



ARE THINGS BETTER OR WORSE BECAUSE OF TECHNOLOGY?

I will give you time to ponder the title question as I give you two examples. Heart disease and heart related problems are one of the leading causes of death in this country. Everyday in offices, homes, planes, on the road, etc. people are suffering heart attacks and inevitably requiring someone to call 000 to organise an Ambulance. In many instances due to traffic, Ambulance shortages and system inefficiencies, paramedics are arriving at a patient's side too late to prevent major damage or death. In fact in the US, nearly 80 percent of all sudden cardiac arrests occur at home and fewer than 5 percent of those victims survive. In the market place now is a product called a Home Heart Start Defibrillator. This amazing product allows virtually any user to restart a person's heart that may have stopped by talking a person clearly through the process. It even checks to see whether the electrical pads are in the right place and if the person actually needs the process at all. It even coaches a person through CPR.

On the other hand we in Australia and indeed the Western World at large is going through an obesity epidemic starting with kids as young as 3. Why are we going through such an epidemic and why is the problem getting worse? Well we drive to school and the shops instead of riding or walking. We watch TV and chat and play games on the computer or games console for entertainment instead of exercising and playing outside. We have less time to cook because of our schedules so we eat more pre-prepared, highly processed and fast food. Basically we have automated so many our tasks because of the Internet and technological devices we have created, that our daily manual labour tasks are now minimal.

In many Universities in the 70s they used to teach students that in the future they would be working less because of technology and processes that were now human operated would be automated. Unfortunately they were only half right, we have automated most of those processes but we are working more than ever.

Now given all this do you think we are better or worse off than generations previous? The easy answer would probably be that it depends what you are talking about. We have made things more efficient, we have more entertainment options, medical science is able to cure more ailments, we can travel most places easily and we are able to access information and communicate better. However as a society we also are now fatter, less active, more depressed and lonely, communicate face to face less, in more debt and if trends continue will have a shorter average life span to our preceding generation.

The saying "*you are here for a good time not a long time*" would suggest we are better off now but the fact that only a generation ago, terms like stress disorder, ADD, hyper obesity and road rage were rarely used if at all. I think the problem lies in the fact that over time, we as human beings became dependent on instant gratification in all aspects of our life. Whether it is entertainment, communication, travel or even curing a disease. At some point we had to invent the machines and systems to achieve this instant gratification and that would have taken hard work and maybe even a bit of suffering to achieve that goal. This sort of human struggle to achieve something is what many believe brings a fulfilling life. Maybe if we as a society struggled to achieve something for future generations to enjoy then not only can we overcome some of the problems our society has but we can also enjoy the technology we have because of generations past without it being detrimental to our lives.

DID YOU KNOW?

What are actually doing on our PC at work? This recent survey has revealed some surprising results. 75% of people "accidentally" see porn at work and 15% percent are regular visitors. Half of employees are spending at least 10% of their time on the web for personal reasons, usually chatting or emailing. 60% of respondents indicated that their company did not have a web usage policy and half of the employers admitted to having no content filtering system. There also seemed to be a high number of employees spying on their co-workers web browsing. Interestingly 2% of users say they don't use the web at all for personal reasons.

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