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# The Philosopher's Stone

Philosophical Discussion Group, Armstrong State University

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# The Philosopher's Stone

The Newsletter of The Philosophical Debate

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## **Technology: Knowledge used to manipulate your environment**

### **Some Things to Consider. . .**

Technology is knowledge that people use to manipulate their environment. How does this capacity affect or change how humanity defines right and wrong? How does the development of the technological capability to sustain life affect how we view life? When we did not have this ability, the loss of life was more readily accepted; human life means much more when we have more power over it. Would technology that could keep us alive forever be good? People seem to value quantity over quality. Where is the place for the qualitative development of the soul? What is a human being, and what are our responsibilities as rational beings? Is technology addictive? It makes our lives easier and we become continually more dissatisfied with what we have. If we could order our groceries and work through our computers, would we ever leave our homes? Are people becoming strangers to humanity as less and less contact with the world is necessary?

### **Ethics?**

[Ethics](#) is an intellectual reflection about theories which apply to the justification of moral standards. Morality is a system of enacted values. The ethicist attempts to help people to examine their morals and decide what is right and wrong predicated on your discoveries. What might being a better person mean? You cannot justify a moral judgment if you cannot anchor the meaning of the word "right."

As beings gifted with the ability to discern right from wrong, is it our duty to investigate the foundations of our moral standards? Do we take the time to think

about what we are doing before we do it, or do we simply act? What is the driving force behind our actions?

## **Highlights from the last meeting. . .**

The first step is to recognize that there may be a problem, the next is to find a way to overcome it. Many would say there is no problem as far as technology is concerned: it serves our purposes, so why examine any detrimental effects which may not be as conspicuous or immediate as the benefits? Others would say that the decline of morality due to technological advancement is a hopeless problem for which there is no solution. Problems without solutions tend to be ignored; they fall off the practical map.

Many people think that technology can be seen as a religion. People both fear and find hope in technology the way that they once did in God: destruction and inability to comprehend vs. reward and hope. Technology poses a stronger temptation than superstitions and magic because it gives immediate "proof of power" and anyone can use it. The temptation to use and abuse this power is greater than that to use magic: this power is not just an illusion: this "god" answers immediately. Also, technology can be viewed as a superstition because so many people do not understand it.

People have access to more information now and are able to question more. The growing capacity of the human being to think for himself is instigating a relativistic society. Or, as emphasis is on an accumulation of great quantities of information rather than on quality examinations of a limited amount of material, *are* people really learning to think for themselves? As education is increasingly influenced by the Internet, concepts are becoming global as opposed to localized. We receive images about which we are not required to reflect, which fragments and depersonalizes learning.

## ***Join Us!***

The Philosophical Debate Group will meet on **Tuesday, April 16, in Gamble 109, at 8:15 pm**. Everyone is invited to join our discussion. Bring your own ideas and/or literature that you have read and would like to share about our current topic, *Ethics and Technology*. Our purpose is to gain insight into current issues in philosophy, to provide an informal discussion of ideas, and to learn from one another.

If your schedule prevents you from attending our discussions, or you would like more information concerning the Philosophical Debate Group, you may contact us through the Learning Support Office, C/O Tiffanie Rogers, student tutor, or e-mail us at [nordener@pirates.armstrong.edu](mailto:nordener@pirates.armstrong.edu). We will be glad to publish some of your questions and our responses in our newsletter.

## ***Announcements***

Don't miss [Dr. Richard Nordquist](#)'s lecture, *Socrates Meets Cyberpunk*, in the faculty lecture series at 12:15 pm. on Thursday, April 4th, in the Health Professions Auditorium.