

MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL INFLUENCE

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INTRODUCTION:

At Christopher Newport University (CNU) we utilize technology through its many facets and in many ways. We use different technological systems in our classrooms that have translated into our workplace positions and personal lives. The use of technology in our higher education has been highly beneficial to our learning. However, there have been a few instances where technology has hindered our learning abilities. This report will discuss how modern technology has influenced our lives, learning, and future capabilities.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CURRICULUM:

The use of technology has been absolutely critical in our higher-education experience. Living in this fast-paced world, we are forced to stay updated on new technology in order to be competitive. Electronic calendars are a wonderful organizational tool that we all utilize to keep up with this fast-paced busy lifestyle. The ability to pull up a calendar on a mobile device or computer has changed the way people are able to schedule events, deadlines, classes and more. Another technology that contributes to managing our fast-paced lifestyle is Google Docs. This is a wonderful tool for group projects because it allows users to simultaneously work on the same documents in real-time. One great in-class learning tool within our higher education experience has been our business management simulations. With these simulations we have been able to utilize technology in a very unique way. These simulations offer us a way to relate to real-world business problems and to virtually understand how interconnected the multiple facets of business are. Another great tool utilized in our business school's curriculum is the Bloomberg terminal. Bloomberg is especially great for our finance and accounting majors because of the seemingly infinite amount of historical data that resides within it. Bloomberg also offers our marketing and management majors a means of keeping up with market information with the constant stream of real-time economics data. We can gratefully say that our school has been able to offer us a quality learning experience that will surely translate into our careers.

TECHNOLOGY IN EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES:

Between our cohort of writers, we've all held significant internship or job positions outside of the classroom. We have utilized many different technologies in these positions that have been very important on a day-to-day basis. A couple of us have used the Oracle database system. Being proficient with this technology is absolutely essential because one wrong mistake could create a snowball effect across many documents. The knowledge needed for this database also requires critical thinking skills for solving problems that may arise within the system. This database, and databases alike, require some sort of prior knowledge in order to use them. Fortunately at CNU we are required to take an information systems class that prepares us for the basics of these database systems. However, we do feel it is the responsibility of the company we work for to train us with the in-depth knowledge needed in order to perform tasks within these databases efficiently. Workshops and refresher sessions are great for any program because for many programs there are multiple ways of coming up with the same answer: especially Microsoft Excel. Excel is an extremely important technology utilized in some of our internships and jobs. This powerful tool allowed us to organize spreadsheets of data including contacts lists, financial data, pricing models, hypothesis testing, and forecasting models in our internships and jobs. Excel has numerous applications and can be very complex in nature. We all feel that Excel is a very important tool that should be a critical piece of any curriculum. In many cases jobs will expect you to have experience with Excel prior to working so it should be a core competency learned in higher education.

TECHNOLOGY IN PERSONAL LIFE:

Technology is also highly tied to our personal lives. In particular, smart-phones are a very contributable factor in the way we communicate with our friends and family. Being away at school means for some of us that we will not see some friends and family for a while; so the ability to text, call, facetime, email, Facebook, etc. with them has allowed us to stay in touch without having to write letters. The use of twitter to keep up with current events may not sound very reputable, but depending on who you follow, you can get quite a lot of information from it. Current events especially come from twitter and allow you to stay with the modern trends. Having technology so readily available can be somewhat distracting at times. On occasion it can distract you from your priorities or class time but managing your desire to use technology is a great skill to learn while in school because there most definitely will be no place for personal use of technology in the workplace.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER FROM THE CLASSROOM TO WORKPLACE:

The workplace is a rapidly changing environment that forces companies to either stay up to date with current trends and technology, or be left behind by competitors. Every firm in one way or another incorporates technology into their business functions. For instance, instead of seeing journal entries written out and stacked in a meaningless file cabinet, they are neatly recorded in excel spreadsheets, stored in a central database, and made readily available for employees who need them. The knowledge we learn in the classroom regarding Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Access, Google tools, Oracle and similar enterprise resource planning systems (ERP), have been instrumental to our success in the workplace. For business majors it's rare to ever have an interview without already possessing the necessary technological capabilities outlined in the job title. Not only do CNU students have the necessary capabilities, but in most instances we are more than qualified to succeed at our various positions. In particular, we felt the most comfortable and prepared with Microsoft Excel and applied our knowledge with ease in our internships and jobs.

TECHNOLOGY AND THE CLASSROOM:

Professors have varying opinions of the benefits and uses of technology in the classroom. Some view computers, interactive boards, simulations, and Bloomberg terminals as extremely helpful learning tools; while others see computers and cellphones as a complete distraction to the user and their surrounding peers. Through the eyes of a student, technology must be present in all classrooms; we are in the age of technology and it is not going anywhere. However, the use of technology can sometimes be a distraction. Teachers are capable of minimizing this distraction by upholding strict policies on technological usage, but ultimately the responsibility falls on the students themselves to uphold the integrity and standards of a good learning environment using the technology to enhance their learning rather than distracting themselves and others around them with facebook, emails and text messaging not related to the classroom material. The use of technology in the classroom isn't always negative. For instance, some students take full advantage of the capabilities laptops provide during class. Most of us can type faster than we can write. Not only does Microsoft Office allow us to write notes, but it also allows us to create interactive graphs and presentations. These thorough notes are electronic, allowing them to be stored in a safer and more efficient way. Another benefit of technology in the classroom is the ability to google for information using a laptop, desktop computer, or smart-phone. Having this capability at our fingertips allows for interactive learning. This is also beneficial because questions can be answered without interrupting the flow of class.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

At CNU, the finance majors wish we had a stock market simulation system similar to the one used by the Norfolk State business students. We feel this would be a practical way to hone in our skills learned during class. Another recommendation would be to incorporate technology into the accounting program because currently the curriculum is based mostly on written documentation. For accountants, knowledge and abilities with regards to Excel and ERP's must be at a level that allows them to masterfully create and modify financial statements. If CNU could put business

technologies and information technology systems at the forefront of the curriculum, it would allow students to have a comparative advantage over students from other institutions when competing for jobs.

CONCLUSION:

Overall, we feel technology in the classroom is extremely beneficial to our learning, our capabilities in the workplace, and our everyday lives. Microsoft Office has endless applications in the classroom and is an integral to the success of a student. Oracle and similar ERP's grant students a glimpse of the web of interconnection that truly makes up a firm, and how to use these different modules to our advantage. Google tools and calendar allows students to manage their schedules at a higher level. Technology continues to evolve at a faster pace, and therefore should be incorporated into more classrooms and at higher levels to further prepare students for life after graduation.