**Mobile Technology: Destroying Relationships**

Paul Butland

CMNS 2200

Shannon Smyrl

October 22, 2021

Is wireless and mobile technology destroying our ability to develop and sustain personal relationships? While elitist, Turkle's theory, "Culture of Simulation," shows how wireless and mobile technology is rapidly replacing the function of real human connection in our society. Computers and mobile phones have been an essential part of our world for many years now; consequently, we are losing touch with our human qualities and ability to connect in person. This is seen in examples from the media, articles covered in the course and my own personal experience. Our ability to communicate using technology is dependent on mobile devices rather than traditional communication methods. Turkle's theory of "Culture of Simulation" argues that technology is changing how we develop and maintain human relationships. Unfortunately, wireless and mobile tools like smartphones don't fulfill the same function as real human connections. Wireless and mobile technology is devastating our ability to sustain and develop personal relationships; this is creating social issues around forming genuine human connections.

Mobile technology has become an essential communication method; we depend on these devices for personal connection and are losing touch with our traditional ways of developing relationships. Turkle points out in her article, "Alone Together", that digital connections are not a replacement for genuine human companionship, and we are hiding from each other even though mobile technology allows us to communicate more than ever. Recently during the pandemic, Canadians have not been allowed to travel because of COVID restrictions; as a result, they spend more time on their mobile devices to make up for the lack of communication with their friends and families. Casey (2020) claims, "Canadians dramatically altered their behaviour by permanently reducing their interactions with others even as they began moving around more during the pandemic, a new study of cellphone data suggests" (Casey, 2020). People have used mobile devices to communicate during the pandemic because it provides an easier way to connect instead of face-to-face interaction. Mobile technology has become such an integral part of our society that it has affected our identity and sense of time. For example, I spend more time replying to emails than any other medium of mobile technology, which is an easier way for me to control my life but makes it more challenging to connect with others at the same time. As Turkle argues, our ability to connect with other people and have a sense of connection with a community can't be developed with technology because mobile technology isn't "real" (Turkle, 2011).

Turkle's theory, "Culture of Simulation," shows how mobile technology is replacing how we develop and maintain human relationships. Technology does not fulfill the same function as real interaction with another person; it only simulates human connection and mimics an alternative form of face-to-face communication. During the pandemic, I relied on my mobile devices to keep in touch with friends, family, and work. As a result, my ability to develop meaningful human relationships has

diminished, and I feel my experiences have also lessened. Although I have classes at university and sometimes visit with friends and family on weekends, there seems to be no 'real' intimacy of any kind, and I sometimes feel alone and anxious. The smartphone is my primary form of communication with the outside world during this pandemic; as a result, I have neglected my social life and spent long periods on social media and websites that are meaningless. I reply to emails by Turkle argues that developing personal relationships requires real human connection even though mobile technology allows us to reach anyone, anytime in seconds. Our technology is replacing how we feel about being alone; smartphones are replacing our ability to develop and create intimate connections.

Today's mobile technology, like smartphones, is making it easy to connect; however, these communication tools can't provide the same function as real human associations. We are now living in a society where everyone is connected with mobile technology and the internet; as a result, people don't have to be with another person to transmit a message. Technology such as data for smartphones provides instantaneous communication anywhere without having to be there in person, and it is becoming easier to interconnect all the time. An example of this from my own life would be how important my iPhone is for my connectivity and how often I use it. Although I don't have data for my phone, I am constantly communicating messages by text or email; wi-fi keeps me connected either at home or university. My cell phone allows me freedom of control over my life, but the social value of my relationships is restricted because of technology. COVID-19 has forced me to spend more time alone, so therefore I rely on my iPhone as a means of communicating rather than managing relationships through actual contact with others. Castell argues, "In sum, the blurring of time, space, and multipurpose communication dematerializes social structure and reconstructs it around individually centered networks of interaction" (Castell et al., p. 306). I am building my own private space around me, and at the same time, it seems like I'm ignoring others while trying to develop my relationships. Today's mobile technology doesn't offer the same function as natural face-to-face human connections, and we are becoming an artificial society through smartphones and wireless networks. Although my iPhone is an essential tool for communication, my ability to develop and maintain human relationships is even more critical, making the lack of face-to-face interactions harmful.

Mobile technology will eventually become more advanced and mimic human relationships. I feel that our dependence on devices like smartphones will become a threatening and artificial method of communication; we may eventually lose traditional face-to-face relationships and rely on technology too much. Our ability to develop and maintain relationships will give way to a digital world where everyone is connected through smartphones and wireless machines. However, there will always be a blurring of technologies' function in society; people need to manage relationships with things like conflict and love,

making us human. With the current trend in technology, mobile devices are becoming a replacement for 'real' intimacy, which could pose a danger to mental health. In today's society, we are experiencing the benefits and negative consequences of mobile technology. In today's overworked and overscheduled life, we need human connection to make life easier and less complicated; if humans want intimacy, they have to work to make it possible.

## References

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