

## Thesis Driven Synthesis Essay: Technology Today

Social settings are very different today than they were several years ago. There are very few occasions that one can look around a public area and see a person without a cell phone in hand. In today's society, people of all ages have a cell phone. Some children in elementary have the latest and greatest phone made today. In Jonathan Franzen's essay, "I Just Called to Say I Love You", he writes about personal experiences he has had with people in public on their phones. Franzen is very passionate when describing his views on people in social settings. He believes it is one of the rudest acts a person can do when they have a personal conversation on their cell phone in public. He explains his disdain for people that express emotion on their phone in public, especially if the person shows affection to another. Franzen is extremely passionate about this topic. He believes the technology of today can only have a negative effect on people. He explains, "The technological development that has done lasting harm of real social significance is the cell phone" (367). Are there any positive effects cell phones can have on people or do they only cause harm? There are many different views on this topic. Many believe that the use of texting is leading to improper social interaction for today's generation. Older people may think that teenagers today do not know how to act properly in social interaction because they only interact from screen to screen and not face to face. Most teenagers disagree with this statement, saying they are completely capable of carrying on a normal conversation with someone face to face. However, when teenagers are given the opportunity to prove the others wrong and have a normal conversation, many times they do not handle it well. Today's generation could definitely use more practice with social interaction.

Another topic many are interested in today is the view on the safety of technology. There are many advantages to having the latest technology. Having a cell phone can be helpful when needing to make a quick call in an emergency. Having access to internet and television can keep one informed on current events around the world and in one's community. Surveillance cameras are used in stores and public areas to watch suspicious behavior; people speak of suspicious events over phone conversations and through email, but is it safe? There have been many instances in the past that have shown reason to question the safety of technology. People have discovered their personal conversations have been listened in on. Hackers have been able to access personal information on emails and through texts or phone conversations. Are

there alternatives to the use of technology? Are there safer ways to observe behavior other than surveillance cameras?

Some believe the alternative to technology should be actual human beings. One may believe that having a security guard is safer than using a camera. "If Looks Could Kill", an essay written by *The Economist*, explains why the use of surveillance cameras may not be the best choice. There has been research done on the most updated surveillance cameras. They are able to read one's facial expression to recognize if it is suspicious or unnatural. The research done has also proven some reasons to not trust the system. There have been several instances that the camera has been incorrect in determining one's actual behavior and identities have been mistaken. Rather than using cameras as the guard of public areas, a human being would be more useful in certain circumstances. For example, if there is a robbery taking place a human could go to the site and take action while a camera would only show the people what was taking place. If a camera was the only thing used, it would take more time for a person to arrive on site to help. While surveillance cameras are definitely helpful, having a security guard as well may be more beneficial in the safety of a community.

With technology becoming more advanced by the decade, some wonder if we should fear it. The government has been able to have control on technology that many find questionable. In Catherine Price's essay, "The Anonymity Experiment", she explains several reasons why we should not trust the government and corporations. For example, Price explains, "Some privacy advocates worry about certain corporations regularly eavesdropping on our email and phone calls so they can personalize ads with creepy precision" (387). People use technology every day. The warning Price gives us is that we may want to consider how much we use technology for personal use and be aware of the chances of our information being hacked or taken. Price states, "Last year, 127 million sensitive electronic and paper records were hacked or lost" (387). This may cause some fear in today's culture. Should government have the ability to access our personal conversations or keep track of what sites we visit on the internet? People still have not decided on whether or not they believe government should have that kind of power.

It is important for people to realize that technology is both helpful and hurtful. Technology keeps us updated on current events and allows us to have contact with people when we may not be able to speak to them face to face; surveillance cameras help keep an area safe when a security guard may not be available. People need to understand that while technology is very useful, there are some reasons to avoid using it all the time.

It may cause people to have issues communicating in social circumstances and information can be hacked.

All of the essays agreed that technology is becoming more advanced year after year. It is important to realize this and be prepared for the advances to come.