THE PHILIPPINES’ MOVING INTO AN INCREASINGLY DIGITAL ERA
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It is no surprise that the world we live in is different from that of twenty, or even ten years ago. Today is the world of the Internet, smartphones, mobile apps, knowledge and entertainment at your fingertips. According to a Rappler report in January 2017, a figure of 3.75 billion people all over the world uses the Internet, a statistic taken from “Digital in 2017 Global Overview” report. The article also states that online activity on mobile is increasing, with more than half of online traffic coming from mobile sources. Indeed, taking a look around our society, is downright impossible not to find a smartphone without any social media apps installed on it. Despite the relatively slow Internet in the Philippines (with an average fixed connection speed of 4.52 Mbps) Filipinos have been reported to be logged on longer than any other country with an average of 8 hours and 59 minutes every day. It is estimated that of those almost nine hours online, around 4 hours are devoted to social media.

As the Philippines is a country known for its young population, and Internet usage is usually attributed to the youth, young people are generalized to be the bulk of this millions of users. And there are solid reasons for that: consider the fact that children born in this era are wired into Internet usage at very young ages, and furthermore, they are already exposed to the existence of various social media platforms. This generation is often referred to as the “Digital Native,” a term used by Marc Prensky of the MCB University Press. The Digital natives are described as “‘native speakers’ of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet” (Prensky 2001). In contrast to these Digital Natives, there are those of the older generation, those who did not grow up with the Internet, computers and phones as we know it. As written by Prensky, “So what does that make the rest of us? Those of us who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology are, and always will be compared to them, Digital Immigrants.”

There exists a divide between these two generations, and as Prensky mentions, the differences between the two are huge. Digital Natives might be even physically different from Digital Immigrants due to their adaptation to usage of digital media. In the article, Prensky
mentions specifically how this brings up a conflict especially in education, as the Digital Immigrant struggles to teach methods that may have become obsolete or are already known to the Digital Native. But this does not mean that the two are at complete odds with each other – now that the world is moving into an age where information technology is rampant, we must reconsider how to adapt to the changes brought on by digitalization. When we do, we will be able to make use of technology not only to entertain ourselves, but make tasks easier and more efficient. Considering the number of hours our population spends online and the fact that many people are being born as Digital Natives, we must use technology not only for our own sakes but those of other.

Works cited:
