

The Redemption of Humanity Under the “Screen Domination” of Technology: Postprint

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Abstract

Technological progress is transforming our world, as it has throughout the long course of history and as it will continue to do in the vast unknown of the future. While each technological advancement has undoubtedly spurred social development, it has simultaneously constituted an encroachment upon human nature. As Churchill observed, “We shape our environment, and our environment shapes us.” Faced with this reality, we cannot help but lament how difficult it is to correct this technological bias...

Full Text

Human Redemption Under the Hegemony of Technology

Technological progress is transforming our world, as it has throughout the long course of history and as it will continue to do in the vast unknown of the future. While each technological advancement has undoubtedly spurred social development, it has simultaneously constituted an encroachment upon human nature. As Churchill observed, “We shape our environment, and our environment shapes us.” Faced with this reality, we cannot help but lament how difficult it is to correct this technological bias. The ongoing cycle of nuclear armament and competition serves as visible proof—the threat of nuclear weapons, like the Sword of Damocles hanging over humanity, shows no sign of disappearing. This remains a problem that contemporary wisdom seems unable to solve.

The same holds true for today’s media technology. Mobile phones have brought us convenience in communication and entertainment, yet they have also condemned the “bowed head tribe” to the bitter consequences of addiction. From the dry, sluggish eyes of countless people who stay up all night staring at their screens, we witness technology’s cold indifference and its lash upon human nature. While the creators of technology celebrate their inventive triumphs without malicious intent to harm, we must question whether some technologies

lack sufficient concern for human nature. Marshall McLuhan warned that “the medium becomes an invisible prison that imprisons its users.” Humanity may slowly perish in this self-constructed prison of alienated technology, like frogs being boiled alive in gradually heated water.

Optimists and neutralists may accuse us of misunderstanding technology’s inherent nature, but this cannot prevent a reckoning with its harmful effects. No technology is perfect enough to be without flaws. We simply hope that from the moment of creation, its designers will incorporate adequate humanistic care. We can choose whether technology serves to benefit humanity or to do evil, correcting and designing its trajectory based on past technological realities. Only by humanizing its direction from the very inception can we endow technology with positive content and meaning, providing sufficient space for comprehensive and sustainable human development.

Integrating technological implementation with human-centered design means taking human physiological, psychological, behavioral, and cultural characteristics as the starting point. In the interaction between humans and technology, we must establish human agency as primary, emphasizing the concrete embodiment of care and respect for people within technological creation. This requires careful study of human psychological and behavioral characteristics during technology use, creating diverse humane technologies of different natures, functions, and features to accommodate the varied needs of different populations.

With the development of artificial intelligence technology, countless AlphaGos, Sophias, and Sophia’s successors are approaching the “singularity,” poised to surpass human intelligence comprehensively. Yet a paradigm of humane technological pursuit already exists: a 12-year-old child, Peng Jingyuan, designed a remarkable device out of filial piety for his father using discarded mobile phones and remote-controlled cars. Within a 20-meter range, upon receiving a traffic light signal, the phone screen goes black while playing the voice message: “Crossing the crosswalk, please do not use your mobile phone.” This is the future of humane technology that a child has shown us! So what are our tech gurus and media experts waiting for?

(Author Bio: Leading talent of Shanxi Province, Vice President of Shanxi Provincial Writing Association, Distinguished Professor and Academic Leader of Network and New Media Program at Xi’an University of Science and Technology High-tech College. Formerly taught at Yuncheng University. His 2002 monograph Practical Online Journalism was reported by People’s Daily, Xinhua Net, and other media, attracting academic attention. Awarded the First Prize of the Fourth Shanxi Provincial Social Science Research Outstanding Achievements in 2004. Selected for the Shanxi Provincial Government “131” Leading Talent Project in 2014.)**

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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