Raising Deforestation Awareness Through Online Education
(Technical Report)

The Effect of Farming Technology Innovations on Animal Cruelty
(STS Research Paper)

An Undergraduate Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
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Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

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Sociotechnical Synthesis

My capstone team was employed by the Amazon Aid Foundation to improve upon a learning module for children k-12 to spread awareness for the deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest. We successfully implemented all of the main requirements requested from our client, and returned a working final product. As a team, we learned the value of communication and committing to deadlines while also helping a company whose goals we fully supported.

While my technical thesis focused on using computer science knowledge to spread awareness, the other part of my paper focuses on a separate issue. Poor animal treatment has become common amongst factory farms, which are responsible for the overwhelming majority of meat production. With in-vitro production and plant-based meats like the impossible burger being introduced, the way efficient farming is done could change for good in the near future. Most people eat meat on a daily basis, so I want to understand why it is that they do it if they know about the current poor practices. The STS Framework, technological determinism, will be used to analyze why it is that little has been done to end it so far, because many people seem to ignore the truth. I'm planning to administer a survey to UVa students, questioning their views on what they think of the current animal treatment, and why it is that they continue or have stopped eating meat. I expect to find that most people who are against the animal treatment are still eating meat and just prefer to not think about how the meat got onto their plate. With an understanding of technological determinism, it is reasonable to expect in vitro meat production and meatless meats to cause a change in animal treatment in the future, as long as it can remain affordable.