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Technology Can be Blessing, Curse to Students

By **Alexandra Pittman**
UCF Forum columnist
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Many college students seem to have forgotten what a university is for because they have become lost within their own technology.

Students have succumbed to relying on increasing technological developments, and without iPhone in hand, laptop at the ready and Kindle in the bag, some do not even know how to act in society.

Our culture has evolved into a bustling society of technology. Where once there was nothing more than ink and paper, the world today might not be able to exist without app-filled phones, a texting-based language and, most importantly, instantaneous access to new information.

With such inventions and innovations, we have created alternative means of communication and broken the boundaries that hindered making vast connections.

Fifty years ago it may have been days before breaking news in Chicago reached Paris. Today, it takes seconds. Through the use of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Skype, people now can communicate with one another whenever, wherever.

Technology is a blessing – but it can also be a curse.

We live in an age of information overload. With the advent of new technologies on a continual basis, giving people access to more information at a faster rate than ever, society is reaching a point where there is just too much stuff to absorb.

With a simple motion on a touch screen, everyone has the opportunity to search and discover millions of books and billions of video files. Knowledge has never before been

so easily accessible. Unfortunately, it is the kind of knowledge that most people are gravitating toward that is most concerning.

William Shakespeare and Jane Austen are left at the wayside as talking-dog YouTube videos and Draw Something competitions seem to dominate our culture. Online sitcom marathons have replaced reading a book, which sometimes consists of nothing more than scanning SparkNotes.

Because of texting, phone calls are becoming less common and only used for special circumstances. Text messages continue to get shorter every day, whether because we have begun to disregard the English language or grow in laziness, and abbreviations now constitute our day-to-day language.

Spellcheck for a paper or resume is no longer simply helpful, but requisite because spelling skills seem to be eroding.

Though it is both groundbreaking and breathtaking to have access to such multitudes of information, society is taking it for granted. Society is taking *knowledge* for granted.

Technological development has become a No. 1 priority, with millions of dollars fueled towards science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Arts and humanities have been left behind, and it is these disciplines that often find themselves face-to-face with budget cuts.

So how durable can our society be with a heavy dependence on all things technologically based?

If one day our world were to come crashing down around us, if our technology no longer worked for us, we would be reintroduced to an era of chaos. We would not even begin to understand a way to cope without instantaneous information and continually updating connections. Our networks and infrastructures would be destroyed instantly.

We must appreciate our past rather than just have a funneled outlook of our future.

True success in technological innovation cannot be achieved without accepting the responsibility that such power over information has granted us.

Students shouldn't be constricted by their time. It is not an excuse to be ignorant and incapable of common speech, or to favor long acronyms and textspeak because society dictates it is popular.

After all, why seek an education if you're going to become lost in an online world?

College is a time for discovery and exploration, where students should take advantage of the knowledge outside their door. They should strive to avoid the distractions and all the minutiae that technology has created.

Sometimes all that is needed to break these influences is to move away from the computer screen, hide the phone from our grasp, and expand our minds beyond this age of information overload.

In short, we need to remember how to learn.

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