

## TECHNOLOGY AND ITS DISCONTENTS: THE DEADLY EMBRACES OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

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### ABSTRACT

This is a review of book “Technology and its discontents: the deadly embraces of technology and society” by L. V. Orman. In this book, the writer declares the impact of technologies on society. He mentions solutions for problem technologies made.

Technology and its discontents: the deadly embraces of technology and society. L. V. Orman. Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2013. 192 pages

**KEYWORDS:** Change, Problem, Science, Society, Technologies

### INTRODUCTION

Technology changes our society and our self as a human being different. In this work, the author, L. V. Orman, stated the technology and tools form our identity and tried to demonstrate the direct effect technology bring to the human being, misery or good it cause in a different time in a different aspect of our life.

This book is an exceptional source for student, socialist, philosophist and politics. In addition, this book is good for those who are open-minded intellectual, love questioning the obvious, enjoy a great discussion with a fair amount of sarcasm and irony, or like to be taken on a trip to different times, cultures and subjects

The content of the book is dividing into five parts. The first part offers the author's opinion technology and its relationship with knowledge, beliefs and society. Orman argues that this relationship causes a rapid change in social values and institutions and its challenge what believe to be true and lead to an unstable society.

The first part is divided into three chapters. The author explains the universal beliefs definition and emphasis that there is ambiguity among philosophical and religious truth. Moreover, the author demonstrates his assumption by exempling such as the prohibition against killing and universal human right. And continue cultural imperative and accidental beliefs, the author implied human has a strong tendency to explain the world, even if the explanation is wrong or arbitrary and these explanations lead to behavior and the power of control other's behaviors. Every religion reflects the technology available at its time. The writer explains the concept of the cultural imperative as a “self-fulfilling prophecies” and it can reform to “self-reinforcing prophecies” after experiencing repeated. The change in technology usually puts the end to reinforce beliefs. Self-reinforced beliefs can evolve into a vicious cycle when the reinforcement strengthens the faith. The example of the vicious cycle is national economics.

Scientists usually study subjects that are recognized relevant in their culture they live in, so nobody interested in challenging “most basic cultural biases” or invent a new system that weaken all of our existing institutions. The free willing, for example, is philosophically a suspect concept. The biological sensation of pain and pleasure is the same. Our available technology severely a confine of what is known and what is knowable. And even when right issues are studied, the research output is not reliable. The statistical analysis is severely limited by technology of data collection and analysis, which fails in some circumstances such as risk measurement. Correction is scarcely useful and it doesn’t imply causality. Some scholar stated what we know about social science is suspect and vague, the knowledge of biological and physical science that is based on data analysis is unreliable. The technology of observation relies on the depth of our understanding and observing of a phenomenal, and it ceases at a point we can observe more.

The second part of the book is divided into four chapters of privacy, crime, power and transparency. The author mentioned that lack of privacy is a recent concern that is a consequence of technology to make track and control easier. Information is a source of power. Both access and protection of information are relying on technology. Privacy has social, economic, psychological and strategically value. Because we do not have privacy the information and its source being controlled and we cannot evaluate them. So people are bombarded by the information they resort to shortcut for making information processing more manageable.

Advertisement companies use this by providing easy to process and psychological shortcut for the actual message that is usually misleading. Information and what we learn shape our identity, values, self-perception and beliefs. The dark side of privacy is that it isolates people from the permanent community and fixed values and can lead to a fragmentation identity. The author claims that people with uncontroversial ideas ended up in prison, religions and cult leaders limited and control the sex and privacy. Where religions fail and autocratic regimes take over. The system watched their people and punished any dissent forcefully. The modern democratic systems also use similar methods for controlling the source of information and educational institutions. They watch and suppress dangerous ideas. The Civil War also amplifies the tendency and efforts to control. The World Wide Web was recently the symbol of free of edition and control. Crime requires privacy to plan and develop.

There is a balance between privacy and control, too much privacy can lead to anarchy, and too much control can lead to the angry masses. Punishment has the power to influence criminals. Excessive punishment can lead to more crime because of the revenge of criminals. New technologies increase the criminal power and punishment reforming from eliminating criminal to controlling his message. The author explains new technologies create power over people who own it and those who consume it. Privacy itself can generate power differential. Privacy has two sides, freedom of behavior and also isolates of that behavior prevent it from spreading in the larger community. Recent communication technology lets terrorist to hide while gaining power, recruits and power.

In the third part of this book, technology introduced as an origin of risk, in order to unintended consequences and fast changing technology environment. Technology needs efficiently to meet immediate human needs. But immediate efficiencies create long-term uncertainty and risk. Human is a risk taker compare to other spices. Agriculture, for example, brings huge efficiencies, but in the long term it leads to deforestation and climate change. Or communicates and transportation technologies are caused ever disease epidemic spread through the world so quickly. The author explains the consequences of the risk technologies generate. So instead, the solution is the utilization of newer technologies. These new

technologies have a high risk. Risk increases when new technologies introduce its social effect interact with each other. The vicious cycle can also raise the risk created in new introduce of technologies. Statistical analysis for prediction and studying the risk has fundamental problems of taking attention from domain knowledge and place. Money introduces risk to the economy since it is an IOU issued by the central bank, money is the debt created by national government and regulated central bank. Risk-reducing technologies should be employed and should be tested in simulation of environmental.

In the fourth part, technology and politics, politics heavily rely on communication technology and coordination. War itself is a consequence of technologies to politics and every resistance movement needs both powerful military and political movement. Changes in technologies always cause a change in warfare and political organizations. Modern political theories are also driven by existing technologies. Orman declares that politics speak in code and technologies provide these codes. Technologies, which provides pretexts for political positions. Political campaigns, advertise for candidates for establishing trust among voters. Mass dissemination of information can be replaced by dissemination personality through a network of trusted partners.

In the fifth part of this book, “a proposal for social engineering”, is presented that technology is different from science, science describes the world around us but technology change it. The long-term impact of it is weakly understood. There is no tendency to consider the link between consequences and technologies. The social impact of the dramatic change in technologies is important. The author emphasizes the importance of interaction between technologies and society. The first consequent is difficult to reverse their effects by discontinuing use of technologies and also discontinuing use of technologies. And even if this has happened in society may not be incentive to reverse or optimum change in technologies doesn't lead to long-term optimum global outcome. Optimistic and pessimistic solutions for these problems are not efficient. The approach of environmental movements to slow down introducing new technologies by government actions and regulations. Fundamental solutions are reliable prediction methodologies and in design escape routes needs to be found with an action plan to reduce undesirable consequences. Technologies categorized as technologies for storing and extracting resources, technologies for moving over space, technologies for storing and extracting information and technologies for moving information over space.

The potential of design and prediction in the social impact of technology is considerable. The goal of this field can be accomplishing interaction of technologies and social structure model theoretically. One of the problems in this area of study is this model theoretically unreachable now. Secondly, it is difficult to test because it takes decades to observe the output of it. In culture, increasing isolation means less competition and contrast culture. Decreasing isolation generates too much competition and leads to the emphasis on the short-term advantages. These dilemmas required basic building block like reliable theories on social impact. The process of alternative design technologies, institutions for encouraging communities to adopt with alternative technologies, research methodologies for comparing alternative communities, protection of alternative communities from short-term competition by isolating them. Alternative communication needs to be developed to encourage learning and global organization for regulation of communities required.

This book has many strengths. The author presents a broad analysis of the subject. Organization of the book in most chapters was good, especially in last part, but in the first part of the book the concepts didn't mesh excellently, and it causes confusion in the reader's mind. In most cases, the writer listed the appropriate examples for every main idea to

support it, however, some of the explanations weren't cohesively appropriate. The writer structures the explanation of his major ideas by using numerous examples of historical events and evidences on economic, scientific, social and political aspects of issues. He also collects quoting of the prominent figures for supporting some of his assumptions. He often demonstrates the consequences and problems of technologies create and mention briefly solutions for them after expressing the problem in some chapters. On the last part of the book, he only focuses on solutions and categorizes them.

The weak side of this book is that the author shortly analyzed on some perceptions. In each part, he shows the impact of technologies on community, privacy, control, crime, punishment, politics and sciences. He understands the today world concerns and most of his examples cover these subjects. He questions most of our accepted values, concepts, norms and even undesirable subject such as rape. This book has tried to change and reform the reader's perception about what he thinks to be true by the community. The author provides too many examples, and some of these examples contain inappropriate words

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Technologies and its impact are inevitable; the solution of consequences of technologies is creating new technologies that have a long-term effect on nature and society. Because fast changing technologies bring can lead to unstable society, as Orman mentioned, "They are the source of our admirable success as a species; and they are the source of our most terrifying problems. Sometimes, they are the only solution to the very problems they created." (p.5)

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## **REFERENCES**

1. L.V. Orman, Technology and its discontents: the deadly embraces of technology and society (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013)