

Openings: We are a contradiction of creativity and banality. Between flourishes of ideas and imagination, we happily exist through habit and accommodation. No matter how fleeting or mercurial the flashes of genius are in life, their presence or possibility allow us to endure almost anything.

Spotlight: It is rare to have a day pass where some aspect of technology does not enter into our awareness. Technology permeates our thoughts, actions, reading, and discussions. There is no doubt that the rate of technological advancement is increasing and that these advancements have, in a very short period, made a significant impact on our lives. Still, we are not living through anything more profound than what past generations have when the likes of the automobile and the airplane were introduced into their lives. So why has the concept of technology obtained such an omnipresent, almost deity status in our lives? More importantly, what has putting technology on a pedestal done to our enterprises?

What exactly is technology? Simply and broadly, it is any *thing* or *idea* that allows us to do what we want to do. If you want to dig a ditch, then a shovel is the appropriate piece of technology to employ. If you want to paint a picture, then you require the technology encompassed by paint, paper, and brush. If you want to influence the hearts and minds of others then you have many technologies from which to choose to convey your message including music, philosophy, politics, or religion. Technology is, in its greatest sense, the avenue through which we share our self with the world we inhabit.

Where there is technology, there is always a person who brings the technology to life. If the person and the technology are well suited to each other, something great can be created. Once there is a good match, the next step is moulding and customising the technology to achieve the perfect fit, an integration between technology and technologist. It is only then that a technology truly exists and that *thing* or *idea* becomes an extension of our being allowing wonders to flow into the world. Using technology should not be a dispassionate activity but rather a very personal experience that allows sparks to fly from your fingertips.

This approach to technology differs greatly from many people's day-to-day experience. Technology can also be imposed in an attempt to get more out of people in a shorter period while extending the workday and workplace beyond the confines of the office. From this bleak perspective, thoughts of a Luddite revolt seem very plausible. In these situations—whether it comes in the guise of a computer or an assembly line—the true technology being employed is control. It is never the technology and rather the intention with which it is directed that determines whether people openly embrace or cynically avoid the offering.

Perhaps our constant ramblings about technology are an indication of the level of disease we feel about our relationship with the technology we employ. The constant introduction and upgrading of technology has worn down our ability to question the benefits that we are deriving. Once the novelty wears off, can we actually say that we are able to do business better? Do the benefits accrue to all stakeholders or at least are not the result of shifting the burden from one stakeholder to another? Are people given greater control over their day and the opportunity to perform at their greatest potential? These are the questions that matter because in the end it is people—employees, customers, and vendors—who determine whether or not a business is profitable. If the technology employed is in service of people, the profits will follow.

Lexicon: While humans have been inventing and creating things for millennium, it was not until 1615 that we started to refer to our creations as technology. From the Greek *tekhnologia*, the original usage referred to the systematic treatment of an art, craft, or technique.

Musings: There is nothing quite so satisfying as a good tool. The way that it feels, how it looks, the efficacy it provides, and several other qualities are all indications of the craftsmanship of a tool. Beyond the utility derived, the tool itself can be a true source of joy.

Every activity has its tools and while partaking in the activity requires use of the tools, it is only after achieving a degree of proficiency in the activity that one starts to recognise the impact that the tool has on the activity. An appreciation of a tool's quality is a certain indication that you have passed the rites of initiation and that you have committed sufficient time and energy to the activity to be on the path to mastery. Every step along this path intensifies your relationship with the tools until they are no long inanimate objects and rather extensions of your self.

As a pastime or a profession, find an activity where the tools-of-the-trade allow you to pour your genius into the world.