Computers And Technology Essay, Research Paper

There isn’t hardly anybody around who can say their lives haven’t

been influenced by computers. Computers have all but taken over

society as we know it. Everywhere you look, computers have greatly

improved our lives. It can be as simple as going through a carwash, a

computer processes the information that we feed it and adjusts the

machine accordingly to give us the particular wash we paid for.

Computers also play an extremely complicated role in one of the things

that everybody uses in their everyday lives, our cars. Most people

don’t realize how much our cars have been taken over by technology,

until they get the bill after one of these computers go out. Just

about everything in a new car is controlled by a computer, a computer

will read and recognize your driving patterns and adjusts how and when

the transmission should shift from gear-to-gear so that you, as the

driver, will get maximum performance from your car. In some vehicles,

a computer will adjust how high the car rides from the ground. It

lowers the car at highway speeds to make it more aerodynamic which

will give you better gas mileage and makes the car easier to handle at

these high speeds. The latest computer technology is an on-board

navigational computer that will direct the driver into using the

fastest and most efficient way to get to the destination. It will

plan your route around any construction, traffic jams, and even

inclement weather. If and when these cars break down, a mechanic will

simply ask the car’s on-board computer what is wrong, rather than

having to go through a series of complicated troubleshooting tests.

As I have clearly stated, computers have greatly improved something

that most of us use every day.

Another advantage of the computer that until recently I was

unfamiliar with is the role of the computer in the workplace. I have

worked at various jobs in my short existence on this earth. For the

most part, the most technologically advanced any of them were was

merely punching prices into a cash register, hardly a state-of-the-art

process by any means. Most of the jobs I have worked at were more

labor-oriented jobs, so I suppose that is why this is kind of a change

for me. These days I wait tables at a local bar and grill. I have

worked at restaurants like this before, but none of those places were

dependent on a computer like this one is. For example, at my old job,

when we took orders for drinks we scribbled it down on a sheet of

paper and then threw it at the bartender along with another ten people

so he could try and figure out just what the heck was written down.

This process seemed to take forever. Now all I have to do is go to

the computer, press a couple of buttons, and voila, the bartender gets

a clear printout of what needs to be made. And with any luck, the

drinks should be ready by the time I get to the bar. Needless to say

I like the method of using the computer much better than the old way

of writing everything down. This has also solved a lot of problems of

the same kind in the kitchen, also. As having the experience of being

a cook at one time, there was nothing that got on my nerves more than

trying to read the handwriting of someone who had to take an order in

a room filtering out more than 150 people making noise while trying to

jot everything down as fast as they can. As you can probably imagine,

this turns into a lose-lose situation for the people trying to work

through all of this. The cook is mad at the server for not being able

to write the order in plain English. The server is mad at the cook

for always being so critical and not worrying about themselves.

Eventually the person who is effected most by all of this is the

customer. What happens is the cook finally just doesn’t care about

the order anymore and doesn’t prepare a good meal, or the server gets

ticked off at the cook and ends up taking out their frustration on the

customer who doesn’t get the quality of service that they deserve.

That is a whole bunch of problems that came out of just one tiny

little detail, that being not writing the order clearly enough. At my

current job, when a food order is taken, the same process is followed

by simply pushing the right series of buttons for what the customer

ordered. After this, a copy of the order is printed out in the

kitchen and is very easy to read. This makes it hard for the cook to

blame anybody else other than themselves for any problems that occur.

There never has to be any guessing games as to what the server was

trying to write down. But there are a few drawbacks to this system,

it seems that every computer is a little bit different and you can’t

expect everybody in the workplace to become an expert on that

particular computer that is there. Henry David Thoreau’s statement

saying “men have become tools of their tools” can definitely true in

this case. I have had it happen to me where I accidentally hit the

wrong button at the wrong time and the computer froze up. One time it

took me almost ten minutes to figure out what I had done wrong and fix

it. I had truly been at the mercy of technology at this time. All in

all I definitely feel that, in this case, a business is better off

using technology than going without it. On the basis of his

statement, Thoreau would probably disagree with me saying that this

technology is only the beginning. Before long there will be robots

and computers waiting the tables, cooking the food, and mixing the

drinks. He might suggest that eventually only one person will be

needed to run such a business, and that person is the one who supplies

all of the capital and buys the equipment. Then the place would just

run itself, while that person sits back and reaps the benefits. My

counter-argument would be this, so long as there are people in this

world who are interested in getting the most value for their dollar,

they would rather be at a place where they are treated like a person,

by a person. The alternative option is this, every time you want or

need a service, you will become nothing more than an invoice number.

You will talk to a computer about what ever is your current need, and

then if you are lucky, that need will be quickly satisfied. The truth

is nobody really wants to be an invoice number. So as far as society

being taken over by technology completely, I can’t imagine that will

ever happen. I believe that we as a society will use technology to

every advantage possible, but it will always be used to our advantage

and it will always improve the quality of our lives.

We need to be sure that we stick with our values and make sure

that technology doesn’t get out of hand. A lot of people disagree on

what exactly is too much technology. In my opinion we can always keep

adding technology to our everyday lives as long as the technology

isn’t manipulated to the point that we have to take advantage of and

exploit other people in order to get ahead. I know it would be great

if everything worked out that way, but as we all know we don’t live in

a perfect world and no matter what the scenario is, somebody’s toes

have to get stepped on if anybody wants to rise to the top.

Another problem I can see arising is people letting technology

overcome their lives and eventually they will be overcome by laziness.

Erich Fromm was also aware of this problem when he wrote his essay

Work in an Alienated Society by stating the following: “It is not

difficult to recognize the widespread longing for the state of

complete laziness and passivity. Our advertising appeals to it even

more than to sex.” It is amazing what kind of perspective Fromm had

on the subject considering he wrote the essay in 1955. A lot of

people today are willing to spend huge sums of money on something that

will make a task easier and effortless, whether or not it will do a

quality and efficient job. As long as they don’t have to use up too

much energy, the consumer is happy they got the job done, never mind

the fact it cost them hundreds of dollars to buy the equipment to get

the job done “easier.”

As far as computers in the workplace go, in my example of having

computers put to use in a restaurant doesn’t cause the workers to

become lazy. It enables the business to operate more efficiently, and

that is something that everybody looks forward to, including the

owners, managers, employees, and most importantly the customers. The

morale of the employees where I work now is ten times greater than

that of where I worked before. Simply put, the environment that I get

to work in is fun. It may sound strange to give computers all of the

credit but I believe that having computers in this setting have

contributed to an all-around better business which has shown up in the

revenue generated by this particular business.

As much as I have praised the presence of computers in a

restaurant setting there are a few setbacks, of which are greatly

outnumbered by the positive aspects. The most prominent setback

incurred by these computers that I have seen is the training-in

process. As I said earlier everyone of these computers is different,

so even if you have had prior experience with computers in a similar

setting, you will be basically starting from scratch when it comes

time to learn a new computer. Personally I have been at my present

job for about a month and-a-half and I am still learning how to use

the computer. It seems like every day I learn something new on that

thing and, at times, I think it has a personal vendetta against me.

But on the other hand, about 95% of the time it helps me to do my job

better. It would be interesting to see how many complaints I would

have if I had to write out everybody’s orders and bills. With my

handwriting, chances are I wouldn’t have lasted a week in that place.

In today’s society, the main issue of technology is ethics,

people are afraid that technology can be corrupting, and with good

reason. However, I think that people feel this way because they are

the generation that has to adapt to this technology. Tomorrow’s

generation will have a totally different attitude about the subject,

they will be accustomed to technology in the workplace because it will

have been there ever since they entered the job market. All in all,

everybody will learn to use technology in each of their professions

and it will make this world a better place to live.