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CSC252 Assignment 2

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For this assignment I interviewed two people, Yusuf {last name removed} who is an amateur astronomer and Communications Technician and Mark {last name removed} who is a History and Education Junior at Lehigh University.

- 1) In what way do you rely on computers, information and or the Internet as part of your daily life? How is this different from the way you did things five or ten years ago?

Yusuf:

Computers are essential to his job as a tech in the IT industry. It allows him to communicate with others in ways that were not possible 20 years ago, including those on the other side of the globe. It allows him to explore the world and the from the comfort of his own home. His astronomical studies also rely on the computer and the Internet to allow access to vast amounts of data. Data that he would not have dreamed possible for an amateur to get a hold of 10 or 20 years ago.

Back then it would have cost hundreds to thousands of dollars for catalogues of star positions, which is rather prohibitive for someone starting out. Now not only can he obtain that data in electronic form over the Internet, but he can also contribute his own observations, which was virtual unheard of back then.

He summarizes his thoughts by saying, "We have truly become a global community. The computer and the Internet have brought the World to our finger tips."

Mark:

Mark also relies on computers everyday in fact he joked that computers are "daily life." Email and calendaring keep him on track personally and cnn.com, nytimes.com, and other Internet media channels allow him to follow the world.

To contrast this to five years ago, he got his news from a local newspaper and kept track of his personal life through a daily planner. He still used word processing, however, for school assignments.

- 2) What impact would it have on you if you could not use the Internet for 30 days? Please explain the consequences of this and how important they are to you?

Yusuf:

The Internet is Yusuf's link to the world. "If I could not use the Internet for 30 days I would somehow feel like I was cut off from the rest of the world." For him the Internet is alive, it has become an entity that becomes an extension of one's self. Doing without it would feel like he lost part of his existence. It would impact him in a negative way because he relies on newsletters via the Internet to keep him abreast of what's happening in the astronomical community. Some of his astronomical software is dependent on the Internet for real time data.

Mark:

Not having the Internet would have tremendous impact on how his life is organized and his daily habits. It would slow his life down, of which he values every second, by decreasing his efficiency, and control over life.

- 3) What societal changes do you see as a result of computers, information and Internet technology? Please identify three good changes and 3 bad changes. What can be done to maximize the good impact and minimize the bad?

Yusuf:

He noted the societal changes that it has had large effects on how we conduct our daily lives (shopping, banking, and even tax returns). In fact, he points out, there is little it hasn't changed in some way.

He also pointed out, "We've gone from Marconi to video conferencing a meeting on the otherside of the world.....live and in color."

Positive Changes:

- a) Data sharing, email, electronic commerce.
- b) Computers in schools from elementary right through college
- c) The ability to be a resource for numerous disciplines

Negative Outcomes:

- a) Easy access to pornographic materials by young children. (But, was careful to point out, that he is not for Internet censorship. Parent control should be used.)

- b) Computer crimes and viruses that can take down and infect the networks of large global companies severely impacting production.
- c) The easy access with the right software to sensitive information about individuals.

Mark:

Mark joked that his answers are show his bias as a history major.

Good:

- a) Information is available quicker and more effectively then ever before.
- b) It has created a more diverse society, opens the doors to better understanding.
- c) Has created higher productivity by allowing for multitasking.

Bad:

- a) More information is now available, but it has reduced the healthy interactions that were important before in obtaining that information.
- b) Related to the above, less social interaction.
- c) Has made our society less stable do to the rapid changes in technology.

- 4) What advice would you give to me as a computer professional with respect to professional ethics?

Yusuf:

Quoting him directly, "Jason you're a great young man and your knowledge as an engineer speaks for itself concerning your professional ethics. Just be yourself and you'll continue to be the professional you are."

Mark:

As a computer user, Mark stressed the importance of my respect of his privacy. He said he has no clue how it works, which makes people like him vulnerable to computer professionals who wish to obtain access to information illegitimately. He summarized his thoughts by asking that I respect his privacy.