

New Technology in an Old World

The men are always in black. The women always wear long skirts. Who are these unique people? They are called the Amish. The Amish people's life has changed very little for 400 years. They live together in Pennsylvania in the USA, have their own churches, and travel with horses and carriages. Their children never study again in school after they finish the eighth grade. Most people think the Amish are part of an “Old World.”

However, from the 1920s, some Amish people started to use new technology, for example, telephones in the 1920s, electricity in the 1930s, and cars in the 1960s. But other Amish do not like these modern things and still do not use them. They believe that new technology conflicts with the Amish's traditional values. So now, the Amish people are divided into three groups, because they do not agree about what technology they can use. One group uses telephones, electricity, and cars. Another group only uses them occasionally. The other group does not use them at all.

The Amish like to meet and stay together, so they all believe phones can stop people from meeting in person. The group of the Amish who uses phones puts the phones outside their houses with answering machines.

Now, using cell phones is a new problem for the Amish to worry about. Some think cell phones will make the Amish less close because they can talk anywhere without meeting. Others think cell phones are useful and convenient.

New technology brings new things that usually make life easier for us. But it also brings problems to the Amish and their Old World. The Amish need to decide whether new technology will keep them close together or not. What are they going to do? We don't know, but just don't call them, all right?