

The author concludes that the continued expansion of digital technology is unjustified. He offers three reasons that independently justify this conclusion: (1) that technology has negative consequences that outweigh the benefits, (2) that an overreliance on digital technology compromises individuality, and (3) that life will become something experienced through the prism of digital media. Overall, the argument is weak because none of these reasons pertain to digital technology itself — rather, they concern the overreliance on digital technology, a problem that can be mitigated even as digital technology expands.

First, the author argues that the negative outcomes of digital technology (e.g. addiction, loneliness and diminished living skills) outweigh the positive benefits of increased productivity and improved worker safety. He asserts this, as if the trade-off was *prima facie* evident from the harms alone; I suspect it is not so clear. For instance, I might justifiably prioritise the benefits of digital technology since they might fulfil the far more basic needs of many individuals — improved productivity has allowed for cheaper goods that enables the global poor to afford basic necessities and raise their standard of living. Improved worker safety has prevented countless workplace deaths, saving lives. These are intuitively far greater benefits, even if it comes at the cost of some individuals getting hooked on digital technology: this is because saving a life or enabling the poor to access necessities creates far more happiness than addicting might take away. As such, the author needs to justify why he has made the counterintuitive judgement that the harms outweigh the benefits — in the absence of this justification, his premise does not hold water.

The author next argues that individuality will be eroded when plagiarism and copyright are harder to enforce — this is not necessarily true, since technology has also enabled the creation of plagiarism detector tools like Turnitin that help us identify plagiarism and copyright violations. Hence, even though plagiarism might become easier with the internet, detecting it has also become easier — the author needs to show why the former effect is greater in scope than the latter.

Finally, the author argues that life will be experienced through digital media rather than first-hand, since we view digital content online. While it might be true that being too focused on recording an event might diminish the satisfaction of an experience, it is equally true that digital content has allowed us to experience many events we would otherwise have no access to: billions can now view a recording of a concert that they were not able to afford tickets to. Hence, the counterfactual is a world where experiences are limited to far fewer people, particularly the poor — this would be intuitively a much worse outcome.

Ultimately, the author's argument is one-sided — he fails to explain why the alternative world without technology would be better. Additionally, he raises extreme impacts that pertain to the overuse of technology rather than the technology itself — the overuse of devices during concerts could be resolved with a simple ban by the event organiser, and the increase in plagiarism can be dealt with by stricter enforcement and warnings by schools. Hence, it is not clear why stopping the expansion of all digital technology is the necessary solution.

As such, the author's argument is weak overall.

AO2: 9/10    AO3: 5/5    Total: 14/15

### **Examiner's Comments**

*NIL.*