This is an initial draft and response to the book chapter that is written by Prof. Levy David, a professor of Information Science at the University of Washington and an article written by Ian Bogost, developer and columnist for *The Atlantic.*

The analysis that can be drawn from the work of professor Levy is that there is a phenomenon that he develops called “Information Overload.” He begins by identifying what the concept is and how it has increased the in the recent decades at increasing rate. Levy begins by identifying what information is. He states that information is defined differently according to various thought camps. He states that the various perspectives of defining what information is doesn’t provide support for the concept of Information Overload. The incongruence of how information is defined doesn’t negate Information Overload and Levy rightly doesn’t spend much time developing the topic. According to Levy within the recent decades have seen an increase in the phenomena of Information Overload. In an ordered fashion, he explains the steps of Information Overload are receiving the information, processing the information and then making a reaction to the processed information. Some of what can be inferred is that from the increased throughput of the information that a persons capacity to properly process and in-turn properly respond to information is either limited or not entirely developed such that the increased interaction with information causes Information Overload.

Bogost, a video game developer and prolific columnist for the Atlantic writes in a recent article an application and proposed resolution to Information Overload. Bogost’s application of Information Overload begins with a number of individual according to Dunbar that a person can reasonably have. That any individual can have at a maximum 150 meaningful relationships. That number descends to around 15 for relationships that sustain some kind of intimacy or that a person could describe as one of those friends that a person could be called a ‘best-friend.’ This Paper is written to introduce a person to the concepts of what information overload is according to Levy, discusses how the concepts of information overload are applied in bogost’s article and then a discussion results wherein the extra-curricular concepts are discussed and developed from the foundation of these two texts with topics of how to address the negative affects of information overload.

The structure of Levy’s analysis begins by defining Information Overload by what it is, progresses the history of the actual words ‘Information Overload’ and how the phrase began to be defined by the research about Information Overload.

From that point, Levy defines what research has said causes Information Overload then discusses the consequences of Information Overload and the briefly summarizes.

Bogost seems to pick up where Levy leaves off; Levy defines what Information Overload is, what the history and where Information overload comes from, Bogost then the applies the concept aside from calling the phenomenon by a different name, but applies it specifically to the spectrum of social media. In the following sections, I will reaffirm what this phenomena is and clarify for the reader what Levy’s intention is in for the reader’s understanding of the concept. I will then introduce Bogost’s concepts and supposed solution to his specific application of Information Overload to social media while highlighting some of his implied experiences as a developer and what specific perspective he has from interacting with those specific technologies from his point of view. As a discussion point, I’ll incorporate my experience about the phenomena in reference to both authors and then develop that into defining either the ideas or the applications of Information Overload.

What is information

Levy defines information by introducing several of the philosophical definitions of what information is. Levy cites Shannon and Weaver define identifies the bits of data that culminate in the transmission of a signal as the definition of what information is. Others take the position that information must have some inherent meaning or value to truly be called information that the transmission media is not the focus but does help to distinguish what information is not. Some designate that the physical property of information, such as a tangible document, is a sense of the concept of information. Still others support information as an idea rather than a thing or an artifact.

Having defined the positions of what information is, we now move to what Information Overload is. Levy gives a rudimentary illustration, but one that deserves a second look, introducing Information Overload as a conveyor belt that, at an increasing speed, delivers a desserts to a person on the other end eating those desserts. Within this illustration are the steps that a person interacts with Information, the implication being that the information is something that the person has decided to either consume or by proxy will consume.

Bear in mind these steps are for the ‘human’ to process information to distinguish between a computer and a human interacting with information.

1. Step 1: reception – to receive the information to a person
2. Step 2: processing – to perform a process to understand the information
3. Step 3: reaction – to then make some kind of decision based off of the processed information.

The essential concept is that a person who is experiencing Information Overload is inundated with information to where the process of reception, processing and making decisions based on decisions is negatively affected.

The concept is defined specifically as almost a symptom of a disease without rightly identifying the actual disease. To clarify, the symptom of Information Overload is not being able to make decisions; thus the procedure for making decisions based on information is negatively affected, not necessarily making the disease of Information Overload the fault of the proliferation of the information, the or the abundance of information itself or the individuals efficiency and capability with interacting with information. This is made subjective by Levy, who brings up the concept of a person *feeling* overwhelmed by information contrasted to simply the state of being overwhelmed by Information; I will go further than that and say that what a person’s perspective and response of whether or not the individual is suffering from Information Overload once confronted is subjective. Then must a scientific quantification metric be defined for an individual to say with some authority or even go so far as to suggest what the proper resolutions to such a condition would be.

Levy also states that there is a definite possibility that the concept of Information Overload is a classical problem and although the media through which we receive information has changed the concept of Information Overload has not.

**What is information overload**

As Early as the 1960s, scholars surmised that urban areas would be saturated with information within the next half-century from the time of that writing. Referring less to the medium of transmission, a different study of Information Overload from the 1960s stated that the ‘flood’ of publications would throw a prospective person going from one information scarcity to information over abundance. Still another study from the 1960s made the claim that no manager could possibly be capable of processing all of the information presented to them.

As a contemporary concept to the proposition of EDUNET, ARPANET, the precursor to the internet, was and *answer* to the problem of Information Overload; this is a fact that should take a second look. When anyone considers the concept of Information Overload, tangent and proportional to that concept is the internet. Imagine that the internet was created to *handle* the increasing amount of information instead of *creating* it.

Some of the causes of information overload are

An interesting quote from Levy to sum

Levy relates the overloading of an electrical circuit to that of a human being processing information.

“Just as the body cracks under the strain of environmental overstimulation, the ‘mind’ and its decision processes behave erratically when overloaded”

What are the causes of information overload

Media formats

Stress

Self-destructive work fanaticism