

Tech advances shorten attention spans, diminish personal conversations

BY AKIRAH JUSTICE
Opinion Editor

When we learn of new technology, we frequently develop a craving for the products introduced, whether they be iPads or faster internet, because we are under the assumption that they will somehow improve our daily lives. However, has anyone considered that these so-called advancements in the technological world are actually setbacks?

Apple Inc. is well known for its ability to upgrade constantly as well as to improve and create new products, most recently being the iPad. As the news of the product reached the public, people eagerly awaited the arrival of this oversized iPod. Before this product became available in stores, it was already backordered because customers could not contain themselves. While Apple's consistent changes are admirable, they do not provide the con-

sumer sufficient time to enjoy and appreciate the products they already own.

Internet use brought on a new speed of information. We can acquire seemingly infinite streams of data without ever leaving a room and all in a matter of seconds, giving the illusion that we have the whole world at our disposal. Having all of this information available to view on a screen appears to be a good idea, but perhaps it is too much.

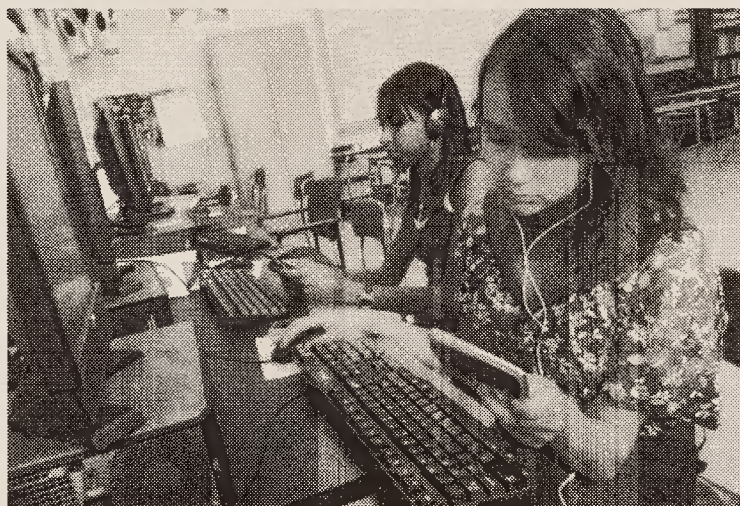
People who use the Internet, which includes a majority of our society, may tend to stay away from reading lengthy articles. Attempting to read extensive copy online can be frustrating and often seems not worth the trouble. Seeing an endless scroll of words becomes overwhelming. We can barely maintain the focus needed to endure reading a whole page.

For those of us who can tolerate reading paragraph upon paragraph of consecutive information, there is usually additional pop-ups to catch their

attention, as the Internet is loaded with unnecessary advertisements, graphics, and other articles displayed alongside the desired website information. By the time we are halfway through a selected reading, we may be tempted to veer off the page and begin reading another.

Before the Internet, we relied upon slower alternatives, such as visiting libraries or finding sources firsthand. While it may have taken longer and forced us to venture out into the real world, these methods were just as efficient and provided opportunities for healthier communication with real human beings.

Along with Internet usage, texting, instant messaging, and other shorthand chats are hindering our attention spans and patience. We cannot keep our composure long enough to type out whole words or wait for a reply. When we send texts, we expect immediate replies. If a reply does not arrive promptly, we become impatient, frustrated, and anxious. The same is true for



Seniors Betsy Sumerford and Nikki Neal enjoy multitasking at lunchtime. With practice, students have learned to text on their phones, listen to music on their iPods, and browse the web simultaneously. *Elliott photo*

instant messaging in that our replies need to be as close to instantaneous as our fingers can possibly type.

As a society, we are losing our patience and forgetting to embrace every second of each day. We hide behind our technology and pretend that it is improving our lives when, in fact, we are consumed by it.

Although properly applied technology is useful, society today often uses the Internet as an escape rather than as a resource. Slowly but surely, the foundation upon which our society was built is diminishing, being forgotten, or being replaced with technology that will soon be deemed outdated because of infinite upgrades.

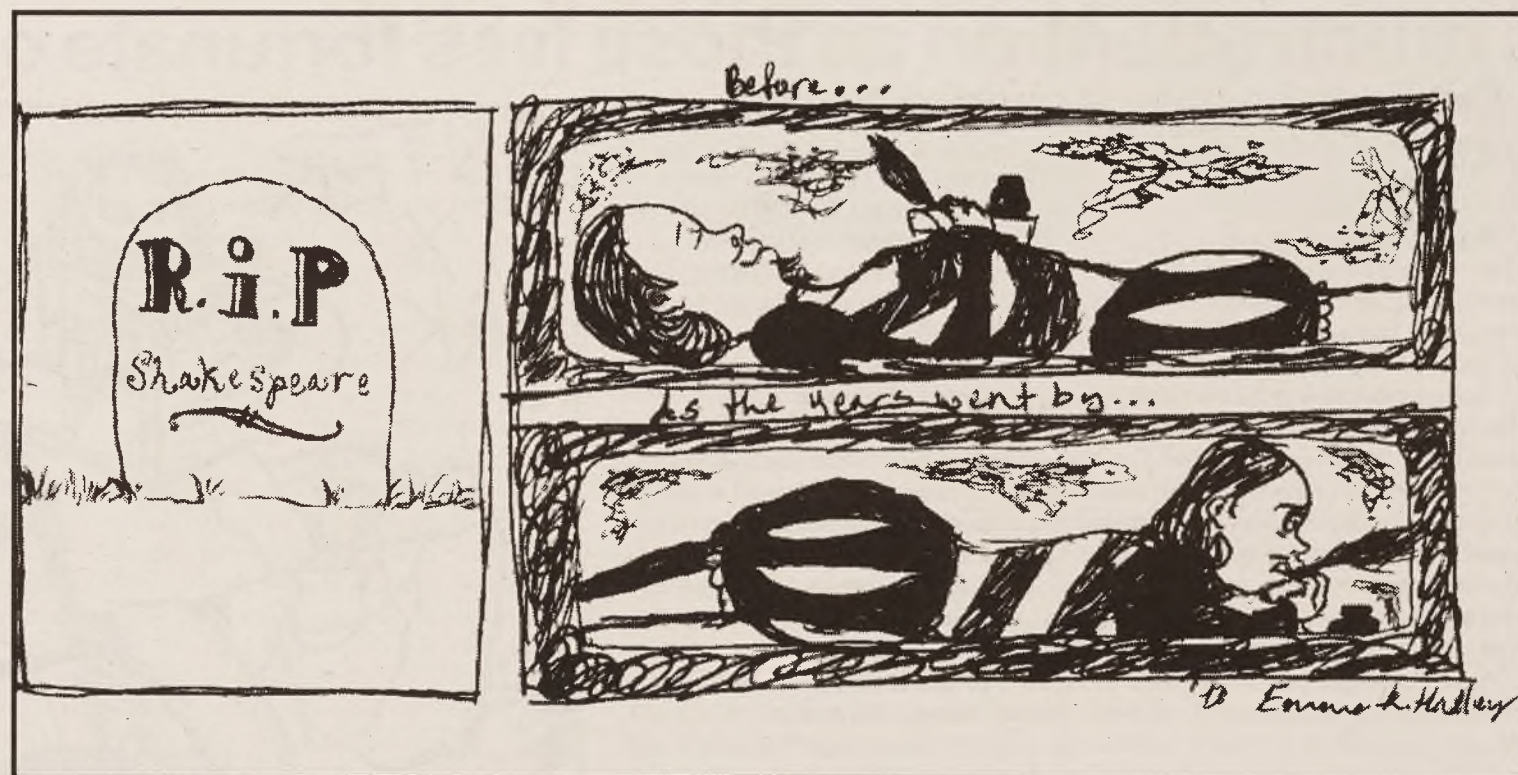
Americans show lack of respect for English language with slang, abbreviated texts, careless grammar

BY ANNA KANODE
News Editor

English as a language has degraded over the past few 100 years, but perhaps the most change has taken place within the last three decades. Most of these alterations in speech occurred due to carelessness and/or a lack of education among large portions of the English-speaking population. Words have been morphed or dropped, and consequently, many in today's society no longer understand the English from centuries ago.

People used eloquent, beautiful poetic words, such as "thou," "withal," and "betwixt," during Shakespeare's era. If people still spoke with such wit and charm today, they probably would find it easier to woo people of the opposite sex, as opposed to saying, "Hey, was sup, babe?" As a society, people have strayed so far from the earlier form of English that many are unable to understand the written word in classic novels and plays.

Vocabulary often diminishes because other words and contractions are easier or quicker both to pronounce and write in communication. It appears that the faster the world moves, the greater



number of words are changed or even lost. Technology has created a society in which time is literally money, so people must express what they need to say as quickly as possible in order to progress to their next tasks or activities.

Spelling errors have become atrocious in recent years as well. How unfortunate that few people remember the lessons involving "i before e, except after c" and when to change y to ie for creating plural nouns. While occasionally some students may find

it humorous to read some of the language written in bathroom stalls, others may consider such an activity quite discouraging when much of what is written is practically impossible to decipher because of the misspellings.

Grammar has become a major concern as well. Some English teachers omit the teaching of grammar in their classes, assuming students' previous Language Arts teachers covered the subject, but even when the instructors do cover the material,

students often do not apply the skills they learn. Regrettably, several people today just do not share an appreciation for the written or spoken word. It is astonishing how individuals progress to college yet still require remediation in speaking and writing properly. Perhaps teachers should collaborate about how they address repeated grammar errors among their students as well as nonstandard dialect spoken within the classroom.

English is not the only language that has been bastardized, Spanish and French have whole new dialects made from grammatical, linguistic, and spelling errors in the original language. Some of these problems stem from the introduction of English in countries that speak French and Spanish, producing Spanglish and English words with a French pronunciation.

If civilizations continue on this rollercoaster of linguistic disaster, the everyone will be speaking like cavemen.