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Reflection Paper 3

Imagine a world where there is no television, computers, mp3 players and smart phones. Today's generation has been basked in the basket of technology where everything is ever evolving in respect to our daily needs but radio triggered the start of this ever changing technology. Radio was an important commodity in the daily lives of the people in the 1900's since it brought various different flavors of media such as comedy, sports and drama through sound. Radio also started journalism and slowly it transformed into broadcast media but as new technologies started coming out, radio was slowly forgotten. When I listen to radio nowadays, one question regularly crosses my mind; is radio needed in the 21st century, where new and fascinating technologies are coming out every day to improve our lives. Well, when I asked this question to my dad he told me his personal experience when he was a little kid and little did I know this was going to change my perspective towards radio.

My dad narrated me a personal experience of his where he said that radio played an integral part of his live when he was a little kid. It was wartime in India where there was a dispute between India and China over the Himalayan border. This war was called as the Sino-Indian war and he described what he went through during this war. It was utter chaos and India had declared a state of emergency when China had declared war with India. People in the communities had to install sirens so when the Chinese fighter planes were detected in the radar

by the Indian Air force, the siren would go off. The sirens were used as a way to inform people when the fighter planes had crossed the Indian border. People also had to close every single light in their house during the night times every day so the Chinese won't be able to know whether they are over the jungle or the city. This protected the cities since the Chinese did not know their location and they would not have dropped the bomb in the middle of nowhere.

During these times families would sit next to each other and would listen to the radio with anxiety. My dad explained how the radio would inform them about the location of the Chinese fighter planes and would broadcast important messages during these times. My dad particularly described one incident where the Chinese bombed a location which killed countless number of people. The next day radio broadcast dispatched a message stating to cover the windows of the house with newspapers so when the window shattered from the splinters from the bomb, it would be trapped by the paper surrounding the window. Another important message that the radio broadcasted in response to the incident was to sit near the pillar of the house. The houses of that time were made of bricks and when the house would collapse due to the bomb the pillars were the last to collapse. Also the radio broadcast instructed the communities to make trenches where they could take shelter in the case of an emergency. My dad described that radio played an integral part in his life at that time and if it was not for the radio, he might have not survived the war. My dad told me that he had been through three deadly wars and described that radio played a vital part in the people's lives during these crucial time.

After hearing my dad's experience with radio, I began to realize that maybe we still need radio during our times. During a thunderstorm, I was monitoring the weather channel online and suddenly it hit me that radio has also played a significant role in my life too. In the year 2003, "Isabelle" struck Virginia. It was a category hurricane with devastating winds. There was a

sense of chaos and fear as Isabelle prepared to strike Virginia with its fearsome winds. People ran to the supermarkets to gather supplies and covered their windows with wooden planks. Finally the day arrived when Isabelle came with the fury of its winds. In the first 30 minutes our lights went out. There was a dead silence for the first 3 minutes and then suddenly trees started bending like straws. I was scared out of my wits and started praying. In this grave time, I listened to the radio to get updates about the status of the hurricane and also to take my mind of what was going outside. Suddenly there was a loud sound which resembled the sound of lighting and when I looked outside, a large tree was falling but fortunately it didn't damage our house.

My family went to an inner room and listened to the radio for the whole duration of the storm. If it wasn't for the radio, I don't know how we would have managed to spent the whole night. The electricity did not come for about 4-5 days and we listened to the radio for that time being. Living without electricity is tough but our little battery powered radio saved me from that experience of boredom. I did not feel that I had nothing to do because I was happy listening to the radio and it felt like that I had a bond with my radio for that time but as soon as the electricity came I forgot about my radio. I started watching television and my laptop. After listening to my dad's personal experience I began to realize how important radio has been in my life. Radio has accompanied me through many of my difficult tasks and has given me countless hours of joy when I was a kid but in the midst of these new technologies I forgot about the invention which acted like an inspiration for all the other media inventions.

Since I am a computer science major, I never understood the importance of radio in my daily live since most of the time I am viewing my laptop, but the incident that my dad described to me made me realize that radio did play an integral role in my life when I was a little kid. My experience with the storm when I was a kid might have been suppressed by my mind

since this was a tragic incident to me. Now, when I listen to the radio I know that it is still a critical tool in sending messages during critical times.

