

2024 MCS Library Essay Question:

In 1964, Senator Margaret Chase Smith discussed the “very profound changes that science and technology have brought upon our way of life.” She noted that the “probable future effects” of technology on civilization was “breathtaking” and “awesome,” but to some “downright fearful.” The Senator described these skeptics and their “moral faintheartedness” as apprehensive people concerned that new technology would cause our society to become “automated, mechanized and synthesized.” She further emphasized that she did not share in their pessimism that computers would dominate “the thinking of our society that we will become a ‘robotized’ society dominated by a mental laziness that not only lets the machines do, but ultimately dominate, our thinking.”



Sixty years later, Senator Smith could not fathom the role technology plays in our daily lives. Today teenagers use technology, more specifically the internet and social media, for a multitude of reasons. The benefits include creating relationships with people and developing personal identities through social networking and messaging, playing online games, and virtual learning. On the contrary, potential risks for adolescents consist of cyberbullying, trolling, isolation, and access to inappropriate material or relationships. In a recent article the American Psychological Association quoted Mary Alvord, PhD saying “Just as we decide when kids are old enough to drive, and we teach them to be good drivers, we can establish guidelines and teach children to use social media safely.” The Margaret Chase Smith Library invites students to recommend what guidelines we as a society should establish for teenagers concerning their use of technology to ensure their personal safety and privacy.

Prizes:

- First Place - \$1000
- Second Place - \$500
- Third Place - \$250
- Five Honorable Mention Prizes - \$50

Contest Rules:

- It is open to **Maine high school seniors only**.
- Essays must be typed and double-spaced.
- For publication purposes, essays should be **no longer than 2000 words**.
- Quality of evidence, argumentation, and writing is more important than quantity of pages.
- The best essays support personal opinions with historical context and cited facts.

Submission Instructions:

- Entrants need to provide the following information:
 - A Reliable Email
 - Mailing Address (School or Home)
 - Phone Number
 - Name of School
- Essays are due **April 2, 2024**. Prizes will be announced by May 1, 2024.
- Electronic submissions can be emailed to john.m.taylor@maine.edu
- Hard copies should be **UNSTAPLED** and mailed to the following address:

Margaret Chase Smith Library
Attn: John Taylor
56 Norridgewock Ave
Skowhegan, ME 04976

You can sample past prize-winning entries at: <http://www.mcslibrary.org/awards>.
For further information email John Taylor at john.m.taylor@maine.edu.