

Technological Inventory and Response

The purpose of this assignment is to observe, record and speculate about your own use of communication technologies; it is a first step towards thinking critically about communication and technology in your own life. The assignment has two parts:

Part 1

In the first section you will observe and record your uses of information and communication technologies for a day. You will log each time you engage with an information or communication technology during that day, indicate whether or not your attention to this technology is high, medium or low, how much time you spend using the technology and where you are when you are using it. The following technologies should be considered:

Desktop Computer Notebook/Laptop Computers	Land Line Telephone
Palm Pilot/Personal Organizer	Answering Machine/Voicemail
Television	Cell Phone
VCR/DVD Player	Pager
Personal Stereo (cassette/cd/MP3)	Video/Computer/Virtual Reality Games
Home Stereo/Radio	Electronic PA Equipment
Car Radio/Stereo	Bank Machines

There may be others, but these are particularly important. For the purposes of the assignment, you will not need to consider such devices as billboards, posted flyers, books, in-person conversations, etc. These are indeed technologies, but you may disregard them for purposes of concision and practicality. For this assignment, you should concentrate on electronic information technologies. Pick an average day and try to record every interface with any of these technologies. Note the time, location, general type of information (e.g. instructions, entertainment, conversation, etc.) and level of attention (e.g. low/high). If you miss one or two, do not freak out, but try to be as complete as possible. You have to submit this log (typed, in table/list format) with your essay.

Part 2

This part requires you to write critically about your use of technologies as you have logged them. In the required number of pages you will attempt to answer at least two of the following questions:

- How does technology mediate your interactions with people?
- Are you surprised by the amount of time your log shows that you were engaged with technology? Why or why not?
- When you are using information/communication technologies, are you primarily receiving information or creating it?
- Do you see the primary role of information/communications technologies as informative or creative? What shapes your opinion?
- What technologies listed in your log serve you well, and which ones server you poorly? Please define what you mean by “well,” and “poorly” based on your experience.
- Based on your log what would you say the purpose of technology in your life is? Does this relate to more general ideas that you have about the purpose of technology?

Include an explanation of your general ideas about the purpose of technology. This part must be written in essay format, 2-3 pages long, typed, double-spaced, with an original title.