TEC 154 2014S, Class 14: Perspectives (2)

Overview

- Preliminaries
  - Admin.
  - Office365
- Context.
- Small-group discussion.
- Large-group discussion.
- Meta-issues.

Preliminaries

Office365

- Concern: Microsoft has your data
  - Contract says that Microsoft will not use the content of your email.
  - Contract says nothing about metadata.
- Plus a bribe: You get Office on "up to five devices"

Admin

- Note takers (send me five main points): EG and DP
- Readings for Friday
  - Ch 12: Why the Future Doesn't Need Us
  - Ch 13: A Response to Bill Joy
- Readings for Monday
  - The first third of *The Design of Everyday Things*.
- Congrats to our women swimmers for placing first in conference.
- Extra credit:
  - Men's BB, Wed at 5:30

Points from EG

1. Technology studies was established and came to prominence in the 60âs, thanks in part to Mesthene and McDermottâs critical analyses and increasing recognition in institutions. [I'm not sure that I claimed the "thinaks in part" to.]

2. Mesthene advocates for what McDermott terms "*laissez innover*", or a "free market" development where people innovate and improve technology in response to other innovators without imposition or restraint.

3. The distinction between technological determinism and laissez innover is that the free, unrestrained invention which characterizes Mestheneâs stance is a logical implication of technological determinism in the sense that development is valued above all else, but there can be determinism with a governing body under a specific agenda or ideology.

4. McDermott's critique of Mesthene's far-right political stance is rooted in a framework similar to that of Winner and Weinberg given his attention to the culture and politics of technology. [I'm not sure that Mesthene is "far right", although McDermott might classify Mesthene as such.]

5. When considering regulation or aims of development, the question "does society aid technological progress?" is inadequate; a more appropriate question is: "does technological progress really aid society?"

Notes from DP

1. It is difficult to define if a technology is reaching its full potential.

2. Positives and negatives of technology will always exist at the same time.

3. Society is the ultimate governor of how technology will be utilized.

4. It can be argued that *laissez innover* and technological determinism are essentially the same concept. [It can also be argued that there are substantial differences, even if they share some underlying ideas.]

5. The failures of past technologies influence the potential successes of future technologies.

Context

- Late 1960's
- Development of Tech Studies

Small group discussions

- Four groups (3 or 4 students).
- Two groups consider a series of questions on Mesthene.
- Two groups consider a series of questions on McDermott.

Meta Questions

- What are the implications of reading excerpts?
- What are the effects of the order in which we read articles? How might we have responded differently if we read McDermott before Mesthene?
- Is it acceptable to identify problems without suggesting (reasonable) solutions?

- What are the dangers of summarizing?

Large group

Mesthene

- Clear illustrations of the effect of technology on society.
  - And the ways in which both positives and negatives exist simultaneously.
  - Examples are helpful; all of our authors should use them.
- We see repeated connections between society and technology. "The politics guy" (Winner) and the social engineering guy (Weinberg)
- One group talked a lot about why society does not respond to technological potential. How can you know the potential of a technology? Should we just look at its intended purpose, or perhaps unexpected applications?

McDermott

- Comparison of two ideologies *laissez innover* and technological determinism. Like comparing apples and oranges.
  - *laissez innover* is "leave the inventor alone"
  - technological determinism is that technology marches forward and makes society march forward
  - Parallel, but different.
- Similarity: Both suggest that this technology is good.
- McDermott thinks *laissez innover* is a bad thing (or at least has the same flaws as *laissez faire*.
- "Does society aid technology progress?" - McDermott would say that's the wrong question. The question should be "Does technological progress aid society?"

Takeaways

- What are perpsectives we see repeated?
- What are new questions we should ask about technology?