Sharing the blame

The Athletic Association’s decision not to renew its foot-
ball and men’s basketball broadcasting contract with WREK radio may be justified, but the way in which the change was handled by both sides is not. While the Athletic Association exhibited a lack of concern for timing and communication, WREK also failed to adequately plan ahead. Both parties are to blame for the ensuing statements made by both actors. Director of Athletics Dan Radakovich’s claim that the reason why WREK was not notified of the decision—which would strip it of around $30,000, or one one-third of its budget—any earlier was because he did not know who to contact at the radio station seems weak, to say the least. There is no good reason to explain why either WREK or Student Publications had no inkling of the decision until one day before a press release was announced.

Given that WREK had to submit its yearly budget to the Student Government Association in October and that it was not given a chance to renegotiate or state its case, the Athletic Association’s communication efforts seem like too little, too late. Even though the decision may be financially smart for the Association, its actions showed little savvy and respect in treating a Tech student organization as a sub-par business partner. We doubt that a commercial partner would have received the same treatment.

However, the Athletic Association has also explained that when it first began broadcasting with WREK, it clearly expressed that it would continue to look for a commercial broadcaster. While WREK’s staff may have changed during this period, organizational leaders should have ensured that such an important piece of information would have been transmitted from year to year. In addition, WREK should have taken care not to rely too heavily on what was never a permanent source of funding. Careful planning might have eased the difficult transition into the next year that the station is now experiencing.

SGA now has to fill in WREK’s budget for next year, taking twice the usual funds from the Student Activity Fee to make up for the $30,000 loss. The large budget cut was unexpected, and we understand that WREK needs these emergency funds, but the station should look to the future to make sure it does not come to rely too heavily on what was never a permanent source of funding. Careful planning might have eased the difficult transition into the next year that the station is now experiencing.

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By Abhishek Jain / Student Publications

A new generation of do-gooders?

Imagine you’re in a tent in the heart of the Africa. With you are three prostitutes, a couple of local businessmen and a two-time Pulitzer winner, whom you have to thank for bringing you along on this surreal trip.

For a third year in a row, New York Times columnist Nick Kristof is offering U.S. college students this rare opportunity. One lucky winner will get the chance to accompany Kristof on his travels through the developing world and gain first-hand exposure to some of its tragedies, including extreme poverty, famine and war, to name a few.

As I excitedly read about the contest, I reached a quote by Bill Gates that made me stop. “I left Harvard with no real awareness of the awful inequities in the world,” Gates said in a 2007 commencement address. “There are billions of dollars and four, or maybe six, years later, have most U.S. graduates fallen victim to what Kristof labels “one of the failures of the American education system?” Have we really learned nothing about the vast world that lies outside these borders?

Yes and no. On the one hand, it is all too easy to obtain a degree in the U.S. without hearing about the tragedies mentioned above. It is as if the U.S. isolationist dogma of yesteryear has infiltrated American schools and minds (if not our actual foreign policy).

It may be true that while most students abroad learn at least two languages, U.S. students are generally complacent with a basic knowledge of English. It’s also known that even though traveling is a habit for foreigners with similar means as ours, less than a third of Americans even own a passport—but this does not mean that our generation is comprised of inward-looking dooms.

At Tech, President Coughlin hoped to increase the proportion of students who study abroad to over half—a realistic goal given current participation rates—and despite being a technical university, we offer a terminal degree in international affairs, a diverse environment at International House and a holistic global experience through the International Plan.

In fact, our generation is part of a growing “internationalist” movement, a direct result of the powerful forces of technology, globalization and what I hope is also a shift towards greater public responsibility. While this movement marks progress, one of my fears is that although we will know much more about the rest of the world, we will not do more.

All in all, is Generation Y really willing to look beyond the materialism, individualism and isolation that were so in vogue last century?

Can we lead the transition into a new world order in which real change (to use the word du jour) is possible?

In the past few years, for example, the spotlight has been shined on the Darfur crisis. My guess is that most people in our age group are familiar with the genocide taking place and want the U.S. government to help make it stop. I see this issue pop up in Facebook profiles, celebrity interviews and movie theaters, but I don’t want Darfur to just become a pet cause for young America—we’re not going to do something about it. I also don’t want to see other crises be relegated to the back burner because they failed to reach the same iconic status in our popular culture.

But what to do? Maybe it’s just me, but there is a certain futility in passing our flyers, attending rallies and listening to lectures that I find both frustrating and disheartening. This futility can lead to cynicism (and inaction), but there are many things that our generation can do to make a pal-pable difference.

From joining the Peace Corps or choosing a career that touches others’ lives (the developing world is in dire need of technological, scientific and engineering know-how), the possibilities available to our generation are boundless.

If making a big commitment seems like too much, sometimes just becoming a mentor to a child, going on a short volunteer trip abroad or writing elected officials about neglected issues can achieve great results (and from experience, I can affirm that the personal payoffs are often greater than what you put in). Oh, as a fun alternative, you could even enter Kristof’s contest.

I’m not arguing that the U.S. should be the watchman of the world. But as privileged, educated individuals, we should stop being so shortsighted and measuring our success by how far along we get on the rat race. The world—and its injustices—are ours to change.

Naihobe Gonzalez
Opinions Editor

“Uh oh... I hope they saved the receipt for that transmitter!”

By Naihobe Gonzalez / Student Publications

“Is Generation Y really willing to look beyond the materialism, individualism and isolation that were so in vogue last century...?”

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First page ag 78. Subsequent pages ag 78 each.
This year, I have resolved to eat a little bit healthier and exercise a little more often. Both are things that I have pretty easily attained and will be able to continue doing—nothing too unattainable.

Some people, however, go slightly overboard with their resolutions. It seems as though many people believe that once the New Year rolls around, they are suddenly reborn and become this whole new person: “I am going to go to the gym every single day and lose 100 pounds in three months!” This is a little absurd considering this person has likely not used their gym membership since they bought it.

People always say, “This is my year; this year I am going to stick with it.” And while I certainly admire the perseverance and determination of those over-the-top resolutions, most of them can’t seem to stay with their goals for more than a few weeks.

After years and years filled with millions of broken resolutions, one would think that people would have realized that always setting such extreme goals for themselves will likely result in failure. What is it about the New Year that tricks people into thinking there is no other time of year they could possibly improve things about themselves?

The same could be applied to the holidays. Why is it that people always start a diet after they have gorged themselves with calorie-packed foods for weeks on end? It seems far more logical to begin a diet before the holidays when all of those extra pounds haven’t yet been packed on. This will result in less work on the dieter’s part.

That being said, if your resolution is to exercise more, why didn’t you get a head start before the holidays rolled around? You would have had the leg-up on all of your friends and wouldn’t have had to work twice as hard to shed those holiday love-handles.

While I understand the draw of starting the year fresh, I want to urge people to think about their goals. The old saying goes, “It is better to start small and progress over time than to go bigger as you feel the urge.”

“Extending change to Israel and Palestine

Staff Editorial
The Daily Iowan
(U-WIRE) For the last 40 years, every U.S. president has had one common foreign-policy concern: peace in the Holy Land. After witnessing a 22-day bombing campaign in Gaza, President Obama entered the Oval Office with more pertinent matters to attend to than the banal promise of a fresh paradigm for a peaceful Israeli-Palestinian existence.

The unilateral ceasefires by Hamas, Hezbollah, and Israel may have ended the current campaign during the end of the Bush administration; however, it will fall on Obama and his Cabinet to effectively deal with the situation afterwards in Gaza.

While Obama went to great lengths during his campaign to confirm that he, like almost all American politicians, is decriedly pro-Israel—largely in response to ridiculous arguments that somehow his Arabic middle name directed his foreign-policy views to be inherently against Israel—administration cannot afford to be blindly pro-Israel in its reaction to the Gaza campaign. A realistic resolution to the Holy Land is going to require an administration that is capable of publicly, not privately, admonishing the military decisions of the Israeli government and its continued second-class treatment of the Palestinian people.

Inevitably, the subject of Israel-rants extremely polemical and emotional reactions. A sharp criticism of Israeli policy is often prone to a hasty accusation of anti-Semitism. Many equate a disagreement of governmental policy as a direct threat to the Editor-in-Chief or to individual Georgia Tech students.

Eric Zaniga
First-year AE

“He said many awkward things, and he got us into a war.”

Second-year CHBE

“I will remember him most by the Iraqi war and how he destroyed the American army and cost many American lives.”

Elizabeth Whiting
Second-year ME

“Maintaining his composure even when he was unpopular. He stayed with his position even when times were tough.”

Nikhil Kadle
Third-year BME

“I will remember him by his failed policies that put this country in financial turmoil.”

Photos by Priya Malhotra

Resolutions aren’t the way to a new ‘you’

Jennifer Aldoretta
Assistant Entertainment Editor

“Changing habits is not something that can be done overnight, which is why resolutions often fail.”

“Hope,” we’re starting to lose our faith in our own team. Despite all the recent talk of new starters on the roster, we are still 1-1 in the ACC—falling behind Wake Forest, but still ahead of Pittsburgh. With a win over the Panthers this weekend, we could be a factor in ACC play. But so far, we are not a complete team.

“Making history

Basketball blues

Tech men’s basketball lost its first five conference games this season, making the team the last-ranked team in the ACC (and 327th out of 330 Division I teams). At this rate, even if the team made 140 straight free throws, it would still be dead last in free throw percentage in the ACC. Despite all the recent talk of ‘hope,’ we’re starting to lose hope in our own team.

“Super alun

Even though the Arizona Cardinals killed the Falcons’ Super Bowl hopes, a large majority of marchers at the Super Bowl, the Tech community still has one reason to celebrate. No, not the Super Bowl. However, Tech men’s basketball did have a great season. Ken Whisenhunt, CE ’90, will try to coach the Cardinals to victory against the Pittsburgh Steelers.

“Tasty!

Peanut butter lovers beware: a recent salmonella outbreak has affected many brands of crackers and ice cream, killing up to six people. Even worse, the outbreak was traced to a plant in Georgia. We can only hope the Nutter Butter cookies sold in Tech vending machines have been removed.

Letter Submission Policy
The Technique welcomes all letters to the editor in response to Technique content as well as general topics relevant to campus. We will print letters on a timely and space-available basis. Send your letter to letters@technique.net and please include your full name, year (Junior, Sophomore, Freshman, etc.), major, and affiliation.

Letter should not exceed 400 words and should be submitted by 7 p.m. Tuesday in order to be printed in the following Friday’s issue. Any letters not meeting these criteria or not submitted in time will be returned. Make sure to include your full name, year (Junior, Sophomore, Freshman, etc.), and major.

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Nicholas Kadle
Third-year BME

“Will remember him by his failed policies that put this country in financial turmoil.”

Photos by Priya Malhotra
Rethinking Facebook: social networks could educate

I first opened my Facebook account roughly three years ago. At that point, as hopefully we all remember, Facebook was for college students only. I had waited diligently to get my Georgia Tech e-mail account set up instead of cheating the system and using my DeKalb County provided email address instead, as so many of my imparient friends had done.

Barely six months later I came to terms with the fact that Facebook, that far off land of social networking that my older cousins had tormented me with and excluded me from for years, was no longer so exclusive. High school students were allowed to join and create profiles, end more depressingly, my own sibling's friends' profiles popped up in my friend request box daily.

Needless to say, I was not a big fan of Facebook's first foray into social inclusion of those not burdened by college tuition, and much less so by the eventual universal access to Facebook. For one thing, how could non-college students, otherwise known as "people with real lives," possibly have the hours of endless free time needed to keep an up-to-date profile and entertain me?

Thanks to extreme self-control I was able to resist joining one of the "1 million strong against the new Facebook" groups, which is fortunate because I am sure that my inclusion in the Facebook group would have had huge consequences, such as convincing Facebook they should direct traffic through their service at least a million people who were willing to use their product, despite hating it.

Recently though, Facebook has been bucking its trend of creating improvements that annoy me. In fact, this week's partnership with CNN to help broadcast the inauguration was downright convenient. While I cannot express to you how annoying it is to see an easy-to-find streaming news source show up just after I got back to the country (not in time to save me hours of tears and hassle), the function was definitely one of the most useful applications released lately.

For those of us not brave enough to stand out in Centennial Park to witness the historic event, many are now comfortable with real lives, possibly have the hours of endless free time needed to keep an up-to-date profile and entertain me.

"The mix of social media and news networks on Inauguration Day...is the next obvious step in news broadcasting."

Emily Chambers
Outreach Editor

Most importantly, I found universal affirmation to my belief that the poor, innocent poet who read after President Obama probably should have memorized the poem she wrote for the occasion if she wanted to even appear competent when speaking after a man who has been declared one of the greatest orators of our age.

Watching the status updates from my friends in Europe, other lazy students still in bed like myself, and those brave few actually in Washington D.C. with their iPhones, I realized that the mix of social media and news networks on Inauguration Day, although only temporary, is the next obvious step in news broadcasting.

Modern America's compulsive need-to-know nature requires us not only to hear news that is updated constantly, but also to know what our friends think about it. To quote the video "Twitter in Plain English," sometimes people just need to know what is happening between daily blog posts, or in this case, between sentences in any given news broadcast. The combination of instantaneous user-generated content with "hard news" is a revolutionary step in news broadcasting.

While news stations becoming too involved in social media poses obvious risks (mainly, that I will lose the ability to claim that I ever check any other websites, or that desperation to generate hits and commentary will drive the media to even new lows of partisanship), this sort of partnership could be what is needed to keep America informed.

Consider it like a mental vacation every morning when you check to make sure your significant other hasn’t posted on their ex’s wall, you could instead choose to check the state of current affairs, without even having to navigate away from the page.