Once in a Lifetime Argument

Scenario

David Byrne is a singer and songwriter for the famous new wave band Talking Heads, known for having a somewhat avant-garde perspective. While thoughtful and creative, Byrne is by no means an expert in our field. Recently, he wrote an editorial in MIT Technology Review critical of the overall direction our field has taken over the past decade, making the case that, “We are beset by - and immersed in - apps and devices that are quietly reducing the amount of meaningful interactions we have with each other.” Whether you agree with him or not, it’s certainly a thought provoking piece. What do you make of his argument?

Assignment

Your job is to write an essay making the case for or against Byrne’s conclusion (thesis.) In your assignment text file (W2/submission.txt), you will find an assigned ethical theory to make your argument from. You should make this argument from only your assigned ethical theory.

Your imagined audience for this essay is a fellow CS student who is not in this class. Assume they have vaguely heard class terms before but aren't intimately familiar with them, nor are they familiar with the particular article you are writing about.

Your response should:

- be between 3,000 and 5,000 characters long
- conform to the writing rubric
- be driven by a clear thesis
- address the questions below while remaining one coherent essay, not a series of disconnected answers
- use the resources provided (and any research you care to do on your own) to support your argument

Questions

- What are the major premises of Byrne's argument?
- Do you consider his overall argument strong? Why or why not?
- Does Byrne appeal (directly or indirectly) to any of the ethical theories we studied?
- Does Byrne appeal to any of the logical fallacies we discussed?
- Can you identify any policy vacuums or conceptual muddles in the issues Byrne discusses?

Resources

- MIT Technology Review, "Eliminating the Human"