Technology and its impact

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
ADVANCED | C1

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each advanced term with its definition.

1 technological determinism ____	**a** the view that technology autonomously drives social change, independent of human choice
2 social construction of technology ____	**b** the view that technology's development and use are shaped by social forces, not fixed by the technology itself
3 digital dualism ____	**c** the mistaken assumption that online and offline life are entirely separate realms
4 platform governance ____	**d** the rules and mechanisms by which a digital platform manages and moderates user behaviour
5 algorithmic amplification ____	**e** a design pattern exploiting reward-based psychological mechanisms to encourage repeated use
6 dopamine loop ____	**f** delegating a cognitive task to an external tool rather than performing it mentally
7 cognitive offloading ____	**g** the belief that complex social problems can be solved primarily through technological innovation
8 techno-solutionism ____	**h** a person's capacity to critically evaluate and effectively use digital tools and information
9 digital literacy ____	**i** the process by which algorithms disproportionately promote certain content, shaping what users see
10 second-order effect ____	**j** an indirect consequence of a technology that emerges only after its initial, intended effect

2 Choose the most precise term for each context.

1 The view that technology autonomously drives change is technological determinism / pure social construction.

2 The view that social forces shape technology's use is the social construction of technology / technological determinism.

3 The mistaken separation of online and offline life is digital dualism / integrated experience.

4 The rules by which a platform manages user behaviour is platform governance / unregulated use.

5 Algorithms disproportionately promoting certain content is algorithmic amplification / neutral distribution.

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6 Delegating a cognitive task to an external tool is cognitive offloading / active memorisation.

7 The belief that technology alone solves complex problems is techno-solutionism / structural reform.

8 An indirect consequence emerging after the initial effect is a second-order effect / the primary intended outcome.

3 Match the verbs with the noun phrases to form academic collocations.

1 interrogate ____	**a** a dopamine loop
2 exploit ____	**b** cognitive load
3 mitigate ____	**c** fringe content
4 offload ____	**d** platform behaviour
5 amplify ____	**e** digital literacy
6 regulate ____	**f** a second-order effect
7 cultivate ____	**g** technological determinism
8 anticipate ____	**h** algorithmic amplification

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4 Complete the analysis with terms from the box.

algorithmic amplification | cognitive offloading | digital dualism | digital literacy | dopamine loop | platform governance | second-order effect | social construction of technology | technological determinism | techno-solutionism

Media theorists critical of 1 _____, the assumption that technology autonomously drives social change, instead emphasise the 2 _____, arguing that human choices and institutional context shape how any technology is ultimately used. This distinction has practical implications for 3 _____, since designing effective rules for a platform requires attention to social dynamics rather than treating technical features as the sole cause of harmful outcomes. Design patterns exploiting a 4 _____, reward-based mechanisms encouraging repeated engagement, represent one clear instance where deliberate human choices, not technological inevitability, shape user behaviour. Scholars increasingly reject 5 _____, the mistaken assumption that online and offline experience constitute separate realms, since digital interaction demonstrably shapes offline relationships and wellbeing. Excessive reliance on 6 _____, delegating cognitive tasks to external tools, raises questions about long-term effects on unaided memory and reasoning, a genuine 7 _____ rarely anticipated when such tools were first introduced. Meanwhile, critics of 8 _____ warn against assuming complex social problems can be solved through clever engineering alone, cautioning that 9 _____, the disproportionate promotion of certain content by recommendation systems, often requires structural and regulatory intervention rather than purely technical fixes. Strengthening public 10 _____ remains essential regardless of which position ultimately proves correct.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

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Beyond technological determinism

Science and technology studies scholars have long challenged technological determinism, the assumption that technology develops according to its own internal logic and inevitably produces particular social outcomes regardless of human agency. The social construction of technology framework instead emphasises that seemingly inevitable design choices reflect specific decisions made by specific actors operating under particular commercial and institutional pressures, meaning alternative designs, and therefore alternative social outcomes, remained genuinely possible at each decision point. This reframing has significant implications for platform governance debates, since it undermines arguments that harmful features are an unavoidable consequence of the technology itself, and instead locates responsibility with the specific organisations that made particular design choices, choices that could plausibly have been made differently.

1 What have science and technology studies scholars long challenged? _____

2 What does technological determinism assume? _____

3 What does the social construction of technology framework instead emphasise? _____

4 What remained genuinely possible at each decision point, according to this framework? _____

5 What significant implications does this reframing have? _____

6 Where does this reframing locate responsibility, instead of the technology itself? _____

6 Replace the words in bold with a precise term or collocation.

1 The theory assumes technology alone drives social change inevitably. _____

2 The app exploited reward-based mechanisms to encourage repeated use. _____

3 She delegated the memory task to an external tool. _____

4 The unintended consequence only emerged well after the initial effect. _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 160-190 word critical commentary on whether technology drives social change or is itself shaped by social forces, distinguishing observation from theoretical argument.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Include four academic collocations. [ ] Maintain a precise, balanced register.

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ANSWER KEY

1 Advanced terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Precise terms

1 technological determinism 2 the social construction of technology 3 digital dualism 4 platform governance 5 algorithmic amplification 6 cognitive offloading 7 techno-solutionism 8 a second-order effect

3 Academic collocations

1 g interrogate technological determinism 2 a exploit a dopamine loop 3 h mitigate algorithmic amplification... note adjust 4 b offload cognitive load
5 c amplify fringe content 6 d regulate platform behaviour 7 e cultivate digital literacy 8 f anticipate a second-order effect

4 Analysis

1 technological determinism 2 social construction of technology 3 platform governance 4 dopamine loop
5 digital dualism 6 cognitive offloading 7 second-order effect 8 techno-solutionism
9 algorithmic amplification 10 digital literacy

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 Technological determinism.
2 That technology develops according to its own internal logic and inevitably produces particular social outcomes regardless of human agency.
3 That seemingly inevitable design choices reflect specific decisions made by specific actors operating under particular commercial and institutional pressures.
4 Alternative designs, and therefore alternative social outcomes.
5 Implications for platform governance debates.
6 With the specific organisations that made particular design choices.

6 Precise terms and collocations

1 technological determinism 2 a dopamine loop 3 cognitive offloading 4 a second-order effect

Over to you

Answers will vary. Look for conceptual precision, evidence-aware reasoning and balanced evaluation.