

HUMAN FLOURISHING | FNDN 102

Technology and flourishing

Dwight H. Friesen, PhD



TECHNOLOGY & FLOURISHING



**What are the common messages you hear about technology today?
In relation to spirituality?**

MY DISCLAIMER

I am not here to make you feel guilty today or knock your generation.

I am here to invite you to THINK about technology in a way that can help you live well with it.



Photo by Nilotpal Kalita on Unsplash

Technology

and your flourishing

MAIN POINTS TODAY

To live well with technologies we need to understand what they are and what they do.

To live well with technologies we need to be aware of the human environments they create.

To live well with technology we need to decide how they can help us become the people we want to be.



POPE PIUS XII / February 17, 1950

It is not an exaggeration to say that the future of modern society and the stability of its inner life depend in large part on the maintenance of an equilibrium between the strength of the techniques of communication and the capacity of the individual's own reaction.

How strong are you, really?

How does your **why** influence your relationship to technology?



TECHNOLOGY & FLOURISHING

What is technology? What does it do?



Photo by Nilotoaal Kallita on Unsplash

RETHINKING

Technology.

About technology

The tale of the security guard.





S45 | E7

MARKETPLACE
Addicted to Your Phone?

In the documentary, CBC Marketplace tracks a family's electronic device usage. It's a fairly common experiment (tracking usage) but who else is in on the game?



S45 | E7

MARKETPLACE
Addicted to Your Phone?

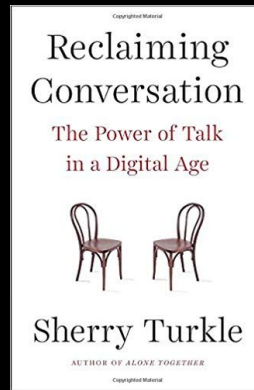
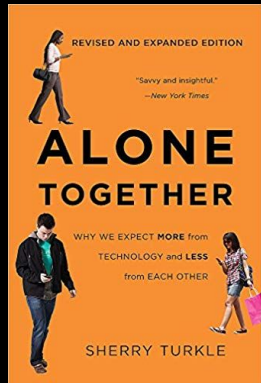




Photo by Nilotpal Kalita on Unsplash



TIPS

- Follow mfr guidelines
- Keep away from private body areas
- Keep it off as much as possible
- Don't use when signal is poor
- Stay away from crowds using them

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/sc-cell-phone-safety-family-0131-20170126-story.html>

FNDN CLASSES

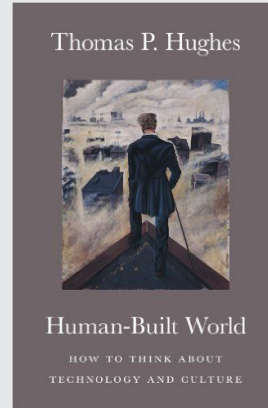
THRIVE 102



Edward Snowden on smartphones / surveillance

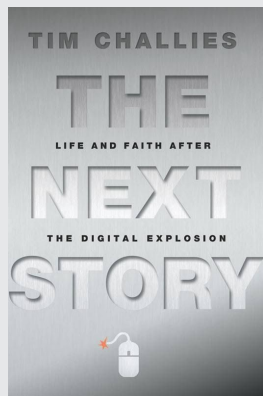


How do you define technology?



A creative process involving human ingenuity. Emphasis on making, creativity and ingenuity can be traced back to *teks*, an Indo-European root of the word “technology”. *Teks* meant to fabricate or to weave. In the Greek, *tekton*, referred to a carpenter or builder and *tekne* to an art, craft, or skill. All of these early meanings suggest a process of making, even of creation. (3)





TIM CHALLIES

The Next Story: Life and Faith after the Digital Explosion

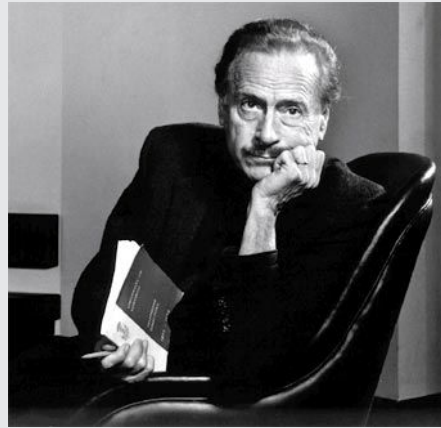
Though the devices and tools we create are inherently amoral, at the same time we would be foolish to believe that they are morally neutral. (16)

In other words, it is not the technology itself that is good or evil; it is the human application of that technology. (17)

PROBLEM ALERT!

While there is a range of possible responses—from enthusiastic embrace to strict separation—the response of the thinking Christian should be *disciplined discernment*. . . .(8)

The problem is that we have been taught to think that technology is neutral; it's what we do with it that matters! **That is a misguided Understanding of technology**



Marshall McLuhan

What is technology?

“All media are extensions of some human faculty - psychic or physical.”

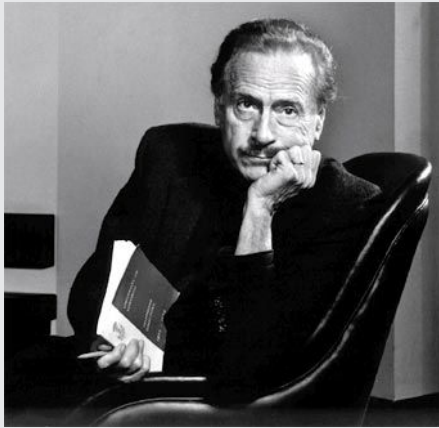
- in *The Medium is the Message*

Prince Modupe’s encounter with books.

- in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*

Prince Modupe wrote of his encounter with the written word in his West African days:

The ore crowded space in Father Perry's house was his bookshelves. I gradually came to understand that the marks on the pages were *trapped words*. Anyone could learn to decipher the symbols and turn the trapped words loose again into speech. The ink of the print trapped the thoughts; they could no more get away than a *daomboo* could get out of a pit. When the full realization of what this meant flooded over me, I experienced the same thrill and amazement as when I had my first glimpse of the bright lights of Konakry. I shivered with the intensity of my desire to learn to do this wondrous thing myself.



Marshall McLuhan

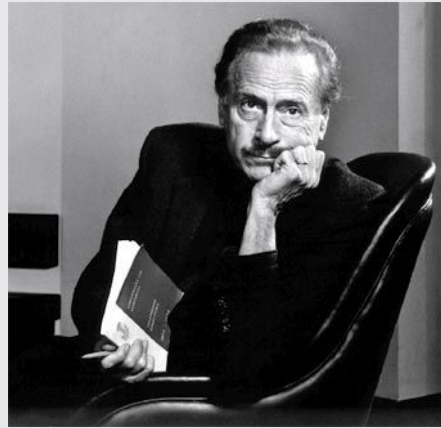
Every technology does four things

Extends
Renders obsolete
Retrieves
Reverses/flips

Every technology (Example: CAR)

Extends / foot
Renders obsolete / horse carriage
Retrieves / horse
Reverses/flips / traffic jam

What happens to the part of us that gets extended?



Marshall McLuhan

“The medium is the message.”

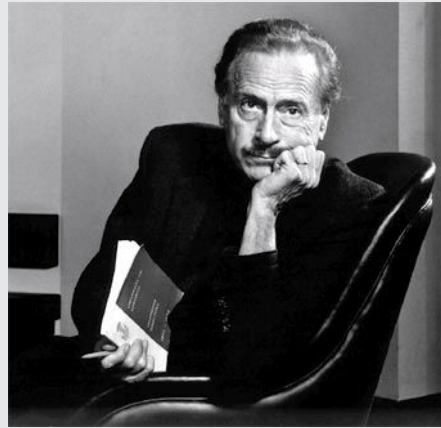
- in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*

DISCUSS

What is the message of the light bulb? Internet?
Clothing?

- See *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*

“Any technology tends to create a new human environment. . . .Technological environments are not merely passive containers of people but are active processes that reshape people and other technologies alike.” - from the intro to *The Gutenberg Galaxy*



Marshall McLuhan

BREAKOUT

What is the message of the lightbulb? Clothing? The internet?

Are you aware of how technology is changing you? Might change you?

SOCRATES | *King Thamus on Writing*

this discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show



Photo by Nilofar Kallia on Unsplash

RETHINKING

Technology.

The image features two laptops, one on the left and one on the right, both with their lids covered in a dense collection of colorful stickers. The stickers include various characters, logos, and text, such as 'MISERY', 'element', and 'A'. The laptops are positioned on a surface that also appears to be covered in stickers. A central white rectangular box contains the main title and subtitle in bold white text. The background is a soft, out-of-focus greyish-blue.

TECHNOLOGY & FLOURISHING

How does it technology shape human environments?

THE CULT OF DIGITAL

Technology-oriented religions are coming



By [Stan Stalaker](#) · October 9, 2019
Founding director, Hub Culture Group





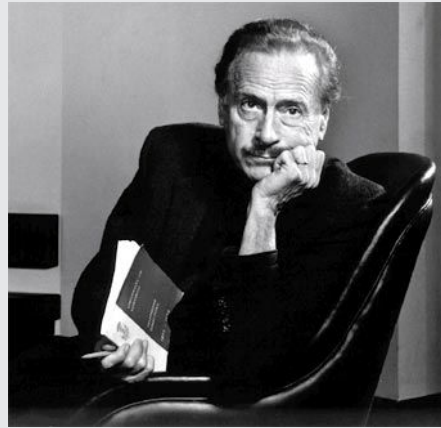
TECH HAS BEEN AROUND FOR CENTURIES

Our attention is being hijacked more than ever before.

“Instead, when we talk about technology, we should be thinking about power dynamics.” - Privacy Is Just the Beginning of the Debate Over Tech

...which we are... by the intentional direction... mind.

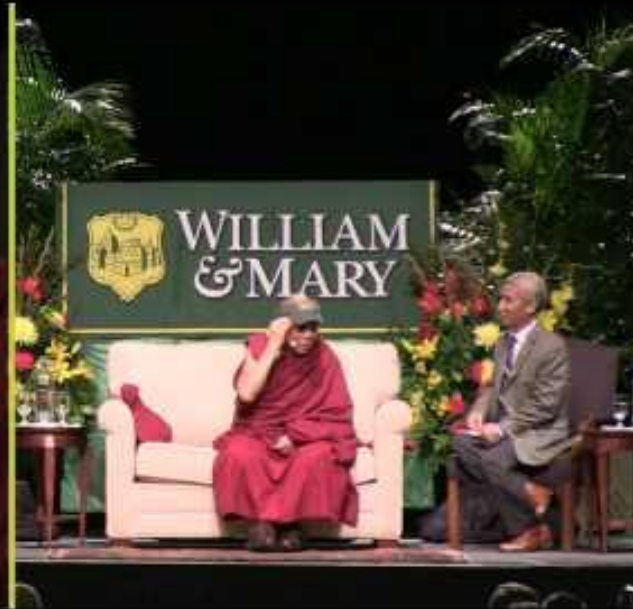
Richard Davidson, neuroscientist at the University of Wisconsin Madison and founder and director of the [Center for Healthy Minds](#)



Marshall McLuhan

BREAKOUT

How would our human environment change without the internet?



“Without technology humanity has no future, but we have to be careful that we don’t become so mechanised that we lose our human feelings,”

- Dalai Lama. Surat, Gujarat, India, Jan 1, 2015.



**CLICK THIS IMAGE
TO GO TO THE VIDEO**

RETHINKING

Technology.

What does technology do?

In order to evaluate the role of technology in our lives it helps to pay attention to how technology can shape culture and how culture can shape technology.

Technology: a brief history | VIMEO

Identify two dynamics in the relationship between technology and culture.

What did you notice?



Photo by Nilotoal Kalita on Unsplash

RETHINKING

Technology.

Nothing is neutral.



NEIL POSTMAN | *Technopoly*

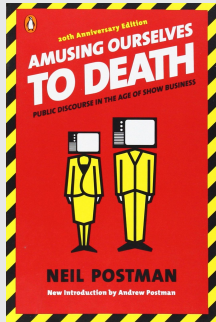
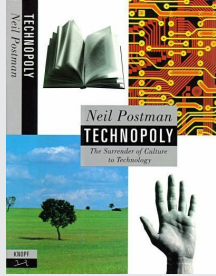
IMPLICATIONS FOR SPIRITUALITY

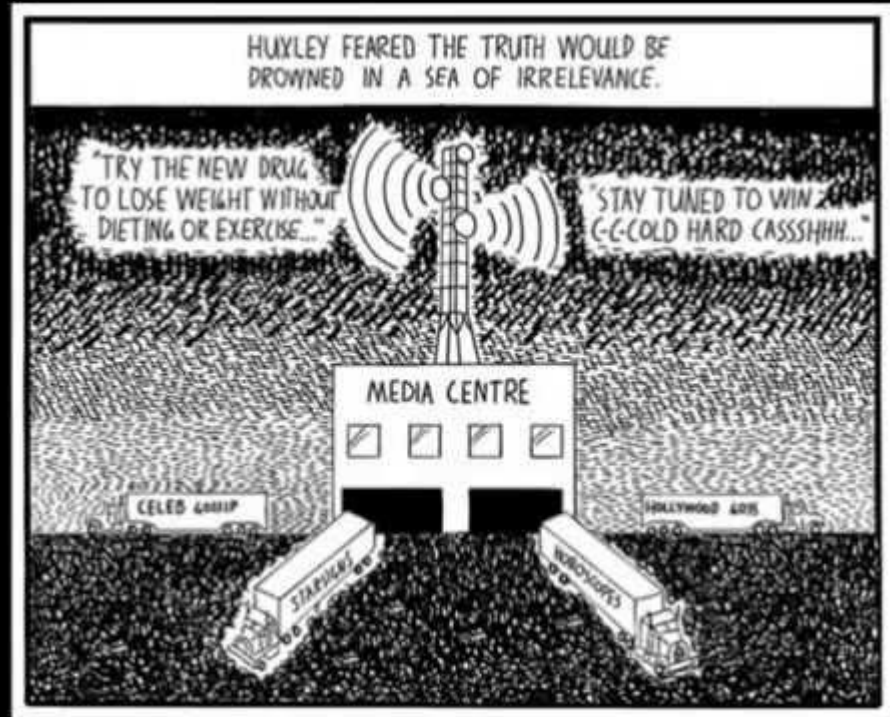
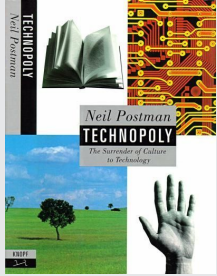
Luther understood, as Gutenberg did not, that the mass-produced book, by placing the Word of God on every kitchen table, makes each Christian his own theologian—one might even say his own priest, or, better, from Luther's point of view, his own pope. (15)

NEIL POSTMAN | *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

What are the implications for wellbeing?

- All technology is a trade-off
- A technology's advantages and disadvantages are never distributed evenly
- Embedded in each technology is a powerful idea, or two
- Every technology is ecological (it blends with what exists)
- It can become *mythic*, it becomes so common we don't notice it







TECHNOLOGY & FLOURISHING

Who do you want to become?

TECHNOLOGY AND FLOURISHING

To live well with technology is to understand what it is, how it functions, and **how to use it to become the person you want to become.**

It is to ask how technology changes what we think it means to be human, to be spiritual.



Photo by Nilotopal Kallita on Unsplash

RETHINKING

Technology.

TECHNOLOGY AND FLOURISHING

Is technology helping you become the person you want to be?

Has technology already shaped your idea of the person you want to be?

LIVING WELL WITH TECHNOLOGY

Pay attention to what technology does

Understand the bargains you are making

Take control

Decide who or what is going to design your mind | Philippians 2:1-11 Romans 12:1-2

Think about the person you want to become and the person you do **NOT** want to become.

RETHINKING

Technology.

Photo by Nilotoaal Kallita on Unsplash



Photo by Nilotoaal Kallita on Unsplash

RETHINKING

Technology.

LIVING WELL WITH TECHNOLOGY

When you are aware that you are in a position to be able to make a decision, you are responsible for the decisions you make.





Quentin Schulze

Habits of the High Tech Heart

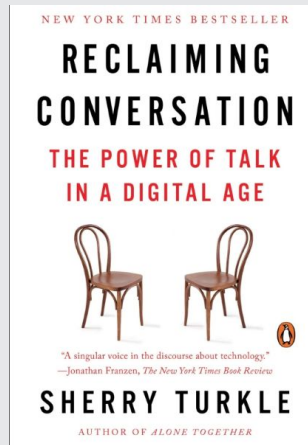
1. Resist *informationism* (the fascination with data as a key to happiness)
2. Exercise *moderation*
3. Gain *wisdom*
4. Maintain *humility* about technologies and their potential
5. Be *authentic*
6. Strive for *cosmic diversity*
7. Nurture *virtue* in community
8. *Sojourn* with heart



Photo by Nilotsoal Kalitia on Unsplash

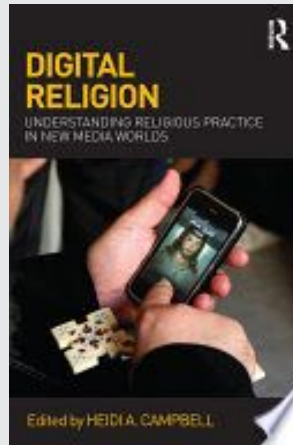
RETHINKING

Technology.




 FROM an interview

“I like the study that shows that after five days away at camp without connections you see the empathy markers among children rising. The ability to recognise the emotions of somebody in a video or a story go right back up. I believe we are wired to talk. It is a Darwinian thing.”




 Heidi Campbell, ed.

Considers how “a digitally mediated context creates not only new spaces for religiosity to be constituted but a lens for meaning-making that may transform our conversations about what it means to be religious in a digital, mobile, augmented reality.” (17-18)





Photo by Nilotoal Kalita on Unsplash

RETHINKING Technology.

