From Pencil to Pixels

Author Name

Institution

In "From Pencils to Pixels: The Stages of Literacy Technologies," Dennis Baron discusses the history of writing technology and argues that "the success of every writing technology depends on its function, authentication and accessibility." Baron first details the history of pencils, printing press, telephone, telegraph, and typewriter. Then he talks about the most recent technology (computers) and claims that all writing technologies underwent some form of criticism in the beginning, but with time, things changed and they become a must part of our lives. It's safe to say that each writing technology has had affected literacy and the author's central acquisition is about the advantages and disadvantages of computers and how do they shape our future.

The computers as you know them today were invented in 19th century by professor Charles Babbage. He designed a simple analytical engine and used it for calculations. Computers are primarily divided into three generations, and each generation gave us an improved version of the equipment. In 1937, Clifford Berry and John Atanasoff built the first digital computer titled Atanasoff-Berry Computer. Later on, in 1943, an advanced computer (Colossus) was developed for army forces. In 1946, Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer revolutionized the world of technology. This particular computer had over 14,000 vacuum tubes for processing information and weighed 25 tons. In 1962, computers were primarily used as translators and had restricted features. However, in 1970, a light-weight computer for commercial use was presented to the public. It had no operating system but its unique features and color combinations were admired by the world. After the invention of integrated circuits, we were introduced to third-generation computers, in which more powerful computers were built to ease our works. They had extraordinary characteristics as well as reliable operating systems.

With time, the number of computer users increased; people started using these machines to accomplish plenty of tasks simultaneously. Today, computer has become a must part of our lives;

we use to sell products on the internet, communicate with friends through social media, meet new customers and grow our business, and perform numerous tasks. Baron's "From Pencil to Pixel: The Stages of Literacy Technologies" is strongly tied to Brandt's article about sponsors of literacy, where he states that all writing technologies including pencils and computers have been a sponsor of literacy. In one way or the other, these writing technologies have given meanings to our lives and made it easy for us to pen our thoughts. Thus, not only the computers are sponsor of literacy but also the internet. Today, internet helps students complete their tasks, conduct educational surveys and submit assignments to their tutors through a centralized system. Not only the students but also professors and college administrators use computers and internet to accomplish their day-to-day tasks, and it looks like our life is incomplete without these technologies.

Baron's article can also be related to the articles of Alexie and Malcolm X. Both Alexie and Malcolm shared their literacy stories with the world and engaged a large number of readers. Malcolm's article primarily focuses on the use of pencils and printers, while Alexie learned from cereal boxes, books and comics. All of these are ancient writing technologies, except books and comics. Though comics, novels and books are available in a large number in our libraries, we love using computers and internet for educational purposes. Many people believe that authors are rejecting technological advances, but Baron claims that it's not true. Today's writers use both pencils and computers to accomplish their tasks.

There is a lot of work that can be done with pencils only, so they have to use these products. For instance, if you want to create a hard copy of your work, you may opt for pencils as these are time-saving, lightweight and easy-to-use. But if you opt for a computer and then a printer, that may waste your precious time. Similarly, if you have to submit soft copies of your work to your customer or tutor, you can definitely go with a computer and internet. Two other major inventions

in communication technology were telegraph and telephone. People relied on these technologies

for years, and there were debates over the use of telegraph and telephone. Baron describes that

neither of those technologies can replace computers. They are more trustworthy and can be used

to accomplish multiple tasks at a time.

We can use computers to send emails, communicate with fellows on social media, share

our thoughts with the world, and of course, submit assignments to tutors. Supporters and critics

have compared new writing technologies (computers) to the old ones (pencils) and claim that there

is no alternative to computers. Pencils are also useful, but their uses are limited; on the other hand,

computers are not only used for writing but also for communication and other things. Change is a

natural phenomenon, but how we respond to the influence of changes makes a difference. We build

relationships, change our behaviors with time, and adopt new methods of communication and

learning. Previously, pencils and printers were good to go with as people had no other option. But

today, the trend has been changed, and now we have more than enough tech gadgets to get

benefited from.

When it comes to writing, computers are widely preferred due to their well-versed features

and fast speed. Using a computer, we can write a 500-word essay in an hour depending on the

topic and our writing skills. On the other hand, pencils may not allow us to write with that flow

and speed. In order to save our time and energy, we will obviously go with computers, not pencils.

Baron argues that human interaction with tech devices is not inherent, and I find his article quite

interesting and useful. He has beautifully presented his idea and compared ancient writing

technologies with the new ones.

It is interesting to read the history of pencils, printers, telephone, telegraph and other

technologies, but one thing that really stands out to me is that Baron prefers pencils over

computers. Maybe, in his time, pencils were used more than other writing devices. But today, the trend has been changed, and we prefer computers over pencils. Using a pencil, for instance, we can write in a single format while the computers allow us to change the format and color of our writings, which ultimately adds value and beauty to the final product. Years can surely make a difference, and now the article of Baron is considered invalid because it stresses the use of pencils and other basic writing technologies. These days, more and more people prefer computers as they ease their work and ensure accuracy.