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Research Paper

September 2017

*Response to Sherry Turkle's reading Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology.*

Technology has made the world a smaller place; in the age of technology, anything is possible. The ability to see the world or gather information used to take days if not, years. Yet, in today's high-tech world, it no longer takes days but rather, seconds. In the reading, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology by Sherry Turkle's*, Turkle expresses that technology, even in its infancy has impacted our day to day life in a big way. She does this by telling story after story about encounters that she comes across. In the intro, Turkle starts with her own story when she joins the MIT faculty staff.

Turkle paints the story of technology as it was coming of age. As she went on to explain that the first home computers were enjoyed by hobbyist and programmers. Which seemed to be a norm, yet it was only when she started to work at MIT, did Turkle notice that there were any generational changes. This change in the generation was noticeable by the fact that kids no longer only played outside nor played simple board games. Instead, kids now played with new technological instruments and computers. At this point and time, no one, not even Turkle understood how this new technology would soon change the way the world would connect.

Turkle shares a story of her daughter in which she took her to the Darwin exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. In this story, her daughter expressed her dislike of the exhibit on the sole purpose that at the exhibit there were two giant tortoises from the Galápagos Islands that seemed to be lifeless.

Rebecca, Turkle's daughter who was fourteen at the time, seemed to have great insight about the exhibit, after some time Rebecca stated, "They could have used a robot." She continued on to express that "it was a shame to bring the turtle all this way from its island home in the Pacific,

when it was just going to sit there in the museum, motionless, doing nothing. Turkle realized then that “Rebecca was both concerned for the imprisoned turtle and unmoved by its authenticity. “ Turkle knew this was not the first time her daughter had made this distinction between animatronic and the real. Turkle continues to share personal stories of her daughter and these encounters. As she recalls a time when her daughter was seven years old. Rebecca saw a jellyfish that was an animatronic animal and expressed that it acted so real. When Turkle told this story to a vice president at the Disney Corporation. He stated

I am not surprised. When the Animal Kingdom opened in Orlando, populated by “real”—that is, biological—animals, its first visitors complained that they were not as “realistic” as the animatronic creatures in other parts of Disneyworld. The robotic crocodiles slapped their tails and rolled their eyes—in sum, they displayed archetypal “crocodile” behavior. The biological crocodiles, like the Galápagos tortoises, pretty much kept to themselves.

This passage holds many truths about how technology is impacting how young people understand the world they live in. Turkle alludes that the once common practice of caging animals is now taboo, yet opens the door for what young people want to experience. This change in technology has now become the new social norm. This norm seems to only be possible due to the newer generation, as Turkle points out later in her writing.

Technology seems to be doing more than just being able to connect with someone on the other side of the world. Technology has changed the way we now learn and see the world around us. This change has also led to a new era; this era of technology is affecting the newer generation. As the technology continues to expand, so does the understanding of our world.

In a later part of Turkle’s writing, Turkle dives into the virtual world and how it has affected the younger society. She goes on to exploit the younger generation by pointing out how the younger generation now has a new kind of freedom. A freedom that allows them to be anonymous, with this freedom they can explore the world around them. Turkle does caution that this can lead to a second life one that is lived in a virtual world.

Turkle also speaks about the effect the virtual world can have someone in there day to day social interactions. In her story about finding a new nanny, Turkle recalls a time where she went to the house of a nanny to interview her.

I show up at her apartment and her housemate answers the door. She is a young woman, around twenty-one, texting on her BlackBerry. Her thumbs are bandaged. I look at them, pained at the tiny thumb splints, and I try to be sympathetic. “That must hurt.” But she just shrugs. She explains that she is still able to text. I tell her I am here to speak with Ronnie; this is her job interview. Could she please knock on Ronnie’s bedroom door? The girl with the bandaged thumbs looks surprised. “Oh no,” she says, “I would never do that. That would be intrusive. I’ll text her.” And so, she sent a text message to Ronnie, no more than fifteen feet away.

In this short social interaction, one can see that there is a disconnect between what one generation and the next finds appropriate. Which Turkle talk about in her writing where she states, “I had concerns about the “holding power” of the new technology: some people found computers so compelling that they did not want to be separated from them. And I worried whether losing oneself in worlds within the machine would distract us from facing our problems in the real—both personal and political.” Here Turkle seems to be foreshadowing about a future that she knows nothing about until her encounter at the apartment with the housemate. This interaction catapults Turkle into thinking about the social changes that technology has brought about. Which has lead me to rethink the way I myself make art. I as well have transitioned from the real to the virtual.

In my work self-titled *Processes of loss*. I am exploring the unique phenomenon of social abandonment between the ever-waking world and the never ending digital platform we call online media. This work speaks boldly both on the irregular social norms that have become socially excepted verse the reality of living in a time that a one-on-one socially interaction is no longer the norm.

My images are everchanging as they are always of news subjects when they are showed. My work is multilayered. It shows the seen and unseen along with the experience. On the walls there is the image of text which will revile an image only when combined with technology. This change

between the real and the virtual is only part of my art. There is also a video that is livestreaming the work itself.

This contrast between virtual and reality seems to be a what Turkle was talking about when she said.

I have often observed this distinctive confusion: these days, whether you are online or not, it is easy for people to end up unsure if they are closer together or further apart. I remember my own sense of disorientation the first time I realized that I was “alone together.” I had traveled an exhausting thirty-six hours to attend a conference on advanced robotic technology held in central Japan. The packed grand ballroom was Wi-Fi enabled: the speaker was using the Web for his presentation, laptops were open throughout the audience, fingers were flying, and there was a sense of great concentration and intensity. But not many in the audience were attending to the speaker. Most people seemed to be doing their e-mail, downloading files, and surfing the Net. The man next to me was searching for a New Yorker cartoon to illustrate his upcoming presentation. Every once in a while, audience members gave the speaker some attention, lowering their laptop screens in a kind of curtsy, a gesture of courtesy.

In this part of Turkle writing she expands on the idea that society is now used to the idea that there is a social acceptance to living in both worlds. By stating there is a curtsy gesture that can be made to let the speaker know you are paying attention. This act of courtesy marks the acknowledgment of my work. Which I state Technology has changed the way we communicate and interact with one another; with this change in technology there seems to be a discontent between communication and social interaction, this rapid change can be noticed in the way society communicates, receives information and interacts with one another.