the first stock exchange that did not have an actual building or headquarters and instead executed all of its trading through a network of computers (“Electric Trading…”). For further explanation, this technology skips past the intermediate character of a stock broker in the process of buying and selling stocks and instead responds instantly to the user of the computer. This technology allows for instant stock transactions at real-time prices.
The inception of the NASDAQ has provided numerous benefits to the buyers and sellers of stocks. Firstly, the obvious nature of faster, more efficient, and more convenient buying and selling of stock allows more people to participate in stock transactions. Another, less known benefit that arises from the use of electronical buying and selling of stocks is a reduction of the bid-ask spread, which the New York Stock Exchange, another arena for buying and selling stocks, frequently profiting from (“Electronic Trading…”). Since the creation of the technology of the NASDAQ, numerous other online trading websites have emerged and became extremely popular, including TD Ameritrade, Merrill Edge, and E*TRADE.

Even I have personally benefitted from the technology that pioneered the online buying and selling of stocks. For a transaction fee, I use E*TRADE to buy and sell stocks. This technology allows me to make instant stock transaction at the press of a button which gives me a gigantic advantage in the ever-changing world of buying and selling stocks. I firmly believe that this technology has continually increased my interest in buying and selling stocks. It is tough to imagine a scenario in which I would have to place a phone call to a stock broker on Wall Street in New York City and tell him or her which stock I would like to either buy or sell. This method seems slow and inconvenient to me, but it was the only way to make stock transactions before the NASDAQ came of existence. Although many people still use the pre-online trading method of calling brokers to place transactions, I believe that in the future, online trading will come to dominate the buying and selling of stocks even more than it does today. As the capabilities of technologies increase, online trading will become even better than it is today, causing more and more people to chose to reap in the benefits of an extraordinarily interesting hobby.

The emergence of the NASDAQ and in turn the technology that allows for online trading is tremendous. By allowing for faster, more efficient, and more convenient buying and selling of stocks, this technology has bettered the lives of countless individuals. This technology has revolutionized the craft of buying and trading stocks. There is no ceiling for the future possibilities that lie in store for online trading.
Part One: My Interests Works Cited


Part Two: In the Media

In the hit show, *South Park*, interesting use of computers and banking are used in season 13, episode 3 entitled *Margaritaville*. The overall plot of South Park is almost non-existent. The creators of the show began writing the new episode six days before the episode is premiered, which results in the new episodes containing extremely current information. There are four main characters who are all in the fourth grade: Eric Cartman, an over-weight, crude, and uncensored character, Kenny, a low-income character whose voice is impossible to hear under his coat, Kyle, a Jewish boy who constantly argues with Cartman, and Stan, the “normal” one of the group, who deals with a hilariously childish father. In the episode, *Margaritaville*, it is 2008 and the economic recession is in full swing. Luckily, Stan has just received a $100 bill as a present from his grandmother. The responsible father that Stan’s dad is informs Stan that he needs to put his money in a money market mutual fund in the bank, so he can grow his money. Stan reluctantly agrees and goes with his father to the bank. There is a long line of people waiting on one banker behind a computer and eventually Stan’s turn comes to meet the banker. Stan informs the banker he wishes to invest his $100 bill into a money market mutual fund and the banker comforts Stan by saying how smart Stan is for investing and how simple it is to set up a money market mutual fund. As soon as the banker deposit’s Stan’s money, he say “And... it’s gone.” The banker has lost every penny of Stan’s money in a matter of seconds by putting it in the stock market, through an online trading site.

This technology, online trading, is available to everyone in the TV show. Stan is only a fourth grader and he is still allowed to put his money in the stock market through an online trading platform. In the real world, there is an age limit to buying stocks. Depending on what state you live in, this age limit can be as low as eighteen years old or as high as twenty-one years old (“Can Anyone Buy...”). It is
evident in this TV show episode that this technology is causing problems for Stan. He managed to lose his prized $100 in a matter of seconds through one click of the button on an online trading site. This scene in the episode does a very good job of representing how instant online trading actually is; one push of a button and a stock can be either bought or sold. Although this instant trading may seem very convenient, other people in the real world suffered similar fates as Stan did. Since online trading technology allows for instantaneous transactions, an accidental purchase of a stock can be instantly processed, leaving you with less money than you began with if the stock was not a good one.

Although in this episode of *South Park* the technology seems bad and possibly even unethical (The use of online trading by a grown banker resulting in the loss of all the money of a fourth grader seems awfully messed up). The technology of online trading is used in ethical ways almost all of the time. This technology allows for instant purchases of stocks that the user of the technology wants to buy or sells at that exact moment. This instant feature actually gives the user of the technology an advantage when buying or selling stocks, because since the online trading is instant and in real time, once the price you are looking for comes across the screen, you are immediately able to either buy or sell the stock at the price listed. Obviously, this technology, along with most technology, can be used in an unethical way. The instant feature of online trading technology can make manipulating someone who is not knowledgeable about buying and selling stocks easier, faster, and more convenient. In five to ten years, this technology can only grow from where it is at now. Online trading will only grow in its capabilities due to the exponential growth in the power of technology.

Episode 3 of season 13 of *South Park, Margaritaville*, shows a use of a technology of my interest: online trading. This episode shows the dangers of online trading in an extremely hysterical way (The phrase “And...it’s gone!” used by the banker immediately after he loses all of Stan’s money has become a very popular meme on the internet). Not only does it show us the dangers of online trading, but it also shows us the power that this technology possesses. By having the capabilities to make a purchase or a
sale by one simple click of a button, online buying and selling of stocks is one of the most revolutionary technological advances made in modern history.
Part Two: In the Media Works Cited
