This summer I worked as a part of the Digital and Computational Studies Initiative researching identity in the digital age with Professor Hall. Technology has become such an integral part of daily life it infiltrates almost every single moment of a modern person's existence. With the consistent presence of technology, its influence on individuals is inevitable. So how does technology change both the individual and the individual’s perspective of herself? These two questions were the primary focus of my research and their answers provided insight into the far-reaching changes the technogeneration will face. As the reaches of technology expand and its use becomes ever more frequent, it is important that the knowledge of its repercussions also grow.

Six weeks of research revealed interesting, shocking as well as alarming truths about technology use, its trajectory and the influences its users face. The most common thread connecting various books, TEDTalks and articles on the subject was a renewed emphasis on superficiality. This emphasis on outward appearance, various ‘likes’, postings and photographs, creates a two-tiered identity for social media users. Online, users can create an identity they want to perceive themselves as, whether or not it is true to who they are, and eventually begin to perceive this false identity as reality. Additionally, with the permanent memory computers provide, identity becomes streamlined; family, friends and coworkers all see the same Facebook profile. People are sharing more personal information with the public than ever before, however individuals may know less about themselves than they ever have.

The readings and tools I explored this summer came from a varied, and thus difficult to create, bibliography but were all dynamic and fascinating, so I created an annotated bibliography, blog and list of quotations to help differentiate and readily identify the various pieces. Throughout the summer I kept an annotated bibliography of the books and articles I read, videos I watched, and the applications I explored, I noted the usefulness of each for Professor Hall's course as well as my thoughts about possible student reactions to each. Additionally, I kept a blog (ourdigitalidentity.wordpress.com) where I kept track of my daily thoughts, findings and questions during my research. For my final project I decided to analyze digital identity in its most common form; the smartphone. The culmination of my research is a research paper analyzing various applications and their ability to reflect the owner’s identity. In the report, I walked through the most common Social Media applications and explained what and how much they revealed about an individual. Concluding both my final paper and my research gave me a new perspective on technology, its use and the role in can and should play in daily life.

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