

## THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY ON WRITING

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### ABSTRACT

*Technology has become a big part of today's society. The Internet has transformed our lives and expanded the ways people communicate with each other. Therefore, understanding how to use it is becoming compulsory. This starts with schools which are now being recognized as the places where students should be learning the important skills needed to use technology. The new information technology provides both teachers and students very easily in looking for teaching and learning materials. One important effect of technology is the fact that technology is changing the way we think about writing and how we do it. Technology gives positive and negative effects to the process of writing itself.*

**Keywords:** Technology, writing and effects

### Introduction

Today we are living among a new era of language and communication. People have changed language from in the past long, rhythmic Shakespearean style of speaking to a simpler and casual, more free style of speaking, which is also seen through their writing. Along with the new area of language comes a new era of writing, people can express this new way of casual, dialogistic writing through short opinion columns or blogs on the Internet. The Internet creates a place where people can publish these types of works without going through the tedious process of print publishing.

Technology has become a big part of today's society. The Internet has transformed our lives and expanded the ways people communicate with each other. Therefore, understanding how to use it is becoming compulsory. This starts with schools which are now being recognized as the places where students should be learning the important skills needed to use technology. When Students write for their teachers, many of them do not make the connection between writing and communication. In dealing with Email, Facebook and Twitter and the like..., all of them are using writing as a means of communication. They write because they have something to say.

Throughout history writing has undergone changes and developments. Language and communications is ever changing and with it, the way of translating language, into written form has changed as well. People tend to write more casually, and freely, as if in a conversation. Short opinion sections are printed in news papers, and blogs are posted online. People can sit at their computer and type out their ideas and instantly post them on the Web for the world to read. The process is quick, easy, and precise. Not like in the past, when works had to be hand written out and revised many times on new pieces of paper until finally sent to a publisher where it would be translated into print. Next, millions of copies would be made and sent out to stores around the world.

new information technology provides both teachers and students very easily with myriad opportunities of teaching and learning materials. The use of the internet is a part of most of our students' daily routine, because they have grown up with computers. It is becoming a part of their daily communication habits and has become a technology as ordinary as the telephone or television for most of them. Bruce and Levin (1997), looked at ways in which the tools, techniques, and applications of technology can support learning to "engage children in exploring, thinking, reading,

*writing, researching, inventing, problem-solving, and experiencing the world."*

### **How does Technology give effects to students writing?**

Students say the internet has enhanced their education. They use the internet to communicate with teachers and classmates, to do research, and to access library materials and use it for recreational tasks ; for leisure and entertainment such as voice-chatting, messaging , down loading their preferred music and the like... . For most of them, the internet is a functional tool, one that has greatly changed the way they interact with others and with information as they go about their studies. The university experience is not only about learning in the classroom, it is also about encountering new social situations and gaining new social skills. Students use the internet nearly as much for social communication as they do for their education. But just as they use the internet to supplement the formal parts of their education, they go online to enhance their social lives. It became apparent that this technology has a positive impact on the abilities of students to learn and increase their self-learning, and improve communication skills. In the light of the above stated arguments, we think that the internet should be included in the teaching learning process at the level of our schools.

Schacter (1999) found that students with access to any of a number of technologies (such as computer assisted instruction, integrated learning systems, simulations and software that teaches higher order thinking, collaborative networked technologies, or design and programming technologies) show positive gains in achievement.

(Strangman (2001) indicated that "traditionally, students have been able to publish their writings by making books or hanging their writing pieces in their classrooms or the hallway. These days the Internet has dramatically changed the way students can publish their work". The advantages of this large audience are numerous. Not only can teachers and classmates see students' writing accomplishments, but anyone around the world can read them as well.

Writing for a public forum such as this blog is different from writing for one person for many reasons. When a person writes for a public forum, they must make sure that they write in expressive language that everybody can understand. Also, the style of public forum writing is also much different. For public writing, the tone of the writer can be much more relaxed. High, formal language is no longer required. Instead writers are allowed to speak what comes to their mind without much consideration. Since this is not a scholarly setting, an advanced vocabulary is not necessary. With formal writing for a class, a person needs to worry about following certain criteria and about impressing their instructor. A person is free to be themselves when they are writing for a blog. When writing for a blog, people often misrepresent themselves because they know that everybody with access to the Internet will be able to see what they post. People will try to make they look more attractive or more appealing to others. When a person is writing for a specific person or persons, they more often than not know who they are writing for, so they have no way to misrepresent themselves without getting away with it. Misrepresentation is one of the few problems with digital communication. Other than that digital communication is an incredibly effective, convenient way for our society to communicate.

One important effect of technology is the fact that technology is changing the way we think about writing and how we do it. The Traditional distinction between speech and writing is becoming increasingly blurred as a result of the pervasiveness of electronic mail in business, school, and other settings. The Increasing practice of offering courses on-line is also a contributor to this process, as chat rooms and on-line discussions become standard components of university courses.

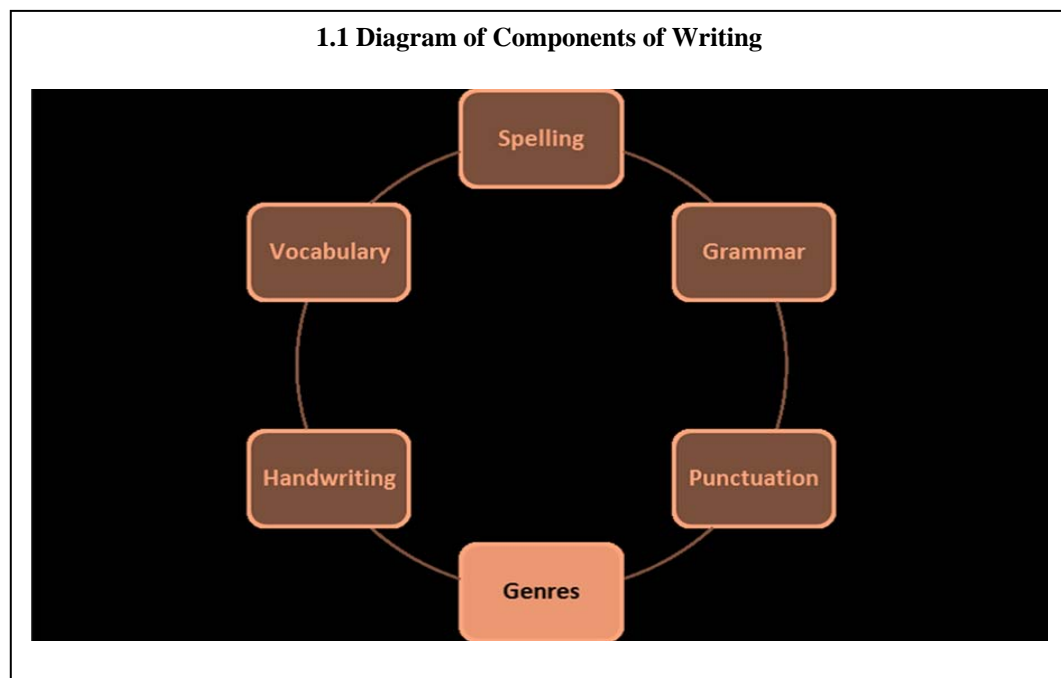
In these contexts, technology gives negative effects on writing because it takes on many of the aspects traditionally associated with speaking, such as shorter, less complex or incomplete sentences, lack of attention to accuracy, and less formal language. While this shift to more speech-like writing is attributed by

many to the expansion of technology, Baron (1998) maintains that the expanding use of email actually serves to reinforce a trend in this direction already present in formal education, as a result of the transformation from a product to a process approach to writing.

The shift to more speech-like writing is only one aspect of writing that has been influenced by technology. Another change in writing that has been made possible through technology is the use of hypertext, or text that are connected by links which the reader can choose or ignore, allowing the reader to construct his or her own exploration of the text in virtually any order. Hypertext, the language of the Web, is a non-linear language that is

dynamic and non-sequential, and connects information through nodes or links (Bardini, 1997). Hypertext frequently incorporates multimedia, principally graphics and sound.

Texting is impacting students writing today. Speed being its reason for being, a word like “because” becomes “b/c” and “enemy” becomes “NME.” Over time, texting habits can damage a student’s ability to construct a full sentence or describe an object or situation fully. Texting throws punctuation and spelling to the wind. Writing is a skill and a craft that needs to be taught and which is learned from practice. The diagram below illustrates the key components of writing.



Writing requires a codifiable medium to convey meaning. Also, it uses a vocabulary, based on known conventions and rules of usage, to create new ideas. In written expression, discrete elements (the alphabet) are combined and recombined to help convey new ideas, often using new words created to meet the needs of conveying those new ideas. Finally, written language must have a fixed relationship with spoken language, so that people can communicate the same thought in two different media simultaneously — as in reading to one

another. These elements give writing its characteristics of permanence and completeness. As opposed to the transience of spoken language, writing has a lasting, permanent quality about it. Written language is less redundant, more planned. Meaning and shades of meaning are conveyed by carefully chosen and placed words. Meaning may be modified by deleting, editing, and otherwise changing the written words, unlike oral language, where once words are said out loud, they cannot be unsaid, only explained.

**Here are some concern in writing based technology based on PEW Research centre:**

1. an increasingly ambiguous line between “formal” and “informal” writing and the tendency of some students to use informal language and style in formal writing assignments
2. the increasing need to educate students about writing for different audiences using different “voices” and “registers”
3. the general cultural emphasis on truncated forms of expression, which some feel are hindering students willingness and ability to write longer texts and to think critically about complicated topics
4. disparate access to and skill with digital tools among their students
5. challenging the “digital tool as toy” approach many students develop in their introduction to digital tools as young children

Basic research skills are also affected. The Internet does not control or verify the information it contains, and the research that a college student can do quickly is not always reliable. “Content farms,” websites that produce massive amounts of regurgitated and often incorrect information, still dominate search results. Thus, a conscientious student must spend time verifying sources and confirming websites’ credibility. Though many students report that the Internet is less intimidating than a library, they also realize that it works better as a supplement to hands-on library research.

**How does the Technology change the way to teach writing?**

Technology is also changing the way writing is taught. The use of technology in writing classes ranges from merely requiring final drafts to be word-processed to teaching in networked classroom, where much of teacher-student and student-student interaction takes place on-line rather than face to face. The use of networked classrooms has led to the increase in actual writing time in class for both native speakers (palmquist et al., 1998) and ESL students (Braine, 1997), and while there is not conclusive evidence that the increase in writing time leads directly to the improvement in

writing quality, some research does suggest that this is the case (palmquist et al., 1998).

Teachers are always seeking for appropriate and interesting contexts where their learners can act ,react and interact to foster knowledge and communication in a collaborative way with people sharing the same concerns .In doing so , they can better their written productions. Writing is a form of expression and communication which permits learners to communicate ideas, feelings and different attitudes in English. L. Miller (2001) states that (...) even though the writing production is an expression of one's individuality and personality, it is important to remember that writing is also a social endeavor, a way of communicating with people....) p:25. This forum would certainly encourage the development of the writing skills of the English language where students and teachers alike exchange written texts in English on various topics.

Writing at a college level requires students to provide supporting facts, cited sources, descriptions, and solutions to problems. Today’s modes of communication do not encourage this type of thinking. In fact, research published by the University of California at Berkeley shows that the constant use of instant messaging and text messaging not only corrupts writing skills, but leads to Internet dependency.

Every student has an individual voice in his or her writing and it is the teacher’s job to encourage and develop that voice so it communicates clearly. A voice that uses emoticons instead of adverbs and adjectives may be quickly understood, but is not acceptable at a university level. The basics of grammar, punctuation, and spelling have also suffered. In the significant time college students spend outside of the classroom texting, tweeting, e-mailing, and on Facebook, spelling and punctuation aren’t important. Students often take that attitude into the classroom because it surrounds them in everyday life. However, the less students practice more formal writing and its rules, the less they are able to do it in class.

## Conclusion

It is clear from the discussion above that technology is affecting writing in numerous ways. It can give positive and negative effects both to students and teachers. Technology as media for students in doing their task and also as a communication tool to communicate with people all over the world. But in doing writing, the students are less on the components of writing (spelling, grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, genres and handwriting). Specially, on hand writing, the students choose to type on their computer rather than to write on a paper. As Technology influences the way writing is taught, particularly in terms of networked classrooms, the social aspects of writing may become more silent. It may become more and more difficult to defend the view of writing ability as an underlying characteristic of an individual that can be measured, like weight and height.

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