

## **Getting Technical: Transcript**

Connor Maake, Charles Verhoog, Kevin

\*Intro Music\*

Charles: Hi, I'm Charles Verhoog and today on getting technical an interesting question has come to us from a listener, Chris Putnuk from Illinois. Chris asked the question: is it good or bad to use technology to understand nature? Usually we deal with technological advances, but I feel this presses on a very important topic of the morality of using technology. To get a general insight into how people view technology, I have gone out into the field and interviewed them on how they see technology in their own lives.

\*Interviews Commence\*

Charles: What comes to mind when you think of technology?

Person 1: Information comes to mind

Person 2: When I think of technology I think of computers and cellphones.

Person 3: Computers

Person 4: Robots

Person 5: I think of computers tv's and cellphones

Person 6: Computers

Charles: How does technology affect your life?

Person 1: I use it every day so it has a huge influence on my everyday activities.

Person 2: Technology affects my life because it allows me to connect with other people.

Person 3: Makes it faster and I can broaden my horizons that I have never even thought of thinking about before.

Person 4: For those days when I don't really have anything to do, it provides me with something to do.

Person 5: It allows me to learn from news around the world

Person 6: I use it

Charles: What does technology mean to you

Person 1: Technology means information and advancement

Person 2: It means advancement in our civilization

Person 3: It means a broader perspective on life

Person 4: It means having something to do on those days where I don't have anything to do

Person 5: It broadens my horizons

Person 6: It means a lot of things

Charles: It seems that most people contribute technology to their phones and computers. This makes sense due to the increasing prevalence of these technologies in our lives. Walking through the streets it is commonplace to see people absorbed in their phones, and not even looking out into the world that's around them. They also mentioned that it broadens their horizons and allows them to do things they wouldn't previously have been capable of doing. This all seems pretty positive towards using technology, but this was just a small sampling from some strangers. I've brought Kevin from Hippy USA and Connor from Nature Publishing Group to give us an insight into this debate.

Charles: Welcome to the show!

Kevin: good to be here Charles

Connor: Thanks for having us.

Charles: So, what are your guys's backgrounds?

Well I went to Cornell university for 4 years then I went to Columbia graduate school and now I'm working at Hippy USA writing.

Connor: I graduated from Bucknell university and I've been working with Nature Publishing Group ever since.

Charles: So the viewer submitted question is: Is it good or bad to use technology to understand nature?

Kevin: Technology has become a massive part of our lives, especially in recent years, and I believe that this has isolated us from nature. It takes us away, because nowadays people would rather look something up on their phone, take out their phone, google something, rather than experience nature for themselves. Rather than going outside, going to a park, literally being in nature and experiencing it for yourself. So much knowledge is learned through personal experience so if you only use your phone or technology to learn these things than do you really understand it, do you really come to know it? I don't think so.

Connor: I actually think technology can be really beneficial in many ways. You said how technology can remove us from nature and isolate us, but I think that it has the capacity to actually bring us a lot closer to nature. Technology allows us to experience things we never normally would have been able to experience. Even if we don't have the means to physically go to a place, we can still experience it through photos or videos. For example I could pull up a video of the amazon rainforest in seconds on my phone, or take a virtual tour of the pyramid of Egypt. It also allows us to see nature as something obtainable, something that can be brought to everybody and experienced by everybody at relatively little cost.

Charles: I don't know about the amazon rainforest or the pyramids, but, I'm looking online all the time on facebook and other sites seeing what my friends are doing

Kevin: I don't think what you said has any relevance, because I'm not really talking about facebook or websites like that, but... moving on to the broader point of technology, I would say that technology and like the things us humans have done have been astonishing, like, the things we've accomplished over

the past how many years through technology has been amazing, but people need to really personally experience more. Actually get out into the world, go see something outside, leave your house and go travel to a different country. People need to personally experience way more because way more is learned through personal experience rather than technology. Like, I'll give you an example. Charles, what's the weather like today?

Charles: One second, let me just check my phone here

Kevin: See, I can't even believe that you said that. There's a window right behind you. You could've looked outside and been like ehh it's sunny, maybe some clouds, so I'll throw on a sweatshirt today. Coulda done that.

Charles: Well I think my point actually did have a lot of relevance. I can see what my friends were doing-

Connor: Okay Charles, Charles, calm down, it's okay... Okay Kevin, I get what you're trying to say about the window thing, but what does it really matter. Does Charles gain anything by looking out the window rather than looking at his phone? Just because the way we do things has changed doesn't mean that it was a negative change. But I think the biggest benefit of using technology to understand nature is that technology allows us to see just how beautiful and fascinating nature is. By doing research and things, it lets us see nature as an intricate web of different systems, all working side by side to maintain balance and produce the things that we see in nature. Using technology, I can do all kinds of research about different ecological principles or relationships between species. These things give me a greater understanding of nature and makes me feel more connected with nature, and once I understand nature it pushes for conservation minded thinking, makes me want to protect nature.

Kevin: With technology we can definitely broaden our horizons and research all different sorts of topics, and research basically everything we need to. But when you make the point about conservation and that all this information makes us want to appreciate it more make us want to conserve it, preserve it. But is all this technology conserving our nature, preserving our nature? I don't think so. Because we've created so much electronic waste at this point that we don't even know where to throw it out. It's becoming such a problem for our environment because things like electronic waste don't go away, it doesn't evaporate, it just sits there in our natural world, rotting. So I don't think all this technology has been good for our world.

Charles: That's right, throwing out your technological waste is a huge disgrace. Well, I want to go back to our Facebook conversation that we were having before.

Kevin: You know what, just to make you happy Charles I'll talk about Facebook. In the interviews played at the beginning of the show, some students were talking about how it could make their lives faster and easier and connect you to more people. Like, I think that that's true, I think that Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, whatever you want to spend your time on, all these pictures and videos that you see on these websites, are you really experiencing these things for yourself, are you really experiencing nature for yourself? Or are you just merely visualizing it, looking at it. I think that personal experience, going outside, going anywhere rather than just looking at a picture on someone's screen is a lot more valuable.

Connor: But see, at least you're able to see these things. Even if it's just a picture or a video, that's much better than not seeing it at all. I feel like social media can be really beneficial in terms of your

perspective on the world and nature specifically. Technology can expose you to all different kinds of people and ideas from around the world. And all these people have the ability to offer you unique perspectives about nature, about the world. To give you a specific example of how technology could help nature, someone could use social media to promote a conservation or nature rehabilitation organization, spread the word about these natural principles, and just get the word out there

Charles: Oh yeah I think I liked a post on facebook the other week that was like 5 likes...and they donated 10 dollars to charity. It's awesome.

Connor: Charles you realize that they're probably not actually donating money to charity right?

Charles: Thanks Connor, now that I'm clinically depressed, I could use a trip somewhere. Like Bermuda.

Kevin: Speaking of your trip to Bermuda, I think this is a good time for us to segway into our topic of transportation and understanding nature through transportation. In our world today, at least the world that I live, we don't even see the land that we travel across because we're either in a plane or a car or a helicopter, whatever transportation methods you choose to use. Rather than back in the day when people just had to pick up their things and travel on foot and literally walk across and personally experience every bit of land that they walk across, rather than what we do today, we just fly on a plane and next thing I know I'm in San Diego California and I didn't even know I passed over Kansas at one point. Its like going from building to building without seeing anything in between. How am I supposed to learn about the land that I live on if I don't even see the land that I live on. If I just travel over it in a car or something, how am I supposed to learn and come to understand nature through that land.

Charles: I don't know if I could do that, I get sore walking from my dorm to Acopian.

Connor: Charles, that's actually kind of pathetic...but, back to Kevin's point, It's true that cars and planes might physically remove us from our environment, but you're missing the benefit of them, which is that we can go anywhere we want. Back thousands of years ago people rarely moved like 10 miles from their birthplace, they were stuck in that one area. Now I can jump in a plane and go anywhere I want, I could go to the amazon rainforest. So essentially transportation lets us view nature as something obtainable, something that can be brought to us, something that everyone can experience. IF I wanted to go to the rainforest and study monkey behavior, I could do that. So basically the fact that technology opens all these doors for us kinda overrides the fact that it might detach us from our environment a bit.

Charles: Well this has been a really eye opening discussion here, it's been awesome having you guys on the show.

Kevin: Thanks for having me Charles

Connor: You're the best Charles

Charles: Well that was quite an interesting debate. It seems that this question isn't so simple after all. You can't just use technology to understand nature, it's more of a balancing act. You have to use technology to see nature in a certain way, but you also have to go out and experience nature yourself. That way you can get the most amount of information that you can while also being able to judge and see nature in your own light. I hope you're satisfied with that answer, Chris. Now, if you want to submit

your own question, send it to us at [questions@gettingtechnical.com](mailto:questions@gettingtechnical.com). Now a word from our sponsor. Hexgears: hexgears' new ultra thread gears will leave your mechanical systems running smoother than ever with only half the lubricant needed for normal gears. For a discounted price of 12%, and to let them know we sent you, enter the discount code le3no9 at checkout. Let me repeat that: le3no9. And from all of us here at Getting Technical, I'm Charles Verhoog. You stay classy internet.

\*Outro music\*