**Essay One: Argument Analysis (Academic Blog Post)**

Student’s name

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Course

Date

The article ‘The Cost of Living in Mark Zuckerberg’s Internet Empire’ by Brian Philips mainly highlights the negative consequences of the internet. The Internet in the context of Facebook and other tech giants. The purpose of the article therefore is to create an awareness of the negative impacts of the internet especially in the aspect of social media platforms such as Facebook which was co–founded and is run by Mark Zuckerberg. Philips clearly describes how the internet has made its users and the general public more manipulatable and exploitable. In this sense, the report by Cambridge Analytica shows how users are frequently bombarded with ads and promotions depending on how they present themselves online. This brings up the issue of privacy. This was the case as described in the article in the year 2018. Finally, the article is a call to action, the author wants people to critically think about the internet and how they interact with it. The author calls for a new social contract that emphasizes more on data privacy.

Brian Phillips as the author is trying to achieve a couple of things in the article. These include raising awareness of the negative consequences of the internet. The author talks about his interaction with the internet from his early days in the 1990s where he clearly states the internet was subtle and gave him an alternative to reality. In comparison to 2018, when the article was written. A lot of things have changed and the size of these tech companies keeps on getting bigger and bigger. The current internet keeps on bombarding users with information and stimuli. This contributes to dividing attention which has led to negative consequences such as depression, anxiety and a general reduction in civic engagement. The more a user interacts with the internet particularly Facebook the more they delve into that world and the more they lose touch with the actual world.

The second goal the writer wants to achieve is to challenge people’s assumption of the internet as a neutral force that is used for good. In this aspect, Brian Phillips says that the internet is used intentionally to mislead. The Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018 was an example of how the internet has been used to manipulate public opinion and possibly swing elections. The final goal of the author in writing the article is to change the way the internet is used. Privacy and being in control of user data is a big deal that most tech companies such as Facebook usually take and may sell to third-party agencies who then use them for whatever they want, mostly to structure specific advertisements. Privacy of messages and personal conversations is also crucial and should be considered.

The author uses various techniques to make the article, persuasive, thought–provoking, informative, interesting and motivational. For persuasiveness the author uses different techniques, for instance, the author uses strong language and imagery. This creates a sense of urgency and alarm. When describing how users are constantly bombarded with information and stimuli and how they react, the author convinces the user that the internet is a serious problem. This is an example of logos that the author uses as he appeals to the reader’s reason. The author keeps the article informative by providing specific examples to support his claims. In this perspective, the author uses the case of Cambridge Analytica to show how the internet can be used to manipulate and target users with specified advertisements and propaganda. The provision of the business model of Facebook and other tech giants provides the necessary information to the reader which keeps them informed on what the author is trying to say.

The author keeps the article motivational by calling on its readers to take action and be at the forefront in asking for a change in how the internet is used. The author asks users to be critical in terms of thought when interacting with the internet as it is. Urging for more privacy and data security enables users to be proactive which is motivational. To ensure thought – provocation, the author asks difficult questions throughout the article. An example is the statement, ‘What does it mean to live in a world where our every move is tracked and our every thought is analyzed?’. This question is thought–provoking and allows the reader to think more about the implications of the internet in their everyday life. Finally, the author ensures the article is interesting through the use of humour, personal anecdotes as well and good storytelling. The addictive nature of social media is described in a humorous manner which keeps the article interesting. The author's personal experience with the internet at Harvard provides a good view of the main topic and keeps the article interesting.

The author uses the following specific elements to appeal to the reader, rhetorical questions, humor, personal anecdotes, strong language and imagery as well as a call to action. The best example of a rhetorical question that is also thought-provoking is, ‘What does it mean to live in a world where our every move is tracked and our every thought is analyzed?’. This appeals to the reader as it grabs their attention and invokes thoughts that are likely to have them thinking deeper and deeper about the place of social media and the internet in their personal lives. In terms of humour the author says, "Facebook is like a casino, but instead of chips, you're betting your attention. And the house always wins." This is humorous and points out the addictive nature of social media. This shows the use of pathos enabling the user to get in a good mood while reading. At the end of the article, the author uses a call to action to appeal to the reader. After defining the problem and proving his claims, the author finalizes by urging the reader to take action and advocate for an overhaul of how social media works.

There are two preconceived ideas that the author has to work against. The most common preconceived idea the author has to work against is the belief that the internet is a force of good which has made up more connected, informed and engaged. The author insists that the internet is a neutral force and can be used to spread propaganda. He discusses the negative influences of social media and the internet in general such as the rise in anxiety and depression. To work around these preconceived ideas, the author provides specific examples and personal experiences alongside his claims. In this aspect, Cambridge Analytica has been used to show how the internet can be used to manipulate and spread propaganda at whatever level that is needed. Furthermore, the author provides the business model of Facebook and other tech giants as he compares them with the Roman Empire. The use of strong language, imagery, humour and personal anecdotes helps the author work around the preconceived ideas.

For the takeaway from the article, the author insists on the following four points. The internet is a neutral force and can be used for both good and bad. Particularly decline in civic engagement is on the rise thanks to the constant use and addictive nature of social media platforms such as Facebook. Social media platforms create a culture of narcissism and self–promotion. This has resulted in to increase in hate speech and misinformation. Tech giants such as Facebook sell user data to third parties which are then used for targeted advertisements. The final takeaway is the call to action, there needs to be a proper conversation on the place of social media in our lives, especially now that it is used to spread propaganda and misinformation. The author insists that the internet is a powerful tool and should therefore be used wisely.