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### Pre-semester Writing Sample

Over the past few decades, the rapid advance in computers has dramatically affected the world. Technology has turned impossible into possible and helped billions of people worldwide improve their quality of living. Yet recently, tech has come under a negative light, and people have begun to ask important questions about the companies that so quickly have taken so much power. In this essay, I will be focusing on the effect technology has had on education and whether it has been a net positive or negative. Have we become too reliant on technology, lazying beings addicted to social media feeds who have little knowledge of the outside world? Or have we advanced as a civilization and become more intelligent than our ancestors could've imagined.

There is a solid argument to be made that the technology we have created for ourselves has advanced too quickly for us to adapt. Harvard professor Edward O. Wilson was quoted saying, "The real problem of humanity is the following: We have Paleolithic emotions, medieval institutions and godlike technology." Companies like Google and Facebook have leveraged this vulnerability in our brains, creating applications that have destroyed the attention span of my generation and others alike (Harris, 2019). This decrease in attention span has negatively affected education; if you can't pay attention to a lecture or reading, you will probably have to spend more time than you would like to learn the material well. To solve this attention problem, some

teachers opt for a no-phone policy in class, which is very interesting to think about when you consider that not long ago schools were desperate to get enough computers for all their students to use.

Even though it's clear that technology has evolved too fast for our primitive brains, I believe that technology has had a net positive effect on education. Aaron Swartz, a programming prodigy, believed that technology could dramatically affect education and the world at large. While apps like Youtube, Facebook, and Tik Tok seemly have had no positive effect on education, the web as a whole has been extremely beneficial. Today with indexing tools like Google, you can be on your way to learning almost anything in a couple of clicks. Aaron Swartz worked on a project called Open Library when he discovered that public records weren't really public. He hacked a publisher called JSTOR in an effort to make the public record available to the public (Scheiber, 2022). Tragically Aaron committed suicide in the process of his trial. Suppose education is solely to train students to join the workforce or start their own business. In that case, I think it is vital to expose students to as much tech as possible during their education. While Aaron's vision of making information free and easy for everyone to access hasn't been fully realized, he played a significant role in helping enormous amounts of educational material become available on the web. I think students should be allowed to use as much tech as they'd like in their education; Google isn't a cheat rather a tool or skill that can be sharpened with practice. Teachers should focus less on how well their students can regurgitate information and more on how well they can quickly find it and understand it. No technology should be banned in the classroom as we are lucky to have it.

Like any other great innovation, the technology seen in classrooms today has many drawbacks to traditional pen and paper, but the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages in my

opinion. Suppose you use the tools at your disposal correctly today. In that case, you can save many hours that would've otherwise been spent searching for relevant information and doing a seemingly dull and repetitive task. Aaron Swartz, the programmer mentioned earlier, tragically took his life after making an effort to make information freely available to the public. After his death, JSTOR released all of its academic material for free. Not long after, another prodigy, much like Swartz, found a way to early test for pancreatic cancer (Pancreas, 2020). This shows the importance of technology and freely available information in academics. In my opinion, the world would be a much better place if everyone had access to the same tools and technologies that big companies gatekeep to profit billions.

## Works Cited

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