

Technology
as cultural
power and
its social
impact

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Introduction

Technology in various forms, from television and radio to digital technologies like the Internet and email, is a culturally powerful force that impacts intercultural interactions in a myriad ways.

The social impact of technology and the recognition of technology as culture had also been advocated by McLuhan and Pacey in the 1960s to 1980s; and it has resurfaced today as a significant phenomenon in the twenty-first century because of the wide-ranging influence of technology and the multiple forms of technology (from the Internet and email to the iPhone and iPad).

On the one hand, many findings and recommendations have emerged to inform us of the negative impact of technology on human communication, whereas on the other hand, myths about the positive impact of technology abound. Underlying these myths are particularly naive notions that intercultural communication in cyberspace discards stereotypical behaviors and that technology is free of value and culture bias.

- Palomba (2006: 83) supports this line of argument and suggests that 'cyberspace itself has a culture and is not culture-free'. However, Palomba also asserts that technology is 'simply a neutral and value-free platform for exchange'. As a platform, technology offers various advantages like a sense of security and confidence, empowerment, achievement, and a space to exchange views and opinions, anonymity, and so on, to users, who rely on it as their information and communication tool.
- Palomba (2006) claims that there are various myths regarding the positive impact of intercultural communication on cyber culture.

Gurumurthy (2010) is of the view that 'the marginalities crafted by the information society pursues gendered hierarchies, creating, first of all, the primary faultline separating those with access to and membership in digital spaces and information networks and those without'.

Technology as culture

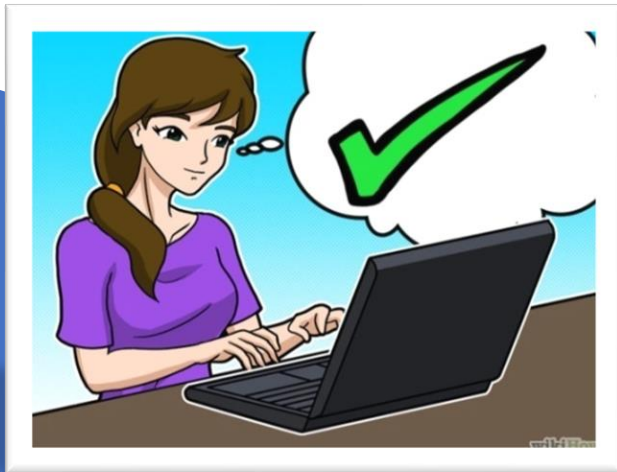
Technology is embedded in a socio-cultural framework that affects the political economy status of communities and impacts on human relations in various ways.

Technology as cultural power

Is acknowledged as one of the significant mechanisms responsible for widening the digital, socio-economic, innovation and gender-divide at an alarming rate.

Harraway (1996; 146)

Claimed that women and men adopt gendered styles online. It is seen that the MALE- gendered style is assertive, self-promoting, sarcastic, authoritative and self-confident, while FEMALE-gendered styles display a more supportive, polite, clarifying, less-confrontational online behaviour.



THE CONTEXTUAL ASSOCIATION ...

defines technology as power, giving the users of that technology greater or lesser significance depending on their power differentials, gendered hierarchies, the sophistication of the technology being used, ease of access (or not) to that technology, the user's socioeconomic status and how technologically savvy the user is in terms of the software, hardware, and the technical language.

Subscribing to Technology as Culture

Technology as a culture assumes power and privilege in the same way as other cultures do.

Paz (2004) is of the view that the Internet, is a 'cultural phenomenon' and that it 'is clearly much more than a technological object; it represents a cultural shift that affects all the dimensions of a community, a group or a society'.

Pacey (1983: 2) introduced the notion of the culture of technology in the early 1980s when he refuted the old argument that technology 'is culturally, morally and politically neutral'.

Technology as Cultural Power

- Technology as a culture and as cultural power may be recognized by the attributes that become aligned and associated with technology since its inception.
- Techno-dialects refer to the embedding of technocultural language within the native languages and remote geographical regions around the world so that indigenous communities can navigate their virtual worlds and thereby control their destinies.



Guenette dan
beamish, 2005



Gurumurthy
(2004: 7

Social Impact Of Technology Culture

Palomba (2006: 84) introduces the idea of 'negotiating reality' in cyberspace. that involves

having an awareness of how your own cultural backgrounds influence your own behavior and perceptions,

ability to engage with others to explore assumptions

an openness to try different ways of seeing and doing things.

Hori's (2005)	Shachaf's (2008)	Palomba (2006: 84)
<p>Research suggests that there are significant behavioral differences when cultures communicate online</p>	<p>exploratory study which focused on the effects of cultural diversity and ICT on team effectiveness in an organizational environment revealed that cultural diversity had a positive influence on decision-making and a negative influence on communication.</p>	<p>Who claims that computer-mediated simulated games offers an ideal opportunity to explore 'prejudice-reduction', particularly because it allows one to explore 'potentially threatening topics in a safe, player controlled environment'</p>

Positive and Negative Impacts of Information and Communication Technology Use

Positive impact	Negative impact
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Uphold the implementation of Human Rights (HAM).2. Held exchange of students between countries.3. There is a high sense of social solidarity among nations in different countries.4. Growing a cosmopolitan and tolerant attitude.5. Spur to improve the quality of self.6. Differences in the personality of men and women7. Enhance self-confidence8. Sharp competition pressure	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The mushrooming of film and music production in the form of CD or DVD fragments.2. A sense of kinship that will diminish with the soul of the individualist.3. The social gap is getting sharper.4. Our traditional cultures will be displaced by the culture of other countries.5. Erosion of cultural values.6. The occurrence of cultural acculturation which further developed into a mass culture.7. Accelerate the changing pattern of life of the nation.

Conclusion

- The power of technology cannot be underestimated in an era when a large number of the world's population is using the media more frequently. Investigating the social impact of technology culture from a wide range of socio-cultural dimensions over the coming decades will reveal some of the complexities of media use coupled with communication behaviors across cultures.
- The preceding discussion illustrates the overt and covert ways in which technology impacts our socio-cultural realities. However, it also demonstrates that technology does not automatically empower its users, spread literacy, and bridge the divide (for e.g., in innovation, gender, class and culture). Human mediation is required to channel technology usage in proactive directions so that it becomes a technology of power that advocates for inclusivity, human rights and global community building.