



CSCI 245 Life, Computers, and Everything

Computers and Happiness

Thoughts

List 5 biggest ways in which computer technology has made people's lives better

a) ...

Compare/Consolidate

Turn to three other people and consolidate your lists into a single list of 5 biggest advances

a) ...

Searching for info

How about web search engines?

Recommendation apps?

Making the world smaller

How about computer networks?

How about texting?

How about Voice over IP?

How about Video over IP?

Getting smarter

How about online education?

How about learning foreign languages?

How about instant access to news?

Connecting people

How about social media?

Entertainment

How about streaming video?

How about streaming music?

Really?

“The ‘information age’ will never lessen our needs by a hair’s breadth.”

“Virtual gourmet food will make you feel full but will not keep you from starving. **Virtual heat** will make you feel warm but will not keep you from freezing. **Virtual sex** will make you feel satisfied in the sense that a pig feels satisfied.”

The cost of not knowing history

“Movies, phonographs, color photography and color printing, the electronic transmission of photos, the invention of radio and radio networks and international radio hookups, newsreels, television, transistorized electronics, long-distance phone networks, communication satellites, fax machines, photocopiers, audio and video tapes, compact disks, cell phones, cable TV...”

“Rail networks, telegraph networks, air and phone and highway and radio and TV networks...”

<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/computers-and-the-pursuit-of-happiness/>

Science and Engineering

“Computers and the Internet have made a revolution in science and engineering. Studying computational models of reality can be cheaper and better than studying reality. Sometimes reality is impossible to measure or too steep to scale, and computational models are the only way to get any purchase on it.”

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What is **your** take?

“Are we better informed than we used to be?” I doubt it. Is anyone prepared to assert that the U.S. electorate is better informed today than it was at the time of (say) the 1960 presidential election? That our fifth graders are better informed about reading, writing, history, or arithmetic? That our fifth-grade teachers are better informed?”

Context

January 1st, 2001

David Gelernter

Prof. of Computer Science, Yale University

“We need more people who are at home in the worlds of art and the humanities and who are less diffident in the presence of technology. There are not enough articulate Luddite, anti-technology voices.” - [The Economist](#)

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“... he condemned “belligerent leftists” and blamed intellectualism for the disintegration of patriotism and traditional family values.” - [The Washington Post](#)

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