

## Opinion

# *Signed, Your ION*

A new technology threatens to overtake human communication; will we allow it to dominate our connection to other human beings?

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From speaking to one another in person, to texting through a cellular device, humans have developed various modes in which to communicate. But what happens when we allow technology to do all the talking? Enter the Integrated Online Networker. This device was created to “manage your interactions with the world.” However, the controlling and addictive features of this intelligent software threatens to replace meaningful communication in our society.



Alexis Bateh

The Integrated Online Networker (the ION) damages the authenticity and creativity that is essential to human innovation. The ION corporation advertises the device’s artificial intelligence as having the ability to “write your texts and emails” along with other modes of communication for you. Many will see the introduction of this feature positively. No longer will you be spending hours drafting the perfect email to your boss or thinking of the caption that will earn you the most likes on Instagram. However, the authenticity of the individual is lost when we are no longer in control of our conversations.

Humans learn through experience, by thinking and creating. Through our mistakes, setbacks, and failures, we learn. How will humanity advance if technology is doing the work for us?

Innovation cannot occur if the ION is given a general task by multiple people, as it will generate the same response, no matter the person. The ION cannot expand on our cognitive processes, and therefore will never produce new ideas for humanity to build upon. If we allow machines to take over our projects, the credibility of our work is lost. Without the concept of originality being pursued, our society will become stagnant.

On another note, the ION has already begun to alienate younger generations in our society. Playgrounds and parks, stadiums and theaters, all empty in person, but all accessible through the projection of the ION. With one hour of charge, the ION is able to sustain power for seven **days**. Instead of Friday night football and homecoming dances, teenagers gather at their local Waffle House in silence, communicating through their IONs. Even adults are beginning to reflect the behavior of their children. Humans are spending less time with each other and more time with a screen.

Our futures are never guaranteed. Will we come to value the time we spend through technology over the experiences we share with our loved ones? This artificial intelligence endangers bonds developed through collaboration and direct communication with others. Friendships based on meaningful conversations, beliefs, and values become insignificant to the users that become immersed in friendships created in an artificial world.

In addition to the psychological damage this technological overdose spreads, our society is physically unwell. According to studies conducted at the Georgia Institute of Technology, 40 percent of ION users have reported a decrease in their daily physical activity over a six-month period. ION users are spending less time outside or at the gym, and more time at home. The silence from the streets would almost make you believe we were in the midst of a global pandemic. If we continue to allow the ION to dominate our lives, we will see our health, psychologically and physiologically, deteriorate into nothing.



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If the ION has not already taken enough from humanity, the device also has elements that invade our privacy. With an artificial intelligence built to send and respond to messages from others, how will we know who we are communicating with? The foundation of communication is comfort and trust, but how can one trust if they are communicating with a machine? As previously mentioned, the ION cannot successfully build upon human cognition. However, it can interpret and converse with the average human being. Therefore, without a distinction between the variable respondents, humans blindly communicate through their IONs, or their IONs communicate on behalf of them. In addition to this lack of identity, the ION does not have many safety precautions in place. If an ION were to be lost or stolen, without a proper voice identification security set, anyone could have access to your personal information. With the way this technology has infiltrated our society, people put their lives into their devices. This leaves our safety and security in peril.

We cannot allow artificial intelligence to live our lives for us. We must put a ban on the ION and all other technologies that take our conversations, our interactions, and our connections away from us. The ION will be the beginning of a global deterioration of mental and physical health. This technology puts normalcy into jeopardy. If we do not revolt against this destructive technology, then before we know it, this opinion article will be signed, Alexis Batch's ION.