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Professor Flanigan

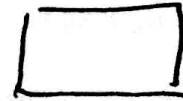
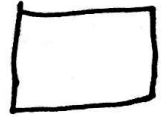
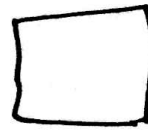
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Summary

Response

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Technology

Technology, adapted from the Greek terms techno which loosely translates to art and -logia (Woodford). It generally refers to the knowledge, usage, making and modification of tools, techniques and methods of organization in order to solve problems, improve existing solutions and handle goals.

Technological advancements started with the first development and use of stone tools in the Paleolithic era followed by the discovery of fire and embrace of clothing and shelter (Bigelow). This was further improved by the discovery and usage of metal tools in the Neolithic era and also the embrace of transport and communications evidenced by the invention of the sailboat and thus advancements have progressed up to this era where they still are on the increase. Technological advancements in themselves have been of greater importance to man and his environment as shall be discussed (Hanks).

In the business world, small corporations are now able to compete with large companies under the benefit of them being swift and agile. The small corporations can easily respond faster to change than the bigger corporations (Bigelow). Before electronic-mail was discovered and integrated into the system, the only mode of communication between people in different areas was through postal services and the speed of this communication fully depended on the distance between the locations thus larger distances meant that communication had to take longer periods

Is technology a blessing or a curse? When it works, great; but when it doesn't, it seems a black curtain covers the earth. Technology is supposed to make life easier, but it seems it just creates more work or costly mistakes.

In his essay "Technology, Movement, and Sound," Ed Bell makes the following statement: "Although technology has improved society in many ways, we use it indiscriminately, not distinguishing the good from the bad" (470). David Gilernter in his essay "Unplugged: The Myth of Computers in the Classroom" echoes Bell's sentiment: "In practice, however, computers make our worst educational nightmares come true (187). Not all critics agree. In "Cyberspace: If You Don't Like It, Leave It," author Esther Dyson retorts, "We haven't created a perfect society on earth and we won't have one in cyberspace either" (294).

Do you agree with the above authors' statements? Would be better off with fewer technological advantages?

Do you agree with Bell's and Gilernter's assertions about technology? Would we be better off with fewer technological advancements? Or should we acknowledge that technology has truly improved our lives, however imperfect as Dyson suggests?

Consider the ways technology has affected contemporary life. We have witnessed tremendous developments in the areas of communication, transportation, medicine, education, entertainment, social networking —not to mention, personal computing, iPads, Apple watches, ear buds and others. Are all technological advancement positive or do some of technology actually influence us in negative ways? These questions exist today and will continue into the future.

**Assignment:** In this essay (850-1250 words), you will be utilizing a variety of genres: summary/response, exposition, and argumentation. You will have to use at least one of Bells', Gilertner's, and Dyson's articles and then either agree or disagree with their thesis. If you can't take a pro or con decision, you could possibly write an essay with a more moderate view.

**Suggested organization:**

Paragraph 1: Provide a strong summary of one or more of the above authors' essays.

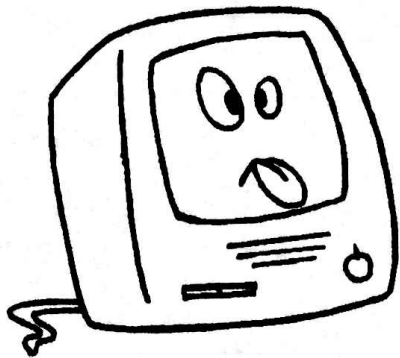
Paragraph 2: Provide a summary of your argument. You may think about this as your introduction. **INCLUDE A THESIS.** Paragraphs 1 and 2 may be reversed or merged depending on length.

Three body paragraphs : You must support your thesis. You may want to contrast the benefits or harmful characteristics of two technologies, for example virtual books to hard copy books the use or overuse of computers in the classroom. Support your position by discussing and describing specific examples and their impact on culture, education, medicine, social interaction, and other. You must use at least three to five direct quotations from the author(s) you are using.

Concluding paragraph: You will mention your selected author's (or authors') full name(s) and the title of the essay(s), summarize your main points, and offer a recommendation to the audience regarding the use of technology. There are other strategies.

You will also have a Work Cited page and parenthetical citations (to be explained). Bibliographical information will be provided. The student models that will be presented will be **SIMILAR** to this assignment, but not exact. Remember student models are not always correct.

The tone of this essay does not have to be serious; you could make some outlandish predictions with exaggerated specifics.



3 quotes

6. Throughout the essay, Ivins alludes to many aspects of Texas life, culture, people, and politics that we might not be familiar with. Do these allusions detract from the essay or make it too topical? Why, for instance, would Ivins want to end her essay with reference to the deaths of two Texans and an allusion to a poem by J. Frank Dobie?

## WRITING

1. Write a humorous essay on the state in which you grew up. Decide in advance what varieties of humor and what tone you want to use.
2. Go online or to a library and find out more about a Texan (for instance, George W. Bush), a Texas trait (like *machismo*), or a Texas institution (for example, the state legislature), and then write an essay that seeks to either confirm or refute Ivins's presentation of the subject.
3. **Writing an Argument:** In an essay, argue for or against the proposition that Ivins is too biased and cruel in her exposé of Texas. Defend or refute her argument on a point-by-point basis.

## NETWORKING

### Applying 21st-Century Literacies

**Reading a Visual in Context:** In a two- or three-page response, summarize, analyze, and interpret the illustration that accompanies this essay (see page 289). In your response, consider how it works with this piece and what each text lends to the other.

# Cyberspace: If You Don't Love It, Leave It

Esther Dyson

*Esther Dyson (b. 1951) was born in Zurich, Switzerland; grew up in Princeton, New Jersey; and received a BA in economics from Harvard University. She is the daughter of Freeman Dyson, a physicist prominent in arms control. She was the editor and publisher of the widely respected computer newsletter Release 1.0. She has also served as chairperson of the Electronic Frontier Foundation and on the boards of the Santa Fe Institute, the Global Business Network, and the Institute for East/West Studies. She served as a reporter for Forbes magazine for four years. The following essay appeared in the New York Times Magazine in July 1995. In it, Dyson defends the free-market approach to cyberspace content, arguing that regulation of the Internet is simply impossible and counterproductive.*

Something in the American psyche loves new frontiers. We hanker after wide-open spaces; we like to explore; we like to make rules instead of follow them. But in this age of political correctness and other intrusions on our national cult of independence, it's hard to find a place where you can go and be yourself without worrying about the neighbors.

There is such a place: cyberspace. Lost in the furor over porn on the Net is the exhilarating sense of freedom that this new frontier once promised—and still does in some quarters. Formerly a playground for computer nerds and techies, cyberspace now embraces every conceivable constituency: schoolchildren, flirtatious singles, Hungarian-Americans, accountants—along with pederasts and porn fans. Can they all get along? Or will our fear of kids surfing for cyberporn behind their bedroom doors provoke a crackdown?

The first order of business is to grasp what cyberspace is. It might help to leave behind metaphors of highways and frontiers and to think instead of real estate. Real estate, remember, is an intellectual, legal, artificial environment constructed on top of land. Real estate recognizes the difference between parkland and shopping mall, between red-light zone and school district, between church, state and drugstore.

In the same way, you could think of cyberspace as a giant and unbounded world of virtual real estate. Some property is privately owned and rented out; other property is common land; some places are suitable for children, and others are best avoided by all but the kinkiest citizens. Unfortunately, it's those places that are now capturing the popular imagination: places that offer bomb-making instructions, pornography, advice on how to procure stolen credit cards. They make cyberspace sound like a nasty place. Good citizens jump to a conclusion: Better regulate it.

The most recent manifestation of this impulse is the Exon-Coats Amendment, a well-meaning but misguided bill drafted by Senators Jim Exon, Democrat of Nebraska, and Daniel R. Coats, Republican of Indiana, to make cyberspace "safer" for children. Part of the telecommunications reform bill passed by the Senate and awaiting consideration by the House, the amendment would outlaw making "indecent communication" available to anyone under 18.<sup>1</sup> Then there's the Amateur Action bulletin board case, in which the owners of a porn service in Milpitas, Calif., were convicted in a Tennessee court of violating "community standards" after a local postal inspector requested that the material be transmitted to him.

Regardless of how many laws or lawsuits are launched, regulation won't work.

Aside from being unconstitutional, using censorship to counter indecency and other troubling "speech" fundamentally misinterprets the nature of cyberspace. Cyberspace isn't a frontier where wicked people can grab unsuspecting children, nor is it a giant television system that can beam offensive messages at unwilling viewers. In this kind of real estate, users have to choose where they

<sup>1</sup>The Communication Decency Act (CDA) was passed by Congress, but the Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional in 1996.

visit, what they see, what they do. It's optional, and it's much easier to bypass a place on the Net than it is to avoid walking past an unsavory block of stores on the way to your local 7-Eleven.

Put plainly, cyberspace is a voluntary destination—in reality, many destinations. You don't just get "onto the net"; you have to go someplace in particular. That means that people can choose where to go and what to see. Yes, community standards should be enforced, but those standards should be set by cyberspace communities themselves, not by the courts or by politicians in Washington. What we need isn't Government control over all these electronic communities: We need self-rule.

What makes cyberspace so alluring is precisely the way in which it's *different* from shopping malls, television, highways and other terrestrial jurisdictions. But let's define the territory:

First, there are private e-mail conversations, akin to the conversations you have over the telephone or voice mail. These are private and consensual and require no regulation at all.

Second, there are information and entertainment services, where people can download anything from legal texts and lists of "great new restaurants" to game software or dirty pictures. These places are like bookstores, malls and movie houses—places where you go to buy something. The customer needs to request an item or sign up for a subscription; stuff (especially pornography) is not sent out to people who don't ask for it. Some of these services are free or included as part of a broader service like Compuserve or America Online; others charge and may bill their customers directly.

Third, there are "real" communities—groups of people who communicate among themselves. In real-estate terms, they're like bars or restaurants or bathhouses. Each active participant contributes to a general conversation, generally through posted messages. Other participants may simply listen or watch. Some are supervised by a moderator; others are more like bulletin boards—anyone is free to post anything. Many of these services started out unmoderated but are now imposing rules to keep out unwanted advertising, extraneous discussions or increasingly rude participants. Without a moderator, the decibel level often gets too high.

Ultimately, it's the rules that determine the success of such places. Some of the rules are determined by the supplier of content; some of the rules concern prices and membership fees. The rules may be simple: "Only high-quality content about oil-industry liability and pollution legislation: \$120 an hour." Or: "This forum is unmoderated, and restricted to information about copyright issues. People who insist on posting advertising or unrelated material will be asked to desist (and may eventually be barred)." Or: "Only children 8 to 12, on school-related topics and only clean words. The moderator will decide what's acceptable."

Cyberspace communities evolve just the way terrestrial communities do: People with like-minded interests band together. Every cyberspace community

has its own character. Overall, the communities on Compuserve tend to be more techy or professional; those on America Online, affluent young singles; Prodigy, family oriented. Then there are independents like Echo, a hip, downtown New York service, or Women's Wire, targeted to women who want to avoid the male culture prevalent elsewhere on the Net. There's SurfWatch, a new program allowing access only to locations deemed suitable for children. On the Internet itself, there are lots of passionate noncommercial discussion groups on topics ranging from Hungarian politics (Hungary-Online) to copyright law.

And yes, there are also porn-oriented services, where people share dirty pictures and communicate with one another about all kinds of practices, often anonymously. Whether these services encourage the fantasies they depict is subject to debate—the same debate that has raged about pornography in other media. But the point is that no one is forcing this stuff on anybody.

What's unique about cyberspace is that it liberates us from the tyranny of government, where everyone lives by the rule of the majority. In a democracy, minority groups and minority preferences tend to get squeezed out; whether they are minorities of race and culture or minorities of individual taste. Cyberspace allows communities of any size and kind to flourish; in cyberspace, communities are chosen by the users, not forced on them by accidents of geography. This freedom gives the rules that preside in cyberspace a moral authority that rules in terrestrial environments don't have. Most people are stuck in the country of their birth, but if you don't like the rules of a cyberspace community, you can just sign off. Love it or leave it. Likewise, if parents don't like the rules of a given cyberspace community, they can restrict their children's access to it.

What's likely to happen in cyberspace is the formation of new communities, free of the constraints that cause conflict on earth. Instead of a global village, which is a nice dream but impossible to manage, we'll have invented another world of self-contained communities that cater to their own members' inclinations without interfering with anyone else's. The possibility of a real market-style evolution of governance is at hand. In cyberspace, we'll be able to test and evolve rules governing what needs to be governed—intellectual property, content and access control, rules about privacy and free speech. Some communities will allow anyone in; others will restrict access to members who qualify on one basis or another. Those communities that prove self-sustaining will prosper (and perhaps grow and split into subsets with ever-more-particular interests and identities). Those that can't survive—either because people lose interest or get scared off—will simply wither away.

In the near future, explorers in cyberspace will need to get better at defining and identifying their communities. They will need to put in place—and accept—their own local governments, just as the owners of expensive real estate often prefer to have their own security guards rather than call in the police. But they will rarely need help from any terrestrial government.

Of course, terrestrial governments may not agree. What to do, for instance, about pornography? The answer is labeling—not banning—questionable

material. In order to avoid censorship and lower the political temperature, it makes sense for cyberspace participants themselves to agree on a scheme for questionable items, so that people or automatic filters can avoid them. In other words, posting pornography in "alt.sex.bestiality" would be OK; it's easy enough for software manufacturers to build an automatic filter that would prevent you—or your child—from ever seeing that item on a menu. (It's as if all the items were wrapped with labels on the wrapper.) Someone who posted the same material under the title "Kid-Fun" could be sued for mislabeling.

Without a lot of fanfare, private enterprises and local groups are already producing a variety of labeling and ranking services, along with kid-oriented sites like Kidlink, EdWeb and Kids' Space. People differ in their tastes and values and can find services or reviewers on the Net that suit them in the same way they select books and magazines. Or they can wander freely if they prefer, making up their own itinerary.

In the end, our society needs to grow up. Growing up means understanding that there are no perfect answers, no all-purpose solutions, no government-sanctioned safe havens. We haven't created a perfect society on earth and we won't have one in cyberspace either. But at least we can have individual choice—and individual responsibility.

### COMPREHENSION

1. The title of the essay is a variation of a phrase popularized in the 1960s. What is the original expression, and what was its significance? What is its relevance to this essay?
2. What is Dyson's thesis? Is it stated explicitly? If so, where in the essay does it occur? If it is merely suggested, how is it suggested, and where?
3. There are many forms of new media that are not considered communities. Why does Dyson refer to cyberspace as a community?
4. According to Dyson, what distinguishes cyberspace from physical space?
5. What does Dyson mean when she states that cyberspace needs "self-rule" (paragraph 8)?

### RHETORIC

1. How does Dyson use her introduction to foreshadow her main concerns about censorship in cyberspace?
2. How does Dyson use metaphor in paragraphs 10–12 to help us understand the structure of cyberspace? Why is metaphor a particularly useful literary device when explaining a new concept?
3. Key to Dyson's views on cyberspace is that it is a "voluntary destination" (paragraph 8). What evidence does Dyson present that it is voluntary? What argument can be made that it is not always "voluntary"?
4. Who is the implied audience for this essay? What level of education does one need to have and how sophisticated about the world of cyberspace does one need to be in order to comprehend and process the author's views? Explain your answer.

5. Dyson refers to laws, rules, and regulations as strategies that various interest groups may use to determine access to content in cyberspace. How does Dyson distinguish these three related tactics? What significance does differentiating these methods have in her presentation of her argument?
6. Dyson concludes her essay with an analogy between human society and cyberspace culture. Why does she save this final support for last? How does it extend her argument rather than merely restate it?

### WRITING

1. In paragraph 17, Dyson refers to the "global village," a term coined by the media critic Marshall McLuhan. For a research project, study McLuhan's views on the nature of the global village, and compare and contrast them to Dyson's views of the nature of cyberspace.
2. Writing an Argument: Dyson argues that technology can create filters, labeling and ranking services to prevent children from viewing inappropriate material. In an essay, argue for or against the proposition that there can be a nontechnological solution to this issue—for example, instilling values in children or developing a society that does not create a mystique about taboo subject matter.

### NETWORKING

#### Applying 21st-Century Literacies

Exploring Virtual Communities: In a comparison-and-contrast essay, select three cyberspace communities and describe each one's character (refer to Dyson's reference to cyberspace communities in paragraph 14).



## Obama vs. Marx

Alan Wolfe

Alan Wolfe (b. 1942) is an American educator and journalist. He was born in Philadelphia, and attended Temple University (BS, 1963) and the University of Pennsylvania (PhD, 1967), where he majored in sociology and political science. Currently a professor at Boston College, Wolfe straddles the academic and journalistic worlds. He writes, "I am trying to keep alive a tradition of informed commentary on public affairs in the face of sterile academic research and a journalistic tradition that refuses to go into historical and political background." Among Wolfe's many books are *The Seamy Side of Democracy* (1973, 1978), *One Nation, After All* (1998), *Moral Freedom* (2001), *Return to Greatness* (2005), and *The Future of Liberalism* (2009). In