

Innovation Beyond Simulation

Benjamin Franklin's philanthropic approach to invention reflects giving out of generosity. Franklin's philosophy of freely dispensing ideas should be mirrored by the inventors of the modern world. His wise insight on ideas and inventions are stated in his Autobiography, suggesting, "That as we enjoy great Advantages from the Inventions of others, we should be glad of an Opportunity to serve others by any Invention of ours, and this we should do freely and generously." Inventions ease the strenuous nature of existence, revolutionizing society into a superior mold of itself. The modern world requires service as we continue to innovate, a responsibility to benefit others and humanity as a whole.

Opportunities possessed by inventors of the past grant individuals from modern society the ability to reap exceptional advantages from them. An example of such ideology is Franklin's profound breakthroughs in the development of electricity. He's noted as the first individual to coin the term 'battery' in a scientific essence. He solidified the single fluid theory, a postulation that when something is charged, electricity flows from a positive body with excess charge to a negative body with negative charge. This electrical concept is crucial in determining the workings of the battery, an invention employed incessantly since Franklin's era. His devotion to employing his genius to serve the public elicited a desire to keep his inventions non-patented. Inventors like Franklin, who shared their ideas without hindrance, are the reason why simply surviving today is less of a task than centuries ago. Without Franklin, it's likely that inventions such as the electric car or electric engine wouldn't have come to fruition.

With patents becoming an integral process in the world of inventions, non-patented products among big corporations are rare, undoubtedly obstructing the ability for their products to be utilized freely. Tesla however, a significant contributor to the advancement of self-driving cars, recently announced in November of 2022 that they're opening their Electrical Vehicle (EV) Charging Connector to the world. The company removed all patents from this development, prompting a new post on the Tesla website to read, "In pursuit of our mission to accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy, today we are opening our EV connector design to the world." By sharing the invention of their EV Charging Connector, other companies who share Tesla's goal of revolutionizing transport have access to the design. Tesla's charger was shared liberally, with the intention of accelerating

society's transition from gas vehicles to electric, comparable to Franklin sharing his ideas to advance the knowledge of electricity.

Franklin's emphasis on using inventions to benefit others aligns with efforts of Elon Musk, businessman and notably the CEO of Tesla. Franklin judged that inventions shouldn't materialize because of monetization. On the topic of patents, Musk has expressed, "They're used like landmines in warfare. They don't actually help advance things; they just stop others from following you." In his opinion, and Franklin's too, patents frustrate others from innovation. Franklin stepped away from potential profit or legacy in pursuit of generosity in invention. While Musk already earned billions, he provides a modern template for a prodigious company allocating knowledge or a product for the greater good. Franklin easily could've collected considerable wealth because of his inventions, but he was much less interested in the monetization of science as opposed to benefitting the world with his ideas. We, as a society, find ourselves enjoying the liberty of creations that scholars thousands of years ago have perfected. We owe it to ourselves as a people to not withhold our projects but to express them to the world with fair balance to inventors and innovators. Of course, inventors deserve to make money from their work. After they profit, access to their designs could benefit other innovators.

Benjamin Franklin's principle of generosity is an extremely important and prevalent matter within today's public sphere. Franklin was one of the first minds to begin establishing the concept of electricity, and did so with a pure interest in aiding the public. Because of his work with electricity, companies such as Tesla have the foundations to succeed and revolutionize the industry further. Elon Musk and Franklin both didn't patent inventions, for the purpose of allowing other companies with a shared goal to utilize their designs. Franklin's generous attitude towards innovation signals the need for balance; inventors deserve a living wage, but after they profit, generous freedom for innovators will help humanity prosper.

Works Cited

Armstrong, Kevin, and Øyvind Husby. "Tesla Opens up Its EV Charging Connector to the World." *Not a Tesla App*, 12 November 2022, <https://www.notateslaapp.com/news/1064/tesla-opens-up-its-ev-charging-connector-to-the-world>. Accessed 4 February 2023.

"Benjamin Franklin's Pioneering Electrical Work Influenced Today's Technology." *Smithsonian Institution*, 16 November 2021, <https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/benjamin-franklins-pioneering-electrical-work-influenced-todays-technology>. Accessed 6 February 2023.

Chew, Rebecca, et al. "Opinion | Save America's Patent System." *The New York Times*, 16 April 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/16/opinion/patents-reform-drug-prices.html>. Accessed 18 February 2023.