Writing 1

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Let us rewind 60-70 years back when engineers started experimenting with robots as a means of cost-effective industrial development. This historical event in industry didn't mean much to me until I watched a scene from "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" when Charlie's father loses his job and is replaced by an industrial machine at a tooth paste factory. Watching that scene stirred up some uneasy emotions about the advancement of technology. Once every couple of decades, we find ourselves facing a new dilemma, a divide, regarding the subject of humans vs. machines. Change has and will always cause fear whether for the better or worse of humanity. This fear of technology evolves into outrage, but eventually the people adapt and move on. The same can be said about the struggle we face today when it comes to smartphones and replacing in-person human interactions with digital social profiles and virtual lives lead through reflecting screens.

In the article "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?" by Jean M. Twenge, the author mentions the negative implications of phones and screens but ignores the advantages. For example, the author discusses the effect of smartphones on the increased suicide rates among teenagers. However, she disregards how having a phone on hand gives quick and easy access to police, fire fighters or medical assistance in life or death situations. Hence, in the department of mortality, phones might prove to be saving more lives than taking them. In addition, Twenge argues that phones are responsible for the decline in hang-outs among teenagers, but she doesn't account for other variables. The world we live in today isn't as safe as it used to be with the rise of urban regions, pollution, traffic and crowds. The blame cannot be directed at one cause.

Moreover, there needs to be a bold line that differentiates between smartphones, the internet and social media. In her article, Twenge seems to use the terms interchangeably although they are each a separate entity that may give access to the other. Eliminating smartphones which give access to social media and the internet -which Twenge states correlate with increased suicide rates, sleep deprivation and depression- is like closing a grocery store simply because it carries cigarettes. Twenge fails to regard all the other benefits of possessing a smartphone. To assess the situation, we should ask ourselves: at the end of the day, are phones more beneficial or detrimental to human lives?

Is it a large enough problem that requires governmental intervention? No, I believe the regulations need to come from within the people. I believe we need to educate the people of the possible negative impacts of smartphones and let them set their personal limits and decide what a healthy usage is. Setting regulations to fight the compelling force and fast paced spread of smartphones will be very difficult from here on out. The human race is constantly evolving, and this technology cannot be abandoned at this point in time.