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### Landmarks in the Digital Era

Art is a reflection of human interaction. Over time, the arts have made serious industrial and technological advancements, as have the ways in which humans work, play, and communicate with each other. Fierce progression in various fields of technology have completely altered the way people display emotion, hold conversations, and establish connections with others. In the digital world, life moves fast and it is incredibly important to pace yourself accordingly to keep up. It is not often that people nowadays will take a moment to stop and think or observe at the fundamental levels that we used to, nor are we likely to pause and appreciate our surroundings, even in their most simplistic forms.

The contrast between the ways of the high-speed, new-media era and the less hectic, pre-digitized days are evident in the *Landmarks* public art projects exhibited at the computer science building on campus. Outside of the building stands artist Sol LeWitt's *Circle with Towers* structure. A very simple and systematic work of art, this structure gives off a very "what you see is what you get" vibe. The tall columns built of prisms are the epitome of precision and display nothing more than the mere elementary units of construction. Undoubtedly minimalist in its form, the *Circle with Towers* depicts a time when the simplest things were appreciated and esteemed, an age when people devoted time to the basic building blocks of society. Whether it be face-to-face exchanges or hand-written letters, quintessential tasks were not always a burden. In fact, they were once reared as works of art.

Conversely, onlookers receive an entirely different experience upon walking into the computer science building. A wide variety of textures, shapes, and colors make an immediate impression and allow the viewer to never run out of new things to look at. Inside the building's offices are two wall art pieces that make a statement completely independent of that made by the outside structure. Artist, and Design Media Arts professor at UCLA, Casey Reas designed a wallpaper masterpiece through coding that is displayed on the main walls of each office. The wallpaper, *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*, is anything but minimalist and simple. Without even considering the look of the wallpaper, the idea of creating artwork by means of coding alone sets a standard for how much society has changed, in its thought process and what it appreciates, as a result of the digital revolution.

As one walks in front of and into the computer science building, the public art takes you on a miniature tour of digital history, starting with the *Circle with Towers* and finishing with *A Mathematical Theory of Communication*. The outside display is unmistakably straightforward, and not on accident. Representative of a generation of in-person conversation, sending mail with an actual stamp on it, and founding friendships on mutual interest, not mutual followers, the work surrounding the computer science building exemplifies the values and customs of the pre-digital era. However, by entering the building, traditional relationships and ideals are left behind, a door closed promptly upon them.

Alas, welcome to the new-and-improved Information Age, and what better place to host the transition from pre- to post-computerization than the computer science building? As a result of incredible technological advancements, human correspondence has become increasingly impersonal, complex, and programmed. Though inventions such as cell phones, the internet, and social media allow people across the world to connect with each other on multiple platforms,

they have also, without question, rendered people with less ability to empathize and establish deep personal connections with others. Technology is very complex and ever changing, as is the work of Casey Reas displayed on the walls of the computer science offices. While his work is well-done and admired, it lacks human benevolence because it is completely code-generated. Work that used to take people years to complete can now be altered in a matter of minutes by changing the programming of code and reprinting.

Though humans have not completely lost the ability to communicate with one another or to establish meaningful interrelations, this capability has definitely been hindered by the evolution of technology. Evident by the inability to hold conversations without looking at a cell phone or laptop, human kind is experiencing a complete reconstruction of intercommunication. This revolution is also distinct among public art and how it is being modified. Technology is continuously being revised and is becoming a more integral, almost natural part of the daily lives of humans. The technological reformation is evident in both the shaping of human interactions and the transformation of public art.