

The Shared Mic: Conversations for the Ages

Episode 6: Twin Brooks Part II

Salima Suleman: Welcome to The Shared Mic. I'm Salima.

Eric Storey: And I'm Eric. Today we continue with our second part of a special episode.

Salima Suleman: Last episode, we shared five conversations from a special event that we were invited to attend out at Twin Brooks Community League, hosted by the Seniors Innovation Fund.

Eric Storey: So today, we have five more conversations. First are Thelma and Maggie.

Thelma Reid: A technological change that have impacted me quite extensively is the proliferation of the use of the internet, all sorts of things. Some of them are good, some of them are bad, some are positive, some are negative, and I want to embrace the positive side. And I just want the negativity to slow down.

Maggie Wang: What a kind of a positive side and what negative side?

Thelma Reid: The positive side is that the communication is much quicker and cheaper. And, you know, you can talk to people in different countries by using just the wireless technology. And it's a lot cheaper than really making a phone call, than the analog way of making a phone call. So you can talk for more extensive periods of time, and get a feel for, you know, what the other person is experiencing, or going through at that particular moment. And so that keeps me connected with family and friends a lot easier and more quickly and cheaply, more economically.

Maggie Wang: So what are the negative side?

Thelma Reid: The negative side is that people are beginning to say really mean things to others, because the values have changed with the proliferation of technology. And so people, you know, say unkind things to other people, because they're hiding behind a screen, and they're not face to face with you as much. So the integrity of the and the character of people have changed. And so that's a negative effect of technological advance. And for yourself?

Maggie Wang: For me, I definitely I like high technology. And I like to use ... I almost want to use it all the time. When I sleep, I want to use technology to help me to cook, program things the night before and they will cook, like wash your clothes in the middle of the night. Now when I get up, it's done. The modern life, it makes me feel like busier and busier so that leads to the good side of technology. It's a saving some of time, bring the convenience and also release

some of the labor work I have to do for the house. And bring me the information, bring me the convenience. I like online shopping a lot.

Thelma Reid: Yes, yes.

Maggie Wang: I like because I don't want to go outdoors and shop anymore. Because I lose my kids once. It's happened to me. So that is the positive side. And I'm really a fan to tracing those high technologies, make my life look like a lazy person life. But on the other side. It is a distraction in a way. Sometimes I have to check the phone, make sure nobody calling me or left me the message either in text, in Facebook, in email, like all those things. Check it out, I need almost like 20 minutes.

Salima Suleman: Now let's hear from Sofie and Fareda.

Sofie Rong: Like you have to use paper and read instead of like, going on the internet and searching. A thing that is really sad when you have like a computer, like if you want to read this book so badly, but it's not in your country or your continent you can't read it because you can't like search it up on Google, but you can't do it unless you have internet.

Fareda Baksh Marshall: Oh, the library, I went to the library. And my library was always next to my school. And so that was easy for me. Now that I'm here in Canada, I go to the library lots, I still go to the library, and I get books that I cannot get on the internet. You can't always get all the books on the internet. So I do go to the library very often. Yes. I think the library is a great place.

Eric Storey: Next we have Mohammed and Andy.

Mohammad Hussan: Without question there's been quite a few. The one probably most prominent that comes to mind is telephones. I did not have the rotary dial phone, but still had the button dial-up where you would have a beep if you wanted to put someone else on hold and come back or call waiting. Which were really, really cool. When they first came out, call display, you would know whose calling. If you wanted to pick up the phone, you would pick up the phone. The Vista 350 was actually a very prominent phone that Ed Tel back in the day had debuted. Do you know what Ed Tel was?

Andy Xia: No, I've actually never heard of it.

Mohammad Hussan: So Ed Tel used to be Telus back in the day. So Ed Tel eventually grew into Telus. And yeah, that's what we have today. And then after that, you went to the really cool cordless phone, you could probably walk for about 100 meters away from your phone and still be able to talk and not have a cord that binded you. And then today, we're at a point in time where we don't have a landline at home at all. So I mean, there's quite a few people, the

phones have evolved to such a situation where people don't have computers or laptops anymore, they just have a phone, which is able to do everything. People don't have cameras anymore, where they just have that. If I was to take your phone, how would your day go?

Andy Xia: Probably fine, I would just take my laptop. I have enough homework to do as it is.

Mohammad Hussan: Phones have revolutionized the way the way we do a lot of things but they've also, have actually come across phones that kill productivity as well. The amount of distractions you come across are significant to the to the point at which I've actually looked at buying a flip phone. My kids are at a point where they say Baba get off your phone. Because there's me messaging, me checking work emails or playing on my hockey pool. So there's always something to do on my phone there.

Andy Xia: For me, you getting a phone at around the end of junior high ... it really helped me keep track of all my different subjects, what days I had tests on and what homework I had to do because I could just check my notes whenever. I could just look at take a quick look and oh crap, I have that test tomorrow, I need to study right away. And even for right now in high school, it's still helping me keep track of a lot of different courses that I do and well, unlike a lot of people I've seen in class, I can put my phone down for longer periods of time.

Mohammad Hussan: That's impressive.

Salima Suleman: Let's hear from Yubiao and Melissa

Yubiao Chang: Computer is my favorite. I use it for the news, weather forecast and more. I don't have much energy to go, but I am a being connected to outside by my computer. I talk to my old friends on the other side of the earth.

Melissa Carvalho: My question to you would be, do the majority of your friends back home also have access to computers?

Yubiao Chang: Yeah.

Melissa Carvalho: Half of your friends have a computer. Okay, so all of them. And do you find it, you use it more to connect with your friends back home or more to learn things here.?

Yubiao Chang: Study English.

Melissa Carvalho: Awesome. I enjoy technology because my kids can learn how to speak Portuguese, to speak to their grandparents, because they don't have computers and they don't want to learn technology to speak English so this way my kids can learn Portuguese to speak to them.

Eric Storey: Finally, we have a conversation between Tony and taken.

Tony Wang: Well, for me, I think one technology that has really impacted my life is how learning is so digitalized now. I think for me, like lots of resources are just really easily accessible online. It's much easier to just go online, do a quick Google search, look on Wikipedia for information, than go all the way down to the library and check out some books and stuff like that. And additionally, I think our teachers actually have made our learning solely online almost. Like all our assignments are now submitted online through a program called Google Classroom. We just do everything through that basically. We have our deadlines online, right now we can even submit stuff at home.

Tegan Liberty: Do you ever find that hard because in school, I remember writing things down allowed me to like to remember whatever it was. Do you ever find that difficult? Or does it help typing things out?

Tony Wang: Actually, I keep my own personal notebook instead of like typing out my notes online. I find like writing things is much more helpful actually.

Tegan Liberty: Okay, that makes sense. Yeah, I'm with you there. Okay. That's awesome. Do you guys use Moodle at all?

Tony Wang: Oh, I've never heard of that.

Tegan Liberty: It might be the old version of Google Classroom. Yeah, I kind of agree that I use electronics or technology mostly for music or the communication thing. I mean, I'm always on my phone and I'm texting my boss or I'm texting this person. I'm texting that person. I find it's super nice. I remember being like, you know, five years old and had to run down the street and find your friends kind of thing. So I mean, that's kind of nice. Do you text a lot of people?

Tony Wang: I text the average amount I think not too much, not too little.

Tegan Liberty: When you were a kid, did you ever have to like to go down the street and find your friends or?

Tony Wang: I would usually just phone them, but I think texting them is easier than phoning so yeah.

Tegan Liberty: So small improvements since I've been a kid. I guess the big thing is just having a cell phone in my pocket. Like I didn't get a cell phone until I was in grade 11 or 12. And I'm not even that old, and then that was kind of huge. All of a sudden, it was like, a lot of things opened up. So yeah, you could just have your music on you. And it was crazy. And, you know, I could tell

my parents, I'm going to be late or whatever. And that sounds kind of awesome. Instead of finding a payphone, calling my parents or something like that.

Tony Wang: When I got my first cell phone, I was in grade nine. And to me that was like, I was already pretty old first, like, compared to the rest of my friends who already got a cell phone much earlier.

Tegan Liberty: No, really. Oh, wow. Oh, no. How early did your friends get cell phones?

Tony Wang: Like some got them One of my friends had a cell phone in elementary school in like grade six, I think.

Tegan Liberty:
That's crazy.

Salima Suleman: And that's the end of those conversations. My takeaway from this episode was how there's a duality in technology. We're using technology to open up our worlds, to communicate, to learn, to check the news to know what's going on. We heard Sofie, who's so young, talk about censorship, and availability of material in other countries and she knows that because of how technology has opened up her world to these concepts. And so we're using technology to learn more, but we're also kind of ending up in echo chambers and we're closing down our worlds in a way. It's the same kind of duality with efficiency. We're using technology to free up all this time. But then we fill that open time with technology and social media and all of these other things that are maybe taking us out of the context that we're in.

Eric Storey: Yeah, I agree with you. But in my words, it's an extremely efficient make work program. My takeaway was about when I was young, telephone was central to communications, how you talk to neighbors ... found out you know, relatives across country. That was it and you had all of these other things around your house: calculator, calendar, camera. Now a smartphone has all of those functions in it, but the phone may be the least use function of the smartphone.

Salima Suleman: Yeah, and it's that idea of, we just have all these things, but our phone was at the core. The phone was the family phone. And it was really exciting when we got cordless phones or caller ID. And now it's, oh, someone's calling me. I don't want to answer it. It's on the side. It's the second choice of communication.

Eric Storey: Exactly. So those were our thoughts. We'd be really interested in knowing what your takeaways are. Please leave us a comment.

Salima Suleman: The Shared Mic is an initiative of Age Friendly Edmonton, which is a project between the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council.



Eric Storey: We'd also like to highlight the senior's information phone line, 211, and that helps seniors connect with outreach providers.

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