
BOOK REVIEW

Technology & Society: Social Networks, Power, and Inequality
(2nd ed.) by Anabel Quan-Haase
New York: Oxford University Press, 2016,
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Anabel Quan-Haase provides an excellent understanding of the ways in which modern and advancing technologies impact our social worlds through *Technology & Society: Social Networks, Power, and Inequality*. Her work, in this second edition, includes a new chapter addressing the social structure of gender and its interaction with technology as well as a deeper exploration of ethics in social technology. While there is still room for improvement, this book is a worthy inclusion on any sociotechnology reading list.

Technology & Society possesses several positive and creative traits that keep the reader interested and entertained, including a great sense of organization and humor. The introduction, historical overview, and theoretical perspectives on technology (chapters 1-3) bring the reader up to speed on the contemporary discourse surrounding technology in society. Chapters 4 through 10 include subjects such as gender, use of technology, inequality, and other social components that discuss how technology impacts the social world. Chapters 11 and 12 conclude the book by addressing the surveillance impact and ethical considerations of using technology. Illustrated cartoons are used to describe the adoption of certain types of technology alongside contemporary references to popular culture cyber-movements such as #Boycott50ShadesOfGrey which engage the reader with present-day examples.

Derek Wilson is currently a PhD student of Sociology and Gerontology at the University of Kansas. Derek's areas of specialization include Technology and Media in Society, Gender and Sexuality, and Aging and the Life Course. Once his PhD is completed, he hopes to become a professor at a teaching university where he can pursue his passion for teaching sociology.

The descriptions of social theory provide an excellent introduction to what many might consider a dry subject. The use of theories such as social constructionism and technological determinism connect technology's presence and potential impact on society while still giving readers without sociological training stable ground on which to stand. Chapter Four, the chapter covering the intersection of gender and technology in sociological study, is without a doubt the greatest addition to the book. This chapter provides an introduction to the sociological discourse of gender and then plunges the reader into topics such as gender inequality in technological labors, technology's interaction with the body, and much more. These are important topics to address as humanity comes closer to integrating technology into the human body.

There are three additions that could improve the informative nature of the book. The first, and most important, is the inclusion of gerotechnology topics. Aging studies is quite important in regards to the study of technology in the social world. Given Quan-Haase's work with gerotechnology, it is a topic that could easily be inserted to further the intellectual reaches of this book. Though the digital divide is discussed, it mostly centers around economics and Marxian thought. The focus on affordability and access is still important, but the digital divide that exists based on age cannot be ignored. Take human factors as an example. Although human factors tends to fall more in the realm of psychology, it is an important component of human/technology studies whose origin resides within complications between older workers and new labor technologies. Human factors is a concept that is only alluded to in certain chapters.

As society continues to rely on modern technologies more, older adults and those considered "technologically illiterate" are running out of accessible options for important tasks such as pay bills, seek medical attention, deciphering between fake news and reality, etc. This book, and its readers could greatly benefit from being brought up-to-date on the current state of older adults' adoption of modern technology as most research demonstrates that many older adults are open to adopting new forms of technology, but simply do not have the necessary guidance.

Another addition that could improve the book is the discussion of potential futuristic technology that could greatly impact the norms of society. For example, the last chapter addresses the ethics

involved with technology and society. This would be an excellent point to address the necessity of ethical/social research training needed in the development of artificial intelligence. While this may seem more of a “too far into the future” topic, the American Sociological Association has already advertised a job focused on artificial development social research for Google in the Spring of 2020. Furthermore, the gender chapter’s section on the human body could be used to address the creation of artificial wombs that will be able to sustain the development of a fetus from conception. While these topics do seem distant from everyday conversation, Ray Kurzweil’s discussion of technology’s exponential advancement rate must not be forgotten: the growth of technology tends to increase exponentially.

Overall, this is an expansive book that provides a great introduction to the world of sociotechnology studies. While a well-seasoned social researcher of technology may find the book to be somewhat elementary, it still has incredible potential. *Technology & Society* is an excellent piece that provides the foundational information on the intersection between technology and sociology. This book, even in its first edition, would be an excellent guide for an undergraduate course in sociotechnology. Additionally, *Technology & Society* might provide a gateway for any social researcher outside of the technology studies field. The book seems to be quite accessible even for someone outside of the social sciences field all together. There is still room for improvement, specifically the inclusion of the age-based digital divide and more effort applied to technology that lies just ahead, but should not prevent anyone from picking this book up and seeing just how impactful technology is in our lives. While a third edition has recently been released with promising updates, the second edition is a great fit for anyone curious about sociotechnology. The humor, the writing, and the gentle introduction to complex subject of sociotechnology are handled well throughout the book.