

Art and Technology

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Summary of Topic

Technology is evolving at an ever-increasing rate, and with it comes developments in artistic technique, application and interpretation. The intent of this Inquiry is to delve into this expansive progression over time, to better understand how changes happened and what their effects were – in hopes to predict, or at least be better prepared for, what the future of technology and art may look like

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Chapter One: The Renaissance and the Printing Press

Technology and art have an interrelated past, new developments in one sparking discoveries in the other. Perhaps the best example would be Western Europe experiencing a staggering amount of social change and upheaval during the 16th Century onwards; the period that would come to be known to as the Renaissance. The term Renaissance, stemming from the French “naissance”; birth and prefix “re” to signify reiteration, was first coined by French historian Jules Michelet, the word purposefully chosen as a summation of the “rebirth” (Stieber and Burke, 1989, p207). This period of history evoked the idea of miraculous rebirth in European culture and considered a return to form - scholars of the time recovered old ways of the Greeks and Romans, these discoveries subsequently leading to further advancements in the spheres of art, science and philosophy; many of which were interdependent. Innovations produced within the art world were also scientific contributions in their own right (Edgerton, 1991, p10) and inspired new revelations across the continent – cementing the symbiotic nature that the advancement of technology and art have continued to share to modern day.

This advancement of art throughout the ages has mirrored that of technology, and the printing press is a good example. Fully realised, developments in art and science flourished as minds were able to connect with one another in new, unprecedented ways and locations. Information became available - and reproducible – the technology eliminating many issues of established replication methods; chief amongst those the corruption of content due to human error (Eisenstein, 2005, p160). Scientists, artists and other artisans were able to convey their ideas in new, liberating ways – and, simultaneously expose themselves to a multitude of new and different perspectives that were not accessible before, having been limited by selection of locally available material. By relation, artists found themselves capable of experimenting with new mediums afforded to them by this new technology; seeing the combinations of picture and text in books to create a new form of multimodal media, and these new

innovative uses for printmaking lead to the genesis of the picture book for children (Yates, 1999, p377). The implications of this new technology were radical and wide reaching.

The developments of these new technologies resulted in specialists in diverse areas being able to come together and collaborate on projects in ways unfathomable in the past. Scholars found themselves more connected, capable of accessing far more detailed, accurate and diverse sources – that were amendable if proven wrong; while the printed word may have remained static and silent, as Plato had stated so many centuries earlier (Plato, Nehamas and Woodruff, 1995, p80), the dialogue around the subjects was alive and thriving, and the capability to modify and correct the inert medium better reflected the discussions had by these specialists. The errata frequently being issued by publishers on their respective books as corrections or new discoveries were made in direct contrast with an older, established belief that the original documents as impeccable. Until this point, the consequence of natural human error, as mentioned above, meant that the more work was replicated, the further obfuscated the truth became. Consequently, instead of descending into obscurity even if it proliferated, information had the capability to evolve alongside its practitioners; instead of echoing the teachings of the long-dead masters (Eisenstein, 2005, p290), professionals – be they doctors, scientists, artists, or indeed all of the above – were able to make dynamic, impactful developments that in turn spurred even greater discoveries that have since been built upon and critically evaluated in their own right.

Perhaps unsurprisingly in this advance of technology, and the dramatic changes wrought by the medium of print was not met without resistance, as older generations decried the popularity of books as an erosion of communal, oratory gatherings. As is the case even to this day, any new technology inspires suspicion from people who have grown reliant upon older ways; these laments levied at the printed book detracting from communal experiences (Eisenstein, 2005, p105) can easily be compared to those of criticisms levied at mobile technology and contemporary age, with very little in the way of differences between them.

The concept of isolating technology is evidently not a recent phenomenon, and the only difference would be the relative infancy of a given technology within the society it is partnered with. The printed book, once lambasted for its society destroying capabilities has become a commonplace, well accepted sight in this day and age; and perhaps the relative hostility toward newer technologies like mobile phones or the Internet will be considered much in the same way in the future, as generations become accustomed to the “new” and it becomes commonplace. The advent of print demonstrated much the same thing, new generations being more willing to adapt and adopt the printed word over the less efficient scribe and oratory culture that came before them.

An interesting facet of technology is the heavily iterative process it undergoes over time. Advancement begets advancement, as inventions lead to greater discoveries, which in turn informs the development of even more advanced equipment that begins this process anew (Chatfield, 2019). To this end, older conventions do typically become obsolete over time, replaced by newer and more efficient ways to perform the same tasks, as has been demonstrated by the diminished role of the scribe after the Printing Press was introduced.

Chapter Two: Advances in Technology

As a society advances and new discoveries are made, so too are the culture and artworks of the time bound to change. Observing the 18th Century, and particularly the Industrial Revolution, artists becoming more interested in the natural world that surrounded them than the dense, urban cities that blossomed across the land (The Burlington Magazine, 2010). Cultural standards were redefined by necessity in the face of these wide sweeping, often destructive changes that industrialisation brought with it; while at the same technology developed in both the art world – with the introduction of easier paint transportation in the form of John Goffe Rand’s invention of the tin paint tube (Enger, 2019). At the same time, better understandings in other areas, like the composition of light and optics changed the

way Impressionist painters approached their subject matter (Kemp, 2008). The art of the time period, as it so often does, presents a sound archive of the opinion of the population at the time – in this case, demonstrating the substantial progress European society was experiencing around this time.

Further approaching the modern day, the introduction of still newer technologies had incredibly revolutionary implications for the art world, as photographic reproductions supplanted oil paintings as the dominant visual medium of the time (Berger, 1972). No longer were artists merely confined to replicating the world they saw – the camera replaced this necessity, and with a level of detail and accuracy near impossible to create by hand (much in the same way the press superseded scribes for the replication of text-based media). Echoing the scholars that had similar revelations in the age of print, artists were allowed – encouraged, even – to delve deeper into their specialisations, constructing niches for themselves to better reflect the industries they became a part of. Some artists questioned what the boundaries of art meant in a world of perfect replications; becoming increasingly conceptual and abstract in their work. The artist became not only an expression of incredible wealth, as they had in the past, but pushed at the boundaries of what could be considered truly artistic – and what that term could even mean. A prime example of this would be the Dadaist Marcel Duchamp, and his renowned readymades collection that highlighted the absurdity of the art world of the time, and the insular nature it had become (Molesworth, 1998).



Fig. 1: *Bicycle Wheel*

There is a prevalent trend to the art movements mentioned that is not coincidental – many of them are reactionary in nature, as artists respond to the changing world around them. Art cannot be separated from a culture that it stems from; and these cultures in turn are shaped by the technologies that transform the world around them. The inordinate slaughters of hundreds with new military technologies inspired multiple reactionary sects of artists; Futurism or Surrealism as examples (Meecham and Sheldon, 2005, p112). Artists banded together to voice their shared dissatisfaction at the world they found themselves in, and this underlines a profound truth of art's purpose within a society; to communicate. As is so aptly put by Drucker – the age old functions of art remain what they have always been: a matter of human beings working individually or collectively to create something that did not exist

previously, and is the product of imagination meeting material to be made manifest (1997). Unlike the everchanging, adapting and evolving methods of production or the medium a piece might be presented on, or even the level of technology of a time period, the reason – the purpose, the goal – of creatives retains that same intention throughout all of human history; to convey ideas. To give form to the immaterial – something that, despite their differences, both the camera and printed book have in common.

Chapter Three: Contemporary Art

While the purpose of art across history has not demonstrably changed from its core roots of communicating ideas, concepts or experiences, the importance of specialisation has diminished in recent times. Formerly pigeonholed into categories like “illustrator”, “designer” or “photographer”, the prominence of technology in our contemporary society has worn down these barriers between disciplines, much in a similar fashion to specialists’ diversification in the Renaissance. While there is no denying there are still certainly experts in their respective fields, the new advancements in both technology– availability, as an example – has enabled many an artist to diversify their portfolio and artistic capacity far more than we have seen in the past. Further, McQuiston posits that “labels such as fine artist, graphic designer, photographer or filmmaker and so on start to lose their relevance, and terms like artist, activist or social commentator start to become more meaningful” (McQuiston, 2015, p9); in essence, that the intent of the artist has become more the focus of their work, than the particular medium they have chosen to express themselves.

Further to this point, in far more contemporary affairs, the Turner Prize winners of 2019 (among other artists, and awards) have made a collective statement, decrying the competition culture awards promote. Instead, these artists are choosing to share the accolades , with the goal of unification, rather than the segregation of both art and artist (Morton, 2019). Judges of these same events have echoed these sentiments; suggesting

that the Turner Prize is a relic of an older time, and it's relevance may be diminishing in recent years (Youngs, 2019). While wondering if this attitude prevails in the coming years is still purely speculative in nature, it is still a bold statement for these artists to have made, and shows their conviction to the ideals of integration, not separation of both artists and peoples.

The introduction of video added still further complications into the problem of -defining what constituted art and artist. This medium faced a different challenge to more conventional, established art forms like painting; Rosler stands as an example, her work standing as part of an anti-establishment movement, in part inspired by the Vietnam War - as public opinion was starting to turn against corporations and the technologies they boasted (Goodyear, 2008). Using the format of video as part of her larger critique, Rosler would challenge the ingrained social norms of presenting art, as the format of video had different connotations—chiefly, the means of broadcasting such a piece of work. They would comment on the somewhat counterproductive intention to display a video piece in a traditional gallery space – and indeed, the relevance of galleries as a whole - as the difference of delivery of the media necessitates a different form of interaction with it (Rosler, 1990, p49). In their writing, Rosler bemoaned the gentrification of the new format; instead of defining itself, video was forced to conform to the confines of the traditional. The limitations of gallery spaces would become more relevant as time goes on, as other technologies would push this limitation of gallery displays – and indeed, what truly qualifies something as art further still.

A complication with art, and indeed what artists like Rosler strove to defy, is the intrinsic link it holds to status – specifically, the commodification of artwork to represent of personal wealth (Berger, 1972) Of note is the bizarre climate we are currently in, wherein even a work of social commentary on commercial society like Kruger's Untitled "I shop, therefore I am", below – a stark critique of the commercial world we find ourselves in, and the individual's dependence on external possessions to define oneself (*I shop therefore I am* | Kruger, Barbara | V&A Search the Collections, 1993) - have been developed into a commercialist

icon sold on carrier bags, even ironically. The relationship between commodification and artwork has shifted; instead of the declaration of wealth and status of the past (Berger, 1972), the modern day commodification serves the interest of commercial entities, offering promise of status and fulfilment to the general public – the relationship between culture and commodity becoming far more explicit than ever before (Meecham and Sheldon, 2005, p35).



Fig. 2: *I shop, therefore I am*

Chapter Four: The Introduction of the Internet

The advent of the internet has had some substantial impacts, not least of which were in the art world. Having experienced a widespread uptake over even a short period of time – jumping from 150 to 500 million users (Duffy, 2000), even within the scope of even one year – the internet has quickly become a veritable juggernaut in daily life, as more and more of us are interacting with it. The availability of information, the capacity to connect with other people, exchange cultural ideas, folklore and interpretations of world events have all played a role in the new artistic playing field creatives find themselves in. Perhaps unsurprisingly one of the most prevalent subjects artists have expressed their views and opinions on has been the realm of political turmoil (McQuiston, 2015, p36). Artists across the world, made

aware of political injustices in countries other than their own, had the capability to respond; regardless of their specific talents – an example being the “Je Suis Charlie” phenomena, below (Newcomb, 2015). Equally, artists suffering under such inequalities were able, at the same time, broadcast the state of affairs in their country, being offered a stage far larger and far wider reaching than any platform any artist has been afforded before.



Fig. 3: *Je Suis Charlie*

Particularly in the early stages of its inception, the internet’s capacity to share and display artwork went unfettered; as people were, effectively, experiencing the democratising effect the internet – and associated anonymity it afforded (Harris, 2007, p.243) – to champion their causes to the wider world, with others responding in kind. The internet also affords an archival property that has not been possible in the past, in part because of this exact

democratising effect that it has had. As a result of the nature of the internet, all that is required of a piece to document its existence is a single photograph; once uploaded, an image can proliferate far beyond its original audience, and indeed timeframe – murals, street art or graffiti in particular. As these formats of art are easily replaced – painted over, washed off, etc – they formerly would only reach a small audience, as they were only present for a short period of time. However, with the advent of this new archival system – one not done at the behest of those who would commodify or dictate the flow of what is and isn't artwork in the conventional sense – anyone with the ever present smartphone would be able to make a record of such pieces and their inherent fragility; which is far harder to remove than it is to paint over the initial mural or street art piece. The shift in recent years as suggested culture is moving closer to a more “transient” format, as work can be “as easily deleted as uploaded” (McQuiston, 2015, p30) – but the capacity of the internet for image proliferation, and the size and scope the platform remains cannot be understated. In a world of increasing globalisation, the internet serves as a fundamental tool to connect our disparate world and even allow communities and artists to come together over common issues (Harris, 2007).

This is not to say that both technology and art exist outside of society itself – indeed, they have demonstrated they can afford opportunities combined that are shifting the dynamics in other spheres. In the classroom, as an example, the changes afforded by new technologies, such as an app for creating comics has had demonstrable impact upon both the teaching process and the engagement of the students involved (Tochelli and Shanahan, 2014). Of note too is the fact that these new technologies allowed their users to create multimodal pieces, text juxtaposed against not only picture but sound or animation – something far more time consuming, if indeed possible at all, by more established creative means. This, too, harkens back to the idea that artists are in a transitional state – children in classrooms are feeling confident and capable enough to integrate different media like sound, text or image intuitively to create pieces, in the same way artists themselves feel more capable of

diversification, a fine artist delving into the world of graphic design much easier than would be possible without the influence of technology at large.

Similar to the example in children, technology – and, specifically in this case, games – have demonstrable impact on other disciplines within education. The University of Michigan has instated the Computer and Video Game Archive (CVGA) – housing over thousands of games across multiple platforms (*CVGA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) | U-M Library*, 2019). The merit of this has been engaging students in disciplines they might have otherwise discounted as disinteresting, or irrelevant to their overall education otherwise (Wood and Carter, 2018). Students are incentivised to interact and learn about these topics, because of the perceived approachability and interactivity of the gaming medium, and that interest fosters a greater understanding of subjects they might not otherwise have approached, like music or history.

Technology itself has also been the focus of several artists and philosophers' work, from which can be gleaned the reflective of the cultural mood of its time. Given the incredible speeds it continues to develop at, artists have both deplored and lauded the eventual culmination, the technological singularity being depicted in both dystopian and utopian lights; as the herald of humanity's own destruction and hubris, or as the saving grace of our time (Meecham and Sheldon, 2005, p110). The concept has disseminated so far as to become part of popular culture – franchises like Terminator (1984–2009) or Bladerunner (1984/2017) centralise the imagined conflict between humanity and their wayward machines, and the ethics involved. Some have even gone so far to suggest the next stage of human evolution is to take it into our own hands – the concept of transhumanism, directly upgrading ourselves into a better, more perfect form of humanity (Desmond, 2014). The disparity between viewpoints, and the exploration of the middle ground between them suggests that ultimately, technology remains simply a tool – and it is the intent of its user (in this case, humanity at large) that would truly dictate what direction it would take us.



Fig. 4: *The Terminator*

Chapter Five: The Advent of Gaming

One of the more distinct areas of technology's development in recent years has been the introduction of video games into society. Starting with very simplistic and basic by today's standards, video games have blossomed incredibly quickly, as technology evolves at such a rapid pace, and enables more expansive and detailed artwork to come of it. Video games have become one of, if not the most prevalent demonstrations of innovative applications of both technology and art combined (Wood and Carter, 2018). Becoming one of the most popular mediums, particularly with younger generations, video games draw from a vast library of cultural wealth before them; taking elements of game design, artistic style and musical direction from its older creative brethren (Harris and Tate Gallery Liverpool., 2007, p254). A game does, however, have a distinguished quality to it that is abjectly different to those that have come before; specifically, the interactive nature of the medium and the requirement of participation from an audience (Meecham and Sheldon, 2005, p130). Comparing games to older art forms – be they picture, text or film – reveals a level of depth

and interaction that only games can boast. Unlike any other medium, games require the active interaction from their audience; a painting will remain static and unchanging regardless of how its audience would react, to quote Plato (Plato, 1995), but the same cannot be said of games. Games do not progress without the participant's interaction, as they are given direction over what is essentially, its protagonist. As they have further developed from their infancy in arcade machines, artists have toyed with the very nature of the medium – allowing their players to embrace the dark side, play as the villainous antagonist rather than the virtuous hero, for example.

Another emergent phenomenon from the development of technology is the evolution of games as an art form and the integration of the internet into them. Consequently, creators have used the networking capability of the internet to design and foster communities by developing games that directly capitalise on this person-to-person ability, Blizzard's World of Warcraft standing as a prime example. Players have and continue to embrace social aspect of the medium (Domahidi, Festl and Quandt, 2014), developing communities that share their enjoyment in of the media – and in a far more direct, impactful way than could be said of traditional format. The interactive nature of the format lends itself to this unifying theme; players banding together to manage one another's weaknesses and maximise their respective strengths in the game correlating with the need to organise and maintain the dynamics of a party (time management, interpersonal relationships, etc) successfully (Corneliussen and Rettberg, 2008).

The interesting, if inevitable results of this globally connected media are the quirks and unintended consequences. Perhaps the most famous example would be the Corrupted Blood Incident in 2005 – wherein a programming oversight lead to catastrophic results. The game was overrun by a prolific disease, players dying in the hundreds in what were thought to be safe spaces – the results of this shown in Fig. 5, below (Stewart, 2015). The event was so impactful, it would draw the attention of the Centre for Disease Control, who were

interested in using the data gathered from the incident to better predict the outcomes and map human behaviour, should a similar outbreak occur in the real world. The behaviours of the players, it was argued, was a far better indication of human reactions and behaviour in these events than even the most sophisticated computer-generated simulations (Lofgren and Fefferman, 2007). Similarly, counter-terrorist organisations were interested in the motives and behaviour of the players who chose to propagate the spread of disease, in efforts to better understand and pre-empt potential modus operandi of bioterrorists. There is a clear demonstration here of the impact that this new format of both art and technology - had in the world, even in its relative infancy; and these were not even effects intended (even conceived of) by the creators. It will be interesting to see how this further develops as time goes on, and what other untended consequences erupt from the media artists create.



Fig. 5; *The Corrupted Blood Aftermath*

In keeping with the trend of a new media's mixed reception, games too have faced criticism from the general public. Like books before them, games have been treated with scepticism; the depiction of violent acts in games such as Manhunt or Grand Theft Auto have caused many to question what impact such media has (Funk *et al.*, 2004). The interactive nature of the medium promotes the idea that acts of violence within the simulated spaces would

encourage its audience to commit similar acts elsewhere or erode the barrier between reality and fiction. Such claims have been under scrutiny for some time (Matravers, 2015), and there is yet to be a sound verdict one way or another – after all, games still exist in the realm of escapism and imagination, and many engage in fictitious behaviours we would not in our waking lives even without the intervention of the gaming medium. By the same token, however, it is difficult to completely deny the impact games do have, in part being responsible for the desensitisation towards violence. The question of whether it is depiction, or the engagement with said given the medium, is what muddies the waters of a conclusive answer to this question.

Further to this, there has been discussion of this division between player and character; in online spaces like World of Warcraft for example, the limitations of the medium frustrates a player's attempts to play the role of their designed character – shackled instead to the framework of the game, a player cannot deviate too strongly from their intended role, as the game does not support this (Corneliussen and Rettberg, 2008). Other developers, such as Toby Fox, have created games that toy with this very divide – playing on the presuppositions of the medium and its audience, in order to then subvert them and highlight some of the inherent assumptions for what they are (Skistad, 2015). The acronym “EXP”, for example, is typically used to denote “experience”; in Fox's Undertale, this abbreviation stands for “Execution Points”. The game's narrative deviates down two major paths, intention being to demonstrate the capacity to resolve conflicts non-violently or emphasize the predisposition to eliminate all enemies for the violent act it is. To further accentuate this, and suggest the true weight of the choice a player makes, the game is programmed to ‘remember’, if a player opts to reset the game – and characters will make comments about the player's resolve, going so far as to ask if they regretted their actions, and if that the reason they chose to reset. Consequently, this led to an impactful narrative that strongly resonated with its audience, the game becoming a wildly popular with a huge audience (Henn, 2016).

As the technology develops, more efforts are being made to reduce the levels of separation between player and game – thus, the tentative first steps of Virtual Reality devices like the Oculus Rift or Vive (both first released in 2016). The intent of these products is to entirely replace the visual space a player is in, instead creating a new and immersive system that would reduce the barriers between the player of a game and the character they control. The technology is still in its infancy – unable to overcome some of the constraints of our time; namely the sense of vertigo players reported, and especially the prohibitively high cost these systems have to the average consumer. That said, if history is anything to go by, this is an issue that will wane over time – personal computers, smartphones and indeed games consoles have been adopted by the general public – they, too, having initially had alarmingly high price tags for what were rudimentary capabilities. As the medium continues to grow, it is likely that this will become something more popular as specialists are able to refine the medium in both capability and cost.

The interactive nature of the gaming platform has been noticed as the internet has evolved – and several businesses have moved to capitalise on this. Video platforms like YouTube and Twitch have grown in recent years, boasting the ability to directly interact with a content creator in real time through streaming services. Again, we see a platform of one to many broadcasting – almost akin to the networking capabilities the book granted creatives at the advent of the Printing Press so many centuries before. The difference lies in the fact that the creator is able to respond in seconds, instead of months or even years before – the responsiveness is higher than it has ever been before; and some game developers have even integrated elements of this into their products; Move or Die boasts stream integration, audience members being able to affect the game world of their host either positively or negatively, for example. Broadening this scope outward further, other creatives have started using the platform to demonstrate their craft; an audience is able to watch in real time the steps that their host takes to produce the work they enjoy, as well as directly influence what the artist might draw.

The responsiveness of this; the capacity for people to connect with one another on such a fast and intuitive fashion really speaks to the capacity the internet holds for connecting people with one another. This is the goal of social media, as well – although it would be naive to assume this is done purely out of a desire to connect people to one another. As is the nature of our society, the chief motivation behind many of the internet conglomerates is purely in the financial realm; Facebook being eponymous with the term social media in the current age. This suggests a complex relationship between social dynamics and society at large; Facebook has hundreds of millions of users, connects isolated people with one another to form communities and produce dialogues on a scope and level never before seen – and already impacts upon the established structures in society; the success of Barack Obama’s campaign in 2008 was largely attributed to the prolific use of social media, for example (McQuiston, 2015, p30). Successful though it may be, social media is still regarded with suspicion, even hostility – perhaps in part because of its relative infancy. Some of this distrust is earned, unfortunately – Facebook having abused the trust of its users, selling private and personal information of its clients to advertising companies (Sanders and Patterson, 2019); in turn sparking debate on what should and shouldn’t be in the commercial space.

Another heavily criticised facet of social media – perhaps exactly because of its capacity to broadcast to unfathomably large audiences – is the heavily superficial nature of its client base. Discussion arises about the tendency for people to present only the most positive aspects of their life, or even exaggerate them beyond what they are. Indeed, this has led to discussion and counter trends to emphasize the importance of truthfulness, with emergent hashtags like “#nomakeupselfie” trending (Lapidos, 2017). One wonders if this is merely a reflection of other facets of society – the criticism levied at the fashion industry, for imposing unrealistic standards for women’s beauty by digitally altering photographs to make them more appealing, for example. If we consider Berger’s perspective – that the role of advertising is to evoke a culture of envy and desirability (Berger, 1972, p134), this too

accounts for the desire by the individual to present themselves in the best possible way – to create a façade of oneself that elicits an essence of desirability and leads a viewer to consider them desirable, if not enviable. The only difference being the platform on which they are shown – in the space of social media, the individual is constructing their own identity to the larger world; advertisements by contrast are to broadcast a product, an idea that one's life will improve should they purchase the product. Social media's example is reflective of that of society's – but the individual is reclaiming their own space, almost in defiance of the notion that they should be enviable of others – instead, others should be envious of them.

Another element worth consideration the fact that many people feel uncomfortable making themselves vulnerable in a public space – and the internet's capacity to connect people can also mean a broader audience of criticism, if not outright hostility in some cases – perhaps it is unsurprising that social media has become a superficial space. These factors merely reflect an established cultural landscape of falsified, idealised simulacra of their lives people adopt to shield themselves from the hostility of the world.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The constantly evolving nature of humanity – of artistic techniques, cultural shifts, technological revolutions, to name a few – reflects the innate desire people hold to innovate and create. The fact that these developments mirror one another; technology inspiring art, art inspiring (and often, challenging) society and society pushing technological advancement forward encapsulates the interrelated nature of both humanity and history. Perhaps the most fascinating thing to see is the domino effect of unintended consequences; creatives (be they artist or no) watching as their works are interpreted - or indeed used - in shapes and forms they themselves would never have conceived of. Often, it is the perfect storm of events that lead to innovation; Chatfield, 2019, uses the printing press as an example – “Every piece of the puzzle assembled by Gutenberg and his collaborators was based on pre-existing technologies”. Technology simply allows people to do the things we always have done; and

yet, it in itself is a marvellously diverse field spanning recreational pursuits like games, affecting communication between people, educational endeavours, or being complicit in the creation of artwork. Again, we see these fields intermingle with one another – it is in our nature to cross boundaries, even if those limitations that are entirely of societal construct. Arguably, it is a fool's errand to attempt to predict where humanity's path lies – indeed, with so much relying on multidisciplinary cross pollination, it almost does not matter where the igniting spark may come from. Change begets change, the work of one inspiring another.

With the advent of the internet, we have done the seemingly impossible – we have shrunk the world. Communication was possible between countries before, of course – but not at the speed nor the scope we have today. What would take weeks to travel across the globe by transit can be broadcast in seconds; information can be shared, developed and discussed faster and more comprehensively than ever before – indeed, this paper itself is a testament to this fact, having drawn from the wealth of information available in the vast network of academic archives across the world, the huge number of journals, websites and papers accessible with just a click of the mouse. Now more than ever we have the ability to stand on the shoulders of giants – and the shoulders of our peers. We have a tool designed to communicate and share our ideas with the world, and even affect change through it; even when demonstration of intent is required, the internet offers the capacity to coordinate and organise people toward their shared goal; and indeed, this may be its most useful function. This is not to glorify what the internet is – it is my belief that we stand in the adolescence of the internet's life, the cheap thrill of anonymity displacing the sense of community which is integral to the human experience. The dehumanising effect of this form of interaction – of being just a name on a screen, almost a nonentity – leads to behaviours that aren't acceptable in more established forms. As society grows, becomes accustomed and comfortable with the technology we have been afforded, perhaps these norms will change; indeed, seeing that younger generations are having less trouble integrating with these new formats certainly seems to suggest adaption is already underway.

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