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## My iPhone Made Me Do It

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# My iPhone Made Me Do It

## **Abstract**

"... it may be tempting to conclude that technology is neutral and that we either use it appropriately or misuse it. While it is true that each of us has control of, and is responsible for, how we use technology, it is a dangerous misconception to believe that our technologies are completely benign. Every human made tool from a sharpened stick to a microwave oven is biased. Each encourages certain behaviors and habits, while making others more difficult."

Posting about technology from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/my-iphone-made-me-do-it/>

## **Keywords**

In All Things, technology, iPhones

## **Disciplines**

Christianity

## **Comments**

*In All Things* is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service](#) at Dordt College.

# My iPhone Made Me Do it

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 [all in allthings.org/my-iphone-made-me-do-it/](http://allthings.org/my-iphone-made-me-do-it/)

Kevin Timmer

This is post #4 of 6 in the series “*Technology Today*”

1. [Is Technology Bringing Us Together or Pushing Us Farther Apart?](#)
2. [Technology Isn't Just for Smart People](#)
3. [Technology is Imagination Incarnated](#)
4. My iPhone Made Me Do it
5. [Technology and Mindful Evaluation](#)
6. [Technology At Every Moment](#)

The editors of iAt have asked five *technology* experts their opinions on the use and expansion of technology in today's society. Is the use of technology pushing us apart from one another and changing the way we relate with one another? Or, is the use of technology bringing people together for the common good?

I believe most of us sense that technology is impacting our lives but we often don't completely understand how. It feels like technology is generally helpful, allowing us to do more things, more quickly, but we might hesitate to declare it GOOD in a Genesis sort of way. But I also think most would acknowledge that blaming their iPhone for their occasional rude, anti-social behavior, is akin to blaming the fires of hell for the burnt beef roast they just pulled out of the oven.

In light of this, it may be tempting to conclude that technology is neutral and that we either use it appropriately or misuse it. While it is true that each of us has control of, and is responsible for, how we use technology, it is a dangerous misconception to believe that our technologies are completely benign. Every human made tool from a sharpened stick to a microwave oven is biased. Each encourages certain behaviors and habits, while making others more difficult.<sup>1)</sup>

A microwave oven makes it possible to cook a small portion of food quickly, which in turn makes it easier to heat-up leftovers or a packaged meal. This gives family members the freedom to keep their own individual schedules, making it more difficult to maintain a regular family mealtime. In addition, with a microwave on the countertop, conventional cooking starts to feel like a waste of time. Clearly, the microwave isn't forcing us to abandon family mealtime but its built-in characteristics make skipping family dinners a more doable option. In a strict sense we have control over the extent to which we allow our technologies to shape our lives, but unless we vow not to use them at all, technologies always change the world and our interaction in it.

While it may be easy to see how technology gives us new and important choices, it may not be clear how this is necessarily dangerous. We know that God has created us to depend on Him and to depend on each other as we love and serve in community. In fact it is within our close relationships where, through the work of the Holy Spirit, we often experience and share the gracious love of Christ most deeply.

In contrast, American society seems to value personal independence over meaningful relationships. They seek fulfillment in accumulating more and in doing what they want, when they want, independent of

anyone else. This cultural bias often gets expressed in the technologies that our society produces and in what is considered to be the normal patterns of day-to-day life. We need to be cautious because these cultural currents are eroding our closest relationships and with them, Christian community, including our families. It is now rare for families to find time to eat together because it is “normal” to be too busy.

So while our iPhones and other technologies are not, in themselves, destroying our relationships, it is critical to remember that they come with biases that are, in concert with the surrounding cultural patterns, trying to pull us away from each other and ultimately from God. In our current cultural context, wisdom may in fact require us to use less technology in all things.

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## Footnotes

1. Andy Crouch, [Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling](#) (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 2008). ↩