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Envisioning Technology  

Part One: My interests  

My greatest passion in life is music. I try to listen to something new every day. I’ve also played guitar and drums since middle school. Recently, I’ve been making music on my computer with a digital audio workstation, which has helped me pick up the keyboard as well. The digital audio software, or DAW, I use is called Maschine and has an extensive library of digital instruments. It can be used to produce, record, and arrange a song in a single application on your computer. This appeals to me because it is a seemingly endless resource for new sounds and ideas, and really allows me to get creative.

The article *How the 1990s Changed Recording and Music Production Forever* (DeArcangelis) discusses the importance of DAWs in modern music. The first DAW, called Pro Tools, originated in 1991. In its early days, Pro Tools was seen “not as a revolutionary new platform, but as a new tool in the production process” (DeArcangelis). Essentially, it took an entire studio’s worth of equipment and put it into a software. It was limited by only allowing two recorded tracks on it at a time, but as that number increased, so did it’s potential. Overtime, more and more processes that had required hardware became possible on the computer. Now, an entire song can be made with only a software and a computer. According to a Guardian article titled *Metronomy and the State of Digital Music*, “thanks to the internet and rapid advances in software, almost all pop music is written, recorded, produced, broadcast and
consumed on computers” (Buchan). DAWs have become the backbone of nearly all modern music.

This technology has been available since before I was interested in it, and I can hardly imagine the process of making a song without them. I also can’t imagine what it would cost to have the hardware versions of all the tools I have at my disposal. If DAWs didn’t exist, I definitely wouldn’t be able to produce music on my own simply because of the cost of the equipment. DAWs made the hobby accessible to millions of people who couldn’t afford to be interested otherwise. This didn’t only change the nature of music production, it changed the entire music industry. With applications like soundcloud and bandcamp, anyone can publish good content from their home. Before DAWs, it was very easy to tell if a song was recorded using low-quality equipment. DAWs evened the playing field because now the sound quality of a song is completely dependant on the skills of the producer. Anyone can make a professional sounding song if they know how. Essentially, it made the road to success in the music industry more about skill and less about resources. I think this is good for any hobby and I think a lot more are moving in this direction.

I see this hobby becoming even more accessible as time goes on. It’s very new technology when considering the history of recorded music, so it will only get more popular. I could also see it getting more collaborative. While I’m not sure if any exist, I’m sure it won’t be long until there is a DAW that allows multiple people to work on a project from different screens, similar to Google Docs. I think these are the biggest changes that could come to this technology in the near future.
Part Two: In the Media

Bojack Horseman is an animated comedy show about a horse that was the star of a famous 90’s sitcom. It’s a satire about Hollywood lifestyles and America in general. Season 4 episode 10, “Lovin that Cali Lifestyle”, opens with a televised debate between Woodchuck Coodchuck-Berkowitz, who in the show is running for reelection as governor of California, and actress Jessica Biel. One of the main characters, Diane, works for a buzzfeed-esque blogging company. She has been gaining attention for writing articles campaigning against Biel. Eventually Diane gets an interview with her, during which Biel says she doesn’t care about Diane’s articles because nobody pays attention to real news anymore. Shortly afterwards Biel gets mad at their waitress because there was avocado on her plate but she didn’t order any. This prompts Diane to write a blog post exposing Jessica for hating avocados. The article blows up on social media, and Jessica's numbers in the polls plummet.

While this is a pretty ridiculous scenario, it captures the nature of social media and blogs very well. Apps like twitter are widely available to everyone, and just about everyone uses them. According to statista.com, there are more than 336 million active users every month on twitter. The benefits of this technology are very apparent. People are more connected with each other than ever before, companies or individuals can use it for promotion, and it’s a place for people to put any type of information they choose. However, the widespread use and ability to share anything have caused problems, both on the show and in real life. People can share anything they want about other people as well. If it gets trending there’s almost no limit to the amount of people that could see it. In the show this is a repeated problem throughout the campaigning, a subplot throughout all of season 4. While people may not be losing support because they said they hate avocados, people have had backlash from things about as serious. The main problem
twitter causes is making this a norm. People seem to care just as much about trivial details about a person as they do about what that person actually stands for.

While it does cause some problems, this technology is definitely still ethical. The problems it causes are inherent with a more interconnected world, and the benefits of a more connected world vastly outweigh the negatives. Promoting falsehoods and negative information about people is the main way it can be used unethically. However, any forum for people to share their thoughts will likely be used to promote negativity at some point. This issue can’t be blamed on social media alone, even though it does promote the problem.

In five to ten years, this technology will only be more popular. It has been growing vastly over the past few years. It may change by becoming more intertwined with other popular applications, for example using your twitter account to login on other services. The only way it would diminish at this point would be for something else to come and replace it, similar to how twitter did with myspace. Unless that happens, the only way this technology can go is up.
Works Cited

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