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TOK

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Nature of Knowledge Essay – TOK

Knowledge, what is knowledge? The definition of knowledge is: Information and skills acquired through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. This definition is rather broad and levees room for questions and a lot of controversy. There are many questions concerning knowledge such as why and how can we contribute to the production of knowledge, especially using technology? How should schools change to adapt to new technology concerning knowledge and knowledge gaining databases, and who “owns” knowledge.

The question of who “owns” knowledge has been plaguing the intellectual world for years. Can someone actually own knowledge? Simple common sense is the answer. No, no one can own knowledge. The renowned physicist Sir Isaac Newton said “*If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants*” he means that all his success and ideas came by building off other scientists and philosophers. It is the same with all knowledge, if knowledge belonged to the person who “first” said or thought it then individuality and unique ideas would have gone extinct thousands of years ago. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NugRZGDbPFU&feature=player_embedded>. When we conduct our own experiment in biology, we go online to look for an experiment with a hypothesis similar to ours then we take that experiment and tweak it to fit our own hypothesis. This is the same for most science experiments. The scientists build off of other’s work in order to find new information, so really no new information was ever discovered by one person, which makes it impossible for information to belong to a single person. Since information does not belong to one person, the entire world should be able to access it equally.

This brings us to our second question. How can we contribute to the production of knowledge, especially using technology? Technology has been constantly changing and enhancing the world’s knowledge for years. It has made accessing knowledge much easier for those who had previously been unable to do so. For example, medical information that was discovered in the United States can be accessed and used in Kenya. The digital world library is a database that contains information from all over the world and translates it into different languages so that it can be used by many different countries <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhBYGI6Tfzo&feature=player_embedded#!>.The only problem is that some of our oldest texts and information has yet to be digitalized, not to mention that much of the information that is digitalized has only been translated into one or two languages which make it hard for countries with other languages to use it. The problem with the digitalizing information is already being solved by a young man named Luis Van Ahn who is the creator of Captcha and Recaptcha which are programs that stop spam while digitalizing text <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITrNU5fpiSo>. Though digitalizing text will do a lot of good like saving very old text and making knowledge available for the rest of the world, there are some that say by digitalizing text, we are really just working towards a future deprived of books. Not only that, but some of these people believe we are so wrapped up in technology, that we are becoming slaves to it. Personally, as much as I love books, turning pages and just the general feel of books, I am skeptical to the whole technology taking over the world humble jumble. I admit that I do believe today’s youth is a little caught up on iphones, commuters etc, but I think that the pros of technology greatly outweigh the cons. One of the best parts of technology being the fact that it made it possible for schools all around the world to be able to access information from all over the globe.

This brings us to the third question, how should schools change to adapt to new technology concerning knowledge and knowledge gaining databases. Technology or the internet is now one of the leading resources used to gain information, yet our schools, the places where knowledge is distributed to younger generations, have found it very difficult to incorporate it into their curriculums. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U&feature=player_embedded> Changing education to better use their technological resources would help international education. Not only would the school’s resources change, but incorporating technology will also help change the way students are taught. Instead of teaching students all the same, technology gives the student options. Many students do not learn the same way, if they have dyslexia, the normal school systems do not work. Technology can offer classes online that use a curriculum made for students that cannot succeed within a “normal” school system <http://nikkicaspers.posterous.com/the-school-system>. However, when dealing with certain classes such as Theory of Knowledge, you need to be able to talk face to face with people because the information you are throwing around is so metaphorical and so out of the box and has so many different ways at looking at knowledge that the only way you can understand and really be able to debate it is to talk to other people. Technology can turn these conversations into international debates and conversations. Now students can Skype other Theory of Knowledge kids all over the world. They can now gain a global perspective and ideas from people thousands of miles away.

So what is knowledge? Why and how can we contribute to the production of knowledge? How should schools change to adapt to new technology, and who “owns” knowledge? These questions do not have just one answer, nor do they have one point of view. All these answers and views and perspectives differ from one country to another, form classroom to classroom. The two things connecting them are technology and knowledge.