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FINXERUNT ISSUE 5 - MASS MEDIA

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Imagine, Create, Elevate is a bi-monthly student publication at Finxerunt Policy Institute of which analytically deepens the focus on a vast array socioeconomic issues are the world. Through journalism, the mission of *Imagine, Create, Elevate* is to elevate student voices as a part of Finxerunt's Student Civic Engagement campaign.

In Latin, Finxerunt means to **imagine** and **create**. And it's been a word that has inspired hundreds of students to take initiative around the world since 2017. As a growing non-profit organization, our mission is to go beyond passive activism by empowering the youth to address socio-economic issues and lead tangible change to build a sustainable future with the philosophy that anyone can make a positive difference regardless of race or gender.

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The Ascendancy of The News

BY CHYONIKA ROY & ARITHRA DAS

The news holds a major significance, as it informs the public of the major events happening everywhere from their local communities to the world. Based on the way the news or media sources inform us, our views are greatly swayed. Many of our decisions (such as voting) depend on how we perceive the world, which is to some extent established from these news outlets.

The United States is one of the earliest countries to advocate for the press, via the First Amendment in the Constitution. This ensures a free transparent press, and in turn, factual information to the public. However, the phrase "fake news" has recently permeated the American consciousness, as the American people have begun to question the trustworthiness of their own press and media.

To add on, the dubiety of the media produces conflicts for one's mental health. Many have questioned why this scarcity of trust and skepticism has occurred between the public and the press; some Journalist and researchers have linked it back to politics in the past 4 years. While this has been a defining factor in the lack of trust in the media, it cannot explain the pre-existing lack of trust in the press by the American public. According to CNN, the data analysis company Gallup has a poll showing

in 2015 only 40% of Americans trusted the media fairly; this was a decline from 55% in the late 90s when Gallup started. So, what is the mass media that causes this lack of trust? How can we fix it?

The Effects of Sensationalism

Diminishing transparency in the media elevates the use of sensationalism. Sensationalism is the use of exciting, and shocking stories, language, clickbait, and images at the expense of accuracy to gain public interest. While it is advantageous to use sensationalism for engagement purposes, it can be quite harmful to overuse it. Oftentimes, the media (specifically alarmist news broadcasts) is accused of creating needless worry among consumers and the types of stories that need to get attention, do not. The reporters who conduct these broadcasts are likely to excessively exaggerate a topic to get a higher Nielsen rating. Nielsen ratings track if audiences are watching the program tv-stations present.

Sensationalism is also seen through political affiliation. In 2017, a poll conducted by Statista depicted how many adults thought political sensationalism in the news media was a major issue. A media piece would tend to report subjectively to present a side of a situation while disdaining another. Ultimately, due to this subjective reporting, we would be in a state of confusion,

or feeling as if we must be solely entitled to one opinion without room for nuances. A Harvard Business Review article stated that across the political spectrum if the headlines were more accurate and the bias in the media had been purged, the outcome of several political events would be rather different. This is because media convergence impacts how much people are exposed to events and people. By giving away news converging towards shock factors of candidates in an election cycle such as their rhetoric or actions it does not allow candidates that do not have these qualities to get as much media coverage. In turn, losing viability with the press and public allowing sensationalism to impact political events.

Health Concerns

Due to the fact that sensational headlines are more likely to catch attention, the press and news outlets used this to their advantage, and rarely ever focused on reporting any positive news. Logan Jones, a Doctor of Psychology (PsyD), states that exposure to this type of media can raise stress levels, and trigger symptoms like depression, anxiety, and even insomnia. Following that, another PsyD from the same states that our brains will activate our fight-or-flight response in these matters, which will react accordingly. Now, if one was to just fight-or-flight response would be act-ivated, and we would go into a state

of shock. If the reaction is severely negative, it could leave us with new health issues, such as long-term phobias, chronic stress, heart disease, etc. With having no real resource to trust (news on the television/newspapers), the public cannot be too confident in what they see, and they may feel as if they cannot rely on anything.

Who Controls The Media?

Lack of trust in the media could also pertain to a lack of trust in major broadcasting networks and the narratives they portray for their own biases, ratings, or advertisers as we discussed before. According to PBS, US news is controlled by 6 broadcasting organizations includ-ing Fox, Disney, CNN, New York Times, AOL, USA Today, VIACOM with 5 majorly con-trolling the industry. Some believe that these organizations do not com-municate new information but re-gurgitate the same stories which go hand in hand with sensationalism. This occurs as local news media is dying out by private equity which buys out these local news organ-izations and restructures these com-panies and then profits off the company's failure, especially during the pandemic. This is damaging to the news industry as newspapers and specifically, local newspapers report most of the news stories and information presented in the news according to a study in 2010 by the Pew Research Center. So this begs the question: what would the news

be without these local news organ-izations communicating the latest information?

Besides which news source is telling the story, Lack of trust in the media is the creation of different media landscapes and can be credited to the polarization of US politics. For example, according to a Pew Research study from 2020, a quarter of both Democrats and Republicans consistently watched news aligned with their political views. This media landscape also causes an overt amount of trust in specific news organizations, which is dangerous as well because they may be able to gaslight or manipulate their viewers to believe what a news organization per-petuates. This can also cause an overt amount of distrust in news organizations which is also dan-gerous because it can cause distrust amongst the public of each other and their beliefs. The organizations that control the narrative impact what people believe and how people act around others with opposing ideas, which does not create a healthy discourse around politics. This can dangerously lead to polarization, hatred, a lack of communication on policy versus politics, and politic-ians can cause people to tune out of what is actually happening, impact-ing the public greatly.

Solutions

How can we fix this lack of trust in the media? While there is no definitive solution, here are some

plausible ideas:

1. Stop sensationalizing the government and its activities. Sensitization can be used to draw people into a story, but as the story progresses, stick to the facts. Assess what needs to be emphasized because stories that should be spotlighted are getting neglected.

2. Do not perpetuate the 24 hours news cycle. Today's news landscape is about addiction to the media rather than news; this is not healthy for people's health.

3. Try not to take what you see on the news at face value—a lot of headlines are exaggerated to grab our attention.

4. Invest in local newspapers. They produce a large variety of news stories that provide the latest and most crucial information needed.

5. Identify the type of word choice used. This is important because word choice and the presentation of a story in this regard can reveal unconscious bias which can make a news organization, reporter, or station appear biased.

6. Check if the information presented to you is accurate by fact-checking with objective sources. This will help you decipher what is being reported.

The news is an essential service that gives essential information to the public. It informs people about the world around them and its foundations help US democracy thrive. Even so, if the news delivered by the media cannot be trusted, basic American freedoms cannot be protected.

Did Social Media Determine Our Electoral Results?

BY RIA ANANDJEE

Credit: Caroline Amenabar, NPR

Social media has been extensively researched and proven to have substantial impact on a person's mental, physical, and emotional health. With evidence on both sides of the spectrum, it is fair to say that the relatively new technology engaging millions of users across the world can either destroy or massively improve a person's life. But beyond the personal level, social media also impacts us on a national, even global scale when it comes to voter turnout and electoral outcomes.

The 2020 US Presidential election saw a record voter turnout of more than 159 million Americans. A lot of this can be attributed to the influence and reach of social media.

The 2020 elections were some of the most divisive and anticipated elections in US history, and were done under unique circumstances with much of the final candidates' campaigns being conveyed to the public through social media rather than live rallies. With the COVID-19 pandemic a lot more people started relying on virtual communication and online platforms as well. In fact, a GlobalWebIndex study finds that social media usage increased by 10.5% from July 2019 to July 2020. In the same timeline, the presidential campaign narrowed down to two candidates and much of the political discourse shifted online.

The Democratic and Republican candidates had very different strategies for social media. Galvez,

President Biden's Social Media Marketing Manager, focused on data-driven posts and shareable content through retweets or Instagram to amplify their campaign. In addition, Biden brought several social media influencers and celebrities with millions of followers on his campaign including Ariana Grande, Dwayne Johnson, and Taylor Swift. He even extended his platform to large left-wing meme pages in efforts to connect better with the younger generation of voters.

The Trump campaign had a massive head start, with a digital team active since 2016 to expand their network of online supporters. Trump's social media contained more evocative posts rather than the data-focused posts Biden pushed out. But more significantly, Trump consolidated all his social media posts into a single app, which he used to avoid flagging for misinformation (which he received on Twitter). He used this app to reward supporters who shared and engaged those posts with points for campaign merchandise.

While these social media campaigns may have been very different in execution and messaging, they had the same goal: connect with the public to attract voters. In fact, Bossetta, a Political and Data Scientist at Lund University, deduces that social media has become so appealing for politicians because it gives them the ability to directly connect with voters rather than through mainstream media. This has become increasingly important as the more personal, face-to-face interactions have been limited by the pandemic. Both candidates worked vigorously to translate what would have been live rallies and town halls to online connections and conversations. But Biden ultimately ended up more successful in connecting with voters as he won the election with 81,283,098 votes, becoming the first president to receive over 80 million votes. Trump received 74,222,958 votes, becoming the second most voted presidential candidate. The political strife and tensions in the nation definitely contributed to this massive turnout, but one thing's for sure, social media played a large role in strengthening presidential and congressional campaigns as well as amplifying voters' voices.

But while social media has dramatically changed over time and has increased in popularity, its impact on voter turnout is not limited to the most recent election. In fact, it has had major effects on the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections as well as congressional elections. And that is because social media has always provided a social incentive for people to vote. A study published online in 2012 shows that each user posting saying they had already voted, generated 340,000 additional votes nationwide, either for Democrats or Republicans. In addition, during the congressional elections of 2010, every Facebook user that logged on (61 million at the time) received a nonpartisan message to "get out the vote" along with several reminders that it was Election Day, and options to inform your friends that you had voted. Social media activity has provided people with a social motivation to go out and vote. With large platforms like Facebook making efforts to remain nonpartisan, there is an element of fairness as there is no hidden agenda by major companies to push for a specific candidate.

In context of the 2012 presidential elections specifically, according to Pew Research Center, 30% of registered voters were encouraged to vote for Democrat Barack Obama or Republican Mitt Romney by posts from their family and friends on social media platforms, primarily Facebook and Twitter. Moreover, 20% of registered voters encouraged others to do the fame by posting on a social networking site.

The 2016 elections arguably changed the way people consume news from social media. The Pew Research Center found that a majority of Americans say they get news through social media, and approximately half of the public turned to social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter to learn about the 2016 presidential election. People received so much of their information regarding candidates' campaigns, scandals surrounding candidates, and election information from social media that it became their primary news source. Whether this information was reliable or not is a different conversation, but it means

that social media had the ability to easily influence the public as well as encourage them to register and vote.

However, with all the positive contributions social media has made to the fate of our nation, it has also had several negative implications due to misinformation from political ads. Political ads are tricky for a couple reasons. For one thing, they are considered political speech, and thus protected by the First Amendment, meaning the government has little authority to regulate such advertisements no matter how inaccurate or misleading they may be. This issue is magnified when candidates can run ads on social media because unlike newspapers' publishers that are liable for any ad they run, social media platforms are considered internet service providers, and thus are not liable for what people post, nor false political ads. Social media platforms can also not offer advertising slots to all candidates since they are private companies with their own policies regarding content.

These issues have been resolved recently as large platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and even platforms less politically-focused such as TikTok

have released and enforced new policies on eradicating voter disinformation and removing false voting information as well.

Social media is evolving and ever changing. We are constantly finding new ways to improve the technology that has gifted us with so many opportunities and new avenues, and correct any wrongs that may have stemmed from it such as misinformation or misleading and biased information. This crucial technological advancement in our society impacts some of the most important events in our nation. As the world's largest economy, US electoral outcomes affect world markets and as a global geopolitical superpower, US electoral outcomes affect our affairs in the Middle East, China, and our relations with European allies. Social media has transformed candidates' abilities to convey their campaigns and highlight their beliefs. Fostering and preserving our democracy was a top priority for many this past year when our nation seemed in peril, and through it all social media was the go-to source for information and encouragement to vote.

Social Media Has Greatly Influenced Our Social Skills

BY JESSICA LIN

Social media—a new avenue for facilitating daily communication needs—helps people connect while apart. It is a vessel for information and interaction alike, as it creates opportunities that are both helpful and essential to social motivation. However, people are beginning to use social media to interact more than they do in person. Instead of utilizing the rapid-fire quick communication style as a tool of assistance, it has been erroneously used to ultimately replace face-to-face communication. With people keeping their heads in their phones for an average of six to nine hours, they are neglecting to develop fundamental social skills.

During face-to-face communication, social information is conveyed by vocal and visual cues in the context of the situation. One needs to modify their behavior according to the reactions of others by recognizing non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, eye contact, and tone of voice. The ability to process emotional cues is associated with personal, social, and academic success, as they are crucial in the development of superior social skills and more positive peer relationships. Unlike in-person communication or even

Even when people have the opportunity to spend time face-to-face with others, they opt to be on social media instead. *Credit: Olivia Li*

talking on the phone, texting people in an impersonal way can impact our ability to empathize and communicate with others. Text cannot properly convey the emotions or social cues that are abundant during face-to-face conversations, thus allowing much room for misinterpretation.

Although social media is convenient in times of distance, this habit has affected how we perceive the world around us. Instead of socializing with their surrounding peers, people are usually on their phones. From responding to online messages, catching up on where their friends are traveling, and up-

dating their followers on their life, users are focusing more on their online life and friends than those who might be in the same room as them. Sometimes, even using social media to communicate with those in the same room.

Social media sites provide opportunities to stay connected to friends and family, make new friends, share pictures and exchange ideas, develop their creativity, and engage in enhanced learning opportunities. However, such convenience has encouraged the public to share much of their personal information with strangers. The convenience of posting a status
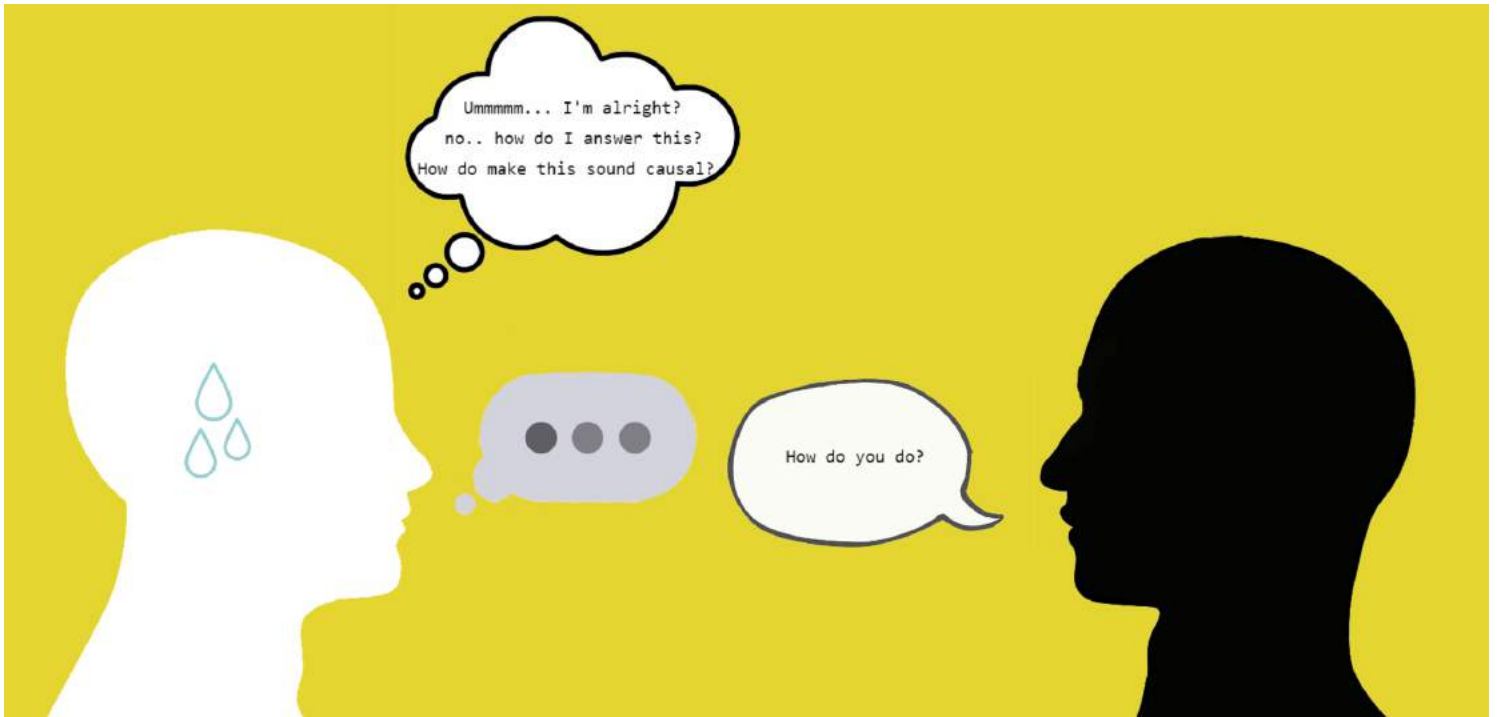
Social media has diminished people's social skills to a state of near moribund, where even the most primal questions cannot be answered without stress. *Credit: Franklin Zhang*

update, a photo, an event, or a "check-in" with the click of a button tempts users to overshare. From a platform to a release, vent, and rant, to trying to paint their perfect lives, it is easy and tempting to expose everything. People enjoy the attention, love, and confidence they receive from likes, comments, and shares. It encourages users to keep sharing for that short splurge of positive emotions. In contrast, once off of social media, people encounter FOMO (the fear of missing out), a lingering feeling that people are doing things without you, or that things are passing you by. This can be seen by people's constant urge to photograph their meals, outfits, and hangouts to post on social media.

Social media is deeply integrated into our lives, but should not and cannot replace face-to-face communication. It should be utiliz-ed during times of urgency, distance, and so on. Otherwise, it is critical to interact with others off the phone. "A third of teens (34 percent) agree either strongly or somewhat say that using social media takes away from the time they could be spending with people face-to-face," reports Zachary Feliciano in his article Is Social Media Hindering Our Face-To-Face Socialization Skills, "and 44 percent agree at least 'somewhat' that using social media often distracts them from the people they're with when they get together in person." People's desire to start living in reality, and not within phones is recognized. To start, users can turn off notifications, limit their screen time, and move the location of the app. Breaking a habit is difficult, but make a new habit to control social media usages!

Social media is a powerful tool created to enhance communication during times of inconvenience. However, it is not meant to replace all forms of communication or take away our social skills. To make sure there is a division between reality and media, we need to instill healthy habits that will ensure a healthy balance. In the end, nothing can replace face-to-face conversation and interaction. The word-of-mouth exchanges and in-depth conver-sations are still most influential.

Pandemic Perfection

BY TASMIA AFRIN, RAY NOBUHARA, & SANDY ZHANG
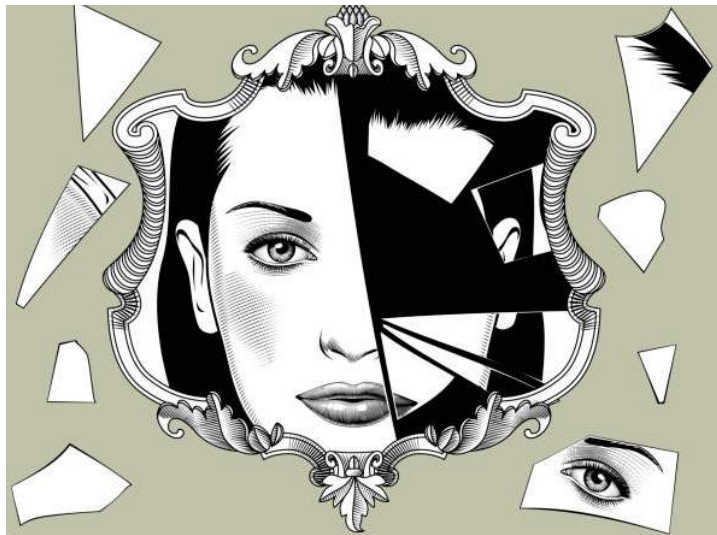
Credit: maystra, iStock

After the pandemic hit, in-person interactions became less and less frequent, which resulted in an increase in social media use across all age groups. Yet, according to data, young people are more affected by the pandemic than other age groups.

Mass media has both positive and negative effects on a young adult's development, psychology, personality and future. Not to mention, the increasing use of social media allows for an increase in one receiving plastic surgery. After looking at their unfiltered selfies, they innately begin to criticize their natural physical state by editing a "perfect" version of themselves (smaller face, bigger eyes, slimmer nose, etc).

Young Adults & Social Media During the Pandemic

Many young adults look towards social media as a way to cope with the pandemic—a poll conducted between March and May of 2020 revealed that 60% of young adults have reported increased usage on certain social media platforms—but it has unfortunately impacted their mental health. People ages 18-29 are more affected by the pandemic, with 42 percent reporting anxiety and 36 percent reporting depression. They are

affected the most because many do not have the opportunity to make social bubbles or have families of their own yet. Instead, they are forced to stay home alone during the onset of the pandemic. So to avoid loneliness, a lot of young adults turn to social media as a way to connect with others around them while also helping themselves ignore what is going on in the real world, and this use of media has obviously brought their detriment.

The increase in social media use also led to an increase in cyberbullying and online harassment. According to L1ght, an organization that tracks online harassment, there has been a 70% increase in cyberbullying in just the first few months of the pandemic. Many people harass others online because it makes them feel more powerful and helps them cope with their own low self-esteem. What makes the concept of cyberbullying more appealing is that it lacks the confrontational factor and can be done anonymously. To make things worse, many support networks for victims of cyberbullying are limited. Which in turn, might make victims feel like they have no one to confide in. Parental support might not be an option because a potential solution could be limiting their use of social media, the child's only connection to the outside world. To make things worse, many support networks for victims of cyberbullying are limited. Which in turn, might make victims feel like they have no one to confide in. Parental support might not be an option because a potential solution could be limiting their use of social media, the child's only connection to the outside world.

However, even with these negative aspects, there are also positive ones. The use of social media platforms during the pandemic allowed many to connect with others from all over the world in a virtual

space, allowing young adults to meet new people through messaging, voice calls, and video chats. It has given them an opportunity to expand their reach and maintain socialization.

Social media & Plastic Surgery

With the growing use of social networking sites and perpetuated beauty standards, many people are undergoing plastic surgery more than ever before. Rico Yamada, who works as a waitress at a expensive restaurant in Japan, has a lot of coworkers who underwent plastic surgery. She says, "I believe that stereotypes about plastic surgery have decreased over the years. Although there are still many people talking negatively about plastic surgery, I believe that this will also decrease over the next couple of decades." As Rico says, more people are shifting their attention to plastic surgery because of social media influences.

For instance, since posting popular videos online showing off "before and after " plastic surgery photos is quite popular, it is not a surprise that viewers may develop a positive attitude towards plastic surgery . To add on, hospitals may ask patients for consent of posting "before and after" pictures to establish their credibility as medical professionals and attract more patients

Famous Japanese YouTuber, Ryo Mon, publicly talks about her experiences of getting plastic surgery, including what hospital she went to and what types of treatments she received. In the video, she herself commented in one of her videos that we are actively living in a generation of social media, but people ask influencers too much about plastic surgery, making the treatments less personalized.

Not only is this happening in Japan, but also worldwide in places like Saudi Arabia. According to Forbes, social media has recently been considered more convincing than TV commercials, especially when social media influencers recommend a treatment whether it comes to the name of the clinic or the name of a treatment or something else. As of 2017, 12 million active Facebook users and more than 50% of

active Twitter users were reported in Saudi Arabia. The number of users of these two sites should have increased since the time when the data was collected in 2017, so 2021 is probably a more technologically advanced society than ever in the past.

Living in a modern society has made individuals more open about their experiences, which includes their surgical experiences. In a study performed two months ago, 96% say that they will not hide the fact that they underwent plastic surgery to people around them, and 41% say that they want to post about the experience on social media. Since there is already a lot of awareness surrounding plastic surgery, maybe in the near future plastic surgery will become the norm.

Media's Impact of Development and Perception

Social media plays a significant role in the livelihoods of any person, especially for our growing generation of adolescents. This form of technology has brought forth enhanced levels of productivity, communication, engagement and influence all through a screen. It is true that social media has its perks and allows for individuals to get in touch with the real world through the widespread information derived in numerous platforms as well as to go beyond the scope of providing influence for mass audiences. Nonetheless, there are several downsides to media that affect society and most definitely our youth heavily; for anyone who has spent any time scrolling through social
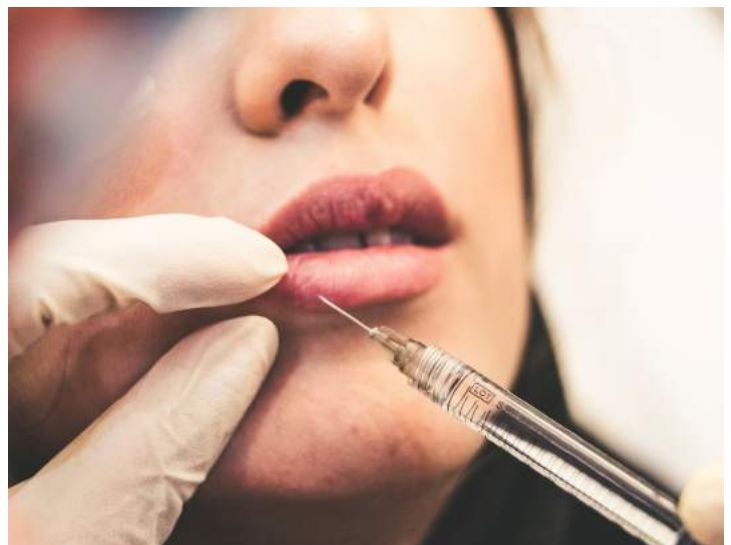
media, it is no secret that it can warp our view of reality and self-esteem.

Think about all the times you have consumed a form of media as a kid and how it has shaped you as an individual. In a modern society where the majority of our lives are spent hooked to a screen, teenagers that excessively use social media grow up with heightened levels of anxiety and lower self-esteem. According to a survey conducted by the Royal Society for Public Health, young people—ranging from the ages of 14-24 years—in the UK report that social media platforms such as Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook have all led to increased feelings of depression, loneliness, anxiety and poor body image. Teens have become too fixated on what takes place on the screen that they forget about their own well-being.

Adolescence is an essential part of development and the shaping of one's personality or character. It is no secret that teens have become accustomed to staying up all night; whether it is to get through a boatload of unfinished homework assignments, play video games, or you named it, dive into social media. Then these teens are not doing their homework (and even when they are) they are constantly surrounded by an environment that revolves around technology and what other people are doing. Texting, sharing, scrolling, and trolling; they are doing it all. While this behavior may seem harmless and overlooked as it is normalized in today's society, being attached to social media has become so integral in teen's lives that psychological and physical development is inhibited.

A blog written by PsychCentral has looked into how social media fosters a world where users are discontent, anxious, insecure and depressed. Modern teens are missing out on crucial life lessons, inter-actions and skills. There is no question that spending hours and hours glued to social media will lead to fatigue, nausea, feelings of self-loathe and even severe anxiety. Adolescents tend to compare reality to the glossy world that is displayed on media platforms and the end result is the envy and agony of not having that picture-perfect life. Media use continues to limit child-

ren in their understanding of how to take care of their minds, manage nutrition, and address real-life problems and their perception.

Nevertheless, it is not like teens are excluded from better communication and learning skills, but more so they are inclined to have conflicted development such better communication and learning skills, but more so they are inclined to have conflicted development such as anxiety, social issues and depression compared to teens who engage less in social media. People are put in a nonverbal, disabled context as body language, facial expression and vocal reactions are rendered invisible. Each social media site has its own personality and purpose. Yet, users have become addicted to the sensation of creating a false version of themselves. This creates a mindset that we know everything about ourselves and others based on the small glance we are given. It becomes an issue when this comparison is taken too far and leads to obsessing over having that "perfect" life.

We agonize over the number of likes our posts receive and let our online engagement define our self-worth. Teenagers realize that they cannot be other people, but oftentimes, they fall back into the same ingrained patterns of associating social media with their value and life. After all, a virtual life seems all sunshine and flowers since everyone has control over what they are putting out.

Not enough people address how this type of environment is tearing apart our society. Since adults themselves are sucked in, they cannot provide that needed guidance for teens. It is time to put down our phones and address the fact that social media can be detrimental to adolescents' health and future. True impact can be made through acceptance and acknowledgement of the dangers of social media and reality.

TikTok: An Inside Look At the Global Video-Sharing Phenomenon

BY TYLAH BOWEN & ELIZABETH JUNG

If you were to stop any Gen Z on the street, chances are that they have TikTok downloaded on their phone. If you were to check their screen time distribution, chances are that this app takes up a great majority of their phone usage. And if you were to ask them how often they scroll down their For You Page, chances are that their answers would orbit around two words: a lot.

As of January 2021, there have been over 2.6 billion downloads of the app TikTok worldwide. Taking this into consideration, it is fair to say that the app is prominent in today's contemporary society, influencing our perception of things, including the media.

What is there not to like? Short 15-60 second videos that are easily accessible and thoroughly entertaining. If you do not like one, you can easily swipe your finger and you are on to the next. The more you watch, the more personalized your videos get; each and every video has been specifically catered for your eyes only.

When you shop, you search for products that you will enjoy; you find something that is tailored to your best interests. Zhang Miying, the creator of TikTok, has

done just that, but for billions of people. Any videos that you interact with—whether you like a video or write a comment—are all stored in TikTok's memory and will start to spew out more and more related videos. That is probably why you find yourself spending hours upon hours viewing countless videos on your screen. Each video is a product that you took interest in—why waste it by not viewing it?

Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook also pose these personalized features. For instance, Instagram has an entire page dedicated for your exploration—hence the "Explore" page. However, the biggest difference between TikTok and other social media platforms, is that TikTok offers only one type of entertain-

ment: video. People are drawn to the idea of watching videos created by normal people from all over the world. Humans are creatures of curiosity after all.

Humans cannot function without social interaction. By rendering us isolated, we are soon to lose all senses of life and live without sustainability. It is easy to gain attention on TikTok; if you post something that a few people are interested in, you will see your views and followers rise, and the thought of going viral is very alluring. Think about Charli D' Amelio, Lil' Huddy, and Sienna Mae; they started out with a few hundred views and now have over millions of followers, gaining recognition quickly as young and

successful content creators.

Now, the D'Amelio family are millionaires with commercial and music labels offerings flying all around them. Lil Huddy has been casted in a film directed by the famous rapper Machine Gun Kelly. Sienna Mae is now the new face of Maybelline. How? Simply by making these videos that probably take less than an hour. When people see this, they are immediately struck with one thought: "If they can do it, I can do it too."

Just like any other social media app, TikTok has been used by people of all ages (but mainly by teenagers and young adults) to share their content on a global scale. By combining the youth on this app with its unique personalized algorithm, TikTok is slowly becoming a vessel of information for the next generation, including the recent mass development of online learning.

Online learning has been one of the biggest issues impacting teens during the pandemic. Many teens can agree that they are not receiving the same quality of learning as they would if they attended school in person. Teens are also starting to slowly lose the capacity to socialize and engage like they once did in school. TikTok is used to combat this issue. Because the videos are a minute or shorter, difficult concepts are usually simplified for viewers to understand, enhancing teens' learning. "This kind of educational video will be sharp-focused to help memorization and understanding of key learning on any topic. It could be a very creative way to keep learners engaged," according to Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, an educational specialist focused on eLearning at the Commonwealth of Learning.

TikTok is also used by activists to inform the public of social issues. These activists have found a way to inform the public of social issues. These activists have found a way to reach users through a useful and interactive way. As John Herman of The New York Times states, "It depicts a diverse, diffuse and not nearly united community of millions of young people discovering the capabilities and limits of a platform that is, despite its many similarities with predecessors, a unique and strange place."

Activism on TikTok has become more widespread for the younger generation due to the amount of engagement in these videos. Topics such as political theory have been made easier to understand for teens who have an interest in it. Users are also able to share their opinion in the comment section, widening viewpoints and adding new ideas to these topics.

Who knows how long TikTok will be taking the world by storm? As long as more and more people are coming up with new ideas and posting unique videos, this app will still be receiving all the hype it is getting while continuing to educate the public.

A Generation Raised by Social Media

BY JANE VU, MARGARET KELLY, & SHINEDIP KUNDLAS

Early Childhood

Generation Z was raised with a level of technology never seen before—social media. It has been prevalent in our lives starting from a very young age and can affect how we think, act, and feel; children are especially vulnerable. A person's childhood creates the foundation of their entire life, and whether or not it is a stable development can affect everything from their social skills to their mental health later in life.

Since digital technology is a recent development in this generation, children develop into adolescents expecting faster and more efficient solutions to problems. This can mess with their natural level of patience and enable laziness as they are used to technology solving their problems for them. It has become the new norm for parents to begin providing their children with devices at startlingly low ages. The average kid gets their first smartphone at age 10.3 and later opens their first social media account by age 11.4. By the time they are 12, 50% of kids use at least one social media platform.

Although social media is by far the easiest way to communicate, its negative effects are drastically undermined. Children who excessively use electronics can develop inconsistent sleep patterns and poor eye health. Psychologically, the effects are more disastrous. Decreased learning achievement, negatively affected social skills, concentration issues, and incomplete brain development are just some of the problems that could arise from media usage in early childhood and adolescence.

Children overall are not mature enough to understand that their private information could become easily accessible to online strangers. In extreme and terrifying cases, unbeknownst to the child, contact could be made with child predators.

Adolescence

Many parents are worried over the impact technology might have on their toddlers' ability to think and develop mentally and socially. According to a research report by Kenneth Rubin, a researcher in child development and professor in the Department of Human Development at the University of Maryland, preschoolers are learning new social and intellectual abilities at a remarkable pace. Preschoolers have always been able to learn at a remarkable pace, but according to Rubin's research, due to the amount of new resources parents have today, children from the ages 1-5 have resources that many earlier children did not have.

These resources include Preschool for all programs, online tutoring, and educational academies. However, spending hours on an iPad screen will impede this. Similar to early and middle childhood, adolescence is an important period of rapid development.

Experts say social media and the internet have become so integral to teenage life that they are responsible for promoting anxiety and lowering self-esteem. Surveys of U.S. adolescents show how teenage depressive symptoms and suicide percentages have

increased between 2010 and 2015, in particular among female teens. Moreover, some research indicates how the correlation can go the other way; when teenagers are depressed, time spent on social media increases.

Even though platforms like Instagram and TikTok appear to connect teens and inform them about recent news and events, it can lead to social isolation. The amount of face-to-face interactions among teenagers diminishes because most of their time is spent on social media platforms. According to a research study by Hwajin Yang, isolation can cause a series of effects including physical, emotional, mental, and psychological issues. This in turn can lead to depression, anxiety, and many other mental disorders.

The human race is known to be social and interactive people, especially now with the internet. However, it does have downsides and upsides to it. Most notably, it has a significant impact on teenagers' mental health, as it has become a crucial part of their day and age since it is a huge part of many lives.

There are a lot of positive mental health benefits from social media. Being connected with others online can help ease loneliness and provide comfort and joy. For example, posts that are amusing or diverting can help teens develop a network and find support systems to help with their depression. In addition, social media

gives teens a chance to connect with each other in circumstances where in-person interactions may be difficult or not possible, like the current COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, the Pew Research Center states that 52% of teens feel more connected to other teens that they have met online. Another positive impact of social media is that it can change a person's lifestyle for the better if utilized as an inspirational apparatus to accomplish sound way of life objectives, such as quitting or improving physical health. Also, media can give you emotional uphold for when you are going through rough times and can often be a release for your creative ideas. Also according to the Pew Research Center, 68% of teens have met other people online that have helped them go through tough times in their life.

Although there are positives to social media, the manners in which individuals are utilizing online media may affect their mental well-being negatively as well. For example, teens who invest more energy in media can possess less energy for face-to-face social communication, which has been demonstrated to be defensive against mental problems.

Additionally, the media can affect your self-esteem with stereotypes perpetuated and glorified across platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. Many studies (like the Harvard University Public Health Department) have shown that looking at apps exorbitantly causes dread of passing up a major opportunity and frustration toward or detachment from companions when not signed into web-based media, having a terrible impact on your overall emotional well being.

In short, social media is a creative and innovative tool for teens to use to meet new people. However, it does have an impact on your mental health in a positive and negative way.
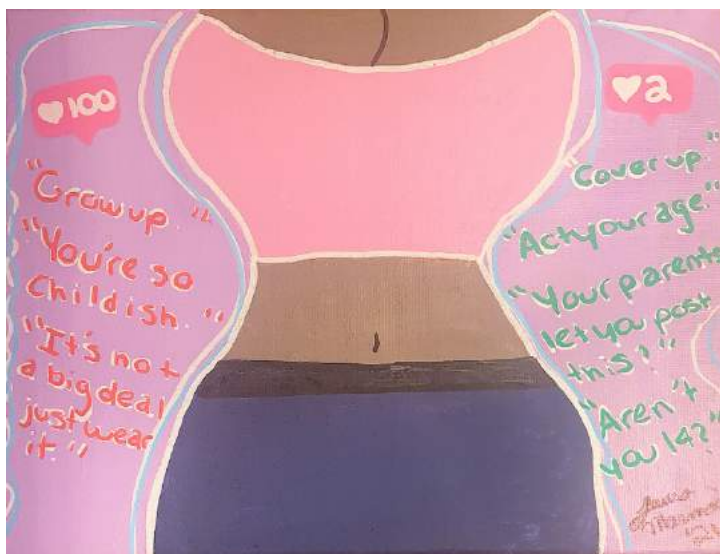
Social media is often the onset of body dysmorphia and insecurity. *Credit*: *Laura Marmol, @lauramarmol__*

Economic Degradation and Uncontrolled Spending: Social Media Is The Culprit!

BY SUDIPTHA "SUD" PAUL

Where It All Began

As of now, the media possibly has the largest influence on how we spend our money and why we do so. However, a 2019 survey from Allianz Life Insurance found that upwards of 57% of Millennials made unplanned purchases because of what they viewed on social media. This is shocking com-pared to the 28% of Gen X and 7% of Baby Boomers that spend based on what they see on social media.

The pressure to spend often is driven by the holidays. A survey from Bankrate found that 51% of Americans felt more pressure to spend more than they felt com-fortable spending on gifts for others during the holiday season. Coupled with the dynamic of social media bearing and spending, Americans are loaded year-round with both spending gratification and the illusive obligations to do so. With all of these problems surrounding the new American culture, it begs the question: what started these pro-blems in the first place? Well, the answer is the drive created by con-sumerism.

What is Consumerism?

Consumerism is the designated belief or idea that when one spends more on the consumption of pro-ducts and services within the market it equates to an overall desirable goal. In some aspects it is thought that people will be happier when consumer spending increases dras-tically. However, the origins of con-sumerism come mainly from the start of the late seventeenth century and gradually intensified throughout the 18th century. Through the innovations of the Industrial Revolution, consumerism spread to most of the European Subcontinent and then the rest of the world. However, there are other dynamics that can be attributed to the growth of consumerism.

Before the Industrial Revolution even began, much of Europe and North America suffered from large income gaps between the rich and the poor. The first class made up much of the nation's economy wherever they were, while the poor struggled to bring food home. In lieu of this, political values that centered around socialism emerged, bringing forth a new middle class to act as a backdrop between the poor and rich. The middle class was better off than the lower class and managed to fend for themselves. With the ability to buy houses, food, and afford quality education for their children, the middle class' presence intensified consumerism. The more people that were able to live comfortably meant more products and goods were purchased throughout the nation. This may

have been the start of the appeal of goods and consumerization in modern times.

As consumerism had taken over much of the world, like a puppeteer, it scourged the ideals and philosophies into a "Golden Age of Consumerism" during the 1950s and 1960s. During this time period, marketing campaigns had brought forth the necessary strategies and values needed to further the expansion of consumerism. Goods, products and services became far cheaper and sold on even larger scales in order to meet consumer demands. For many of these companies, marketing and advertising through these campaigns was the life blood needed to help ripen their social standing. As more and more companies participated in this practice, the chains of consumerism were let loose as production skyrocketed in factories all over the world. Although advertisements and marketing campaigns brought forth the Golden Age of Consumerism, modern consumerism today

has mainly developed to its anchor because of outsourcing. Outsourcing is essentially hiring outside parties and services to create goods that were once done by "in-house" factories and developers. When companies and countries send themselves and their manufacturers to other nations, it allows for the production of goods to increase exponentially. This advent brought society forth to what is now modern-day consumerism in all aspects of life.

The Ballpark of Consumerism and Social Media

The origins of consumerism and how we reached modern day consumerism and how it has flourished in front of our eyes has become society's new plate; discussions on the implications of consumerism and social media are only next. A research paper by Santa Clara University found that in recent years consumer culture has "infiltrated" the social media world as a result of social media collaboration. Accord-

ing to a survey done by the Pew Research Center as of September 2018, a majority of Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat users have increased three-fold over the past decade, leading companies and other developers to advertise their products and services on these platforms. In 2020, upwards of 40 billion dollars was spent on social media advertising and will likely continue to increase in the coming years.

With advertisements on social media only increasing daily as new users continue to create social media accounts, the effect that social media has on economic and goods spending is immeasurable. An AARP report as of 2018 found that Facebook Users who spent longer on the platform tended to have lower credit scores and more debt compared to their counterparts who didn't indulge as much time into social media platforms. And while the individual is harmed, companies are still benefiting economically as more people continue to spend on products and services they see on social media platforms.

These ideals and spending once again come down to the methods of consumerism. By appealing to a strong base using media networks, companies have an easier time having their product become known with flashy ads. Their alluring appeal continues to affect younger generations as they spend more and more time on these platforms. In the end, social media is the true culprit!

Will Mass Media Be The Death or Revival of Empathy?

BY KILHAH ST FORT

Picture a standard Instagram feed: aesthetically pleasing photoshoots, the latest celebrity gossip, a series of recycled TikTok trends, and a few GoFundMe posts. Click on one of the donation posts and immediately check the comment section. There are three possible outcomes—overwhelming empathy, overwhelming apathy, or a mix of both.

In this digital age of connection, it can seem as if people are more disconnected from each other than ever. Statements such as "stop asking for a handout" and "no one cares" are frequent residents of comment sections and threads that ask for help.

Many could argue that trolls and hateful commenters are products of boredom. Some professionals, however, believe that it may go a bit deeper than that. The suspected culprit to this increasingly apathetic society is mass media.

Too Burned Out To Care

Social media can be overwhelming at times, especially since online political and social discourse have become more common. It can begin to take a toll on a person's mental health.

Apathetic Idealist, an anonymous asker to the New York Times opinion column, wrote about being in a state of "paralysis" in regards to her activism. Roxane Gay, the responding columnist, recommended cutting back on mass media consumption as a solution. Gay cited it as a contributor to her own apathetic tendencies. She describes her actions, saying, "I've stopped watching cable news because the 24-hour news cycle has become an incoherent mess."

Consuming repetitive, sensationalized headlines in large amounts have left these two women emotionally drained. In turn, their lack of energy prevented them from taking action against the social issues that concern

them. This concept is called compassion fatigue.

According to the Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project, the condition is "a broadly defined concept that can include emotional, physical, and spiritual distress in those providing care to another." Although originally associated with healthcare workers, a 1996 research study investigated the concept's relationship with mass media.

The study warned that the pervasiveness and repetition of the media cycle "may lead to a normalization of social problems." People would be less inclined to inquire about society's pressing issues. Instead, injustice and suffering will be another one of those headlines in the media that is too difficult to overcome. This mentality is also the byproduct of mass news reporting that showcases the problem with no hints of solution, a common practice in the media.

After 48% of participants reported using strategies to avoid consuming media about social issues they felt most passionate about, the study realized a common trend. Consumers get overwhelmed by "bad news" and regain control by switching networks. In doing so, they are limiting the time they could spend learning about combating the issue. If this occurs enough times, then people will start tuning out social issues all together.

Although the study is dated, its overarching content still holds relevance. Today's news cycle is far more repetitive than it was in the late 90s. The recent increase of media ownership by only six corporations is a contributing factor. A viral YouTube clip titled "Sinclair's script for stations" shows that news repetition has reached a peak. The video depicts nine different local news teams reading the same prepared statement sent out by the company that owns them, the Sinclair Broadcast Group.

Not to mention, Americans consume 732 mins of media (digital and traditional) per day, surpassing the worldwide average of 487 mins. This overexposure to media increases the chances of developing feelings of apathy.

Empathy Through A Screen

While mass media can ruin people's capability to be empathetic, it can also do the inverse. Mass media, especially social media, does have the capabilities to increase empathy.

A common worry about social media and empathy is that social media limits face-to-face communication. Many attribute the ability to see and understand nonverbal cues as a valuable part of empathy. After all, everything a person is enduring cannot always be put into words. Whereas, if one is able to see a person who is struggling rather than read about it or see pictures, they are able to feel for the person on a deeper level. Social media can reduce this personal element.

However, a 2015 research study suggests otherwise. After analyzing over 1,000 results of an anonymous online survey filled out by members of the Net Generation (18-30 years old), it was found that face-to-face communication was not actually reduced by going online.

Instead, it was found that going online allows individuals to form deeper connections. Many people use the internet to interact with friends and family they already know. If an individual consistently communicates online with someone they know in-person, then there is a greater chance that the two will meet up in-person on a later date. All these chances of them meeting up are also chances for them to practice empathy skills.

The article also notes that virtual empathy positively correlates with social support, but to a weaker level of real-world empathy. This may seem like a massive drawback for the positives of virtual empathy, but it is not.

Larry D. Rosen, a retired professor of California State University's Psychology Department, once stated "I don't think [social media is] a problem with a lack of empathy, but a different style. We have to think of empathy as a continuum. The experience that we hear from kids and young adults is they do feel like they're being empathetic."

This feeling could arise because social media allows people to show support in different ways. Despite disparaging comments, there have been multiple successful GoFundMe efforts due to the use of social media. For example, Immigrant Families Together, a foundation dedicated to reuniting families separated at the border, has raised over 1.8 million dollars through their current GoFundMe account. This money would not have been raised without social media and its empathy.

A Potential Solution

Instead of asserting that the relationship between mass media and empathy is a straightforward concept, we should view it as a balance. Too much media consumption can result in compassion fatigue that gives way to desensitization and apathy. Yet at the same time, being on social media has helped people's empathy levels. Since they are exposed to different walks of life, they become more tolerant and have an easier time extending empathy to others.

A good middle ground would be setting a limit on what type of media you consume and how often. Hopefully through this, the media can continue to be used as a way of exercising human empathy while also avoiding slowly turning into apathy.
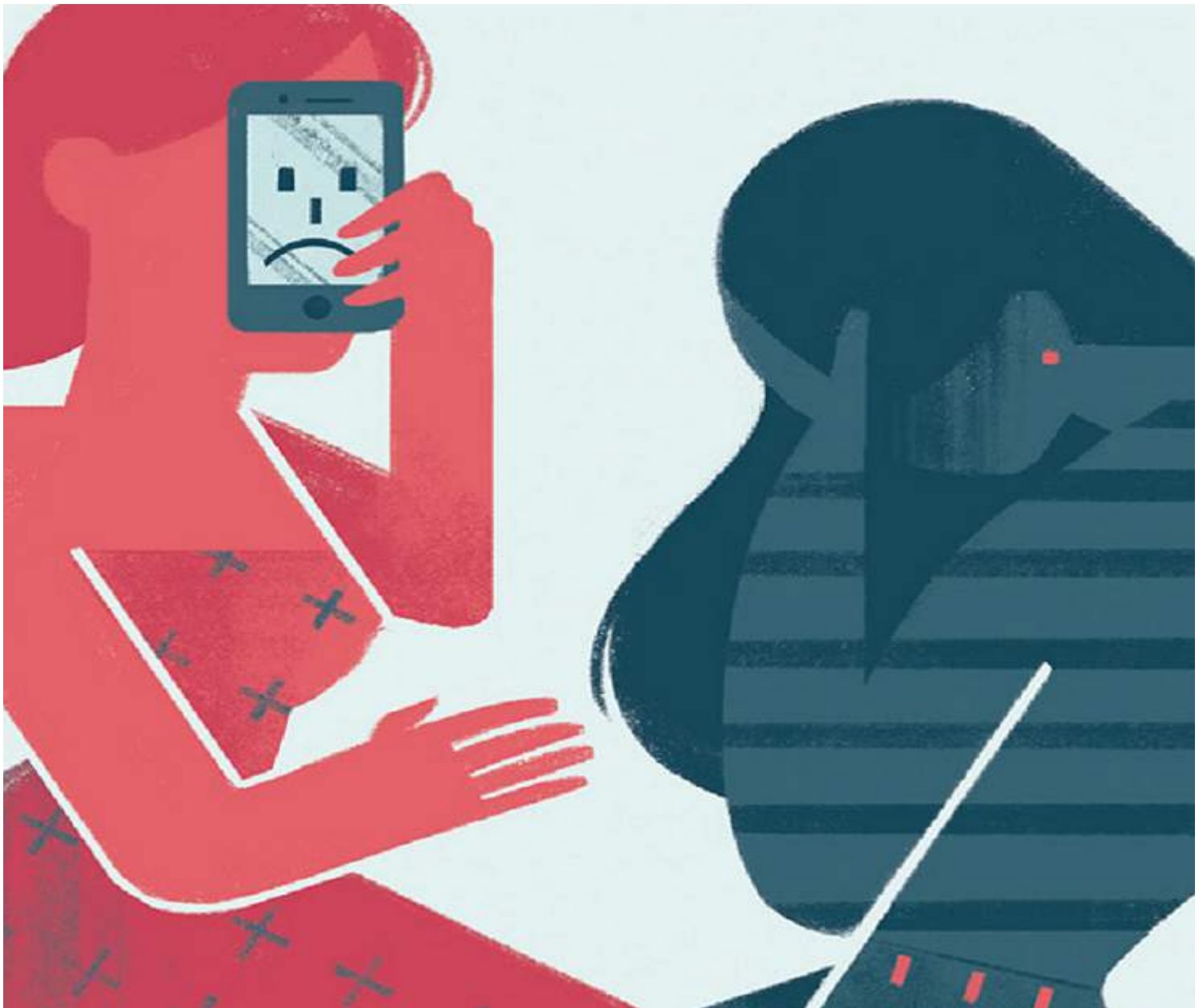
The Media's Role in Propagating Beauty Ideals Through the K-Pop Industry: Benefits & Negatives

BY JOCELYN WANG

K-Pop fans often internalize the impossibly perfect beauty standards of the K-Pop community, making them more insecure about themselves. *Credit: Olivia Li*

K-Pop, also known as Korean popular music, has become a global sensation. Since its inception around the 1990s, K-pop has made a name for itself on the global stage, from PSY's Gangnam Style to BTS's Blood Sweat & Tears, Twice's Likey, and countless other hits. Indeed, from 2006 to 2013, the "K-Pop industry has grown 11-12%" in "total sales and added value growth," and in 2018 alone, the industry's revenue increased by 17.9%. But this musical genre's immense success has people questioning what exactly contributed to its unusually rapid rate of domination in the industry worldwide.

K-pop companies and agencies often use social media to reach out to a wide range of audiences. They promote their artists through online platforms like YouTube as opposed to less accessible ways, such as concerts, television, and CDs & DVDs. Especially as we transition into a more technologically advanced 21st century, the growing use of social media has proven to be an effective method. And not only has access to social media led to the spread of K-pop, but also South

Korean beauty ideals.

Arguably, part of what makes K-pop so popular are the attractive physical features of K-pop stars. In K-pop, and in South Korean society in general, there is a huge emphasis on physical appearances. For women especially, South Korean beauty standards can be very constricting due to thin body standards. Many K-pop idols likewise feel pressured to meet these societal beauty standards, and being constantly under the spotlight can make them more susceptible to media attacks on their physical appearances, which may exacerbate their self-image problems.

Media's Negative Impact on the Idols

There is often heavy pressure on K-pop idols to meet unrealistically high beauty standards by both the companies and the public. Failure to meet these standards can possibly result in elimination from debuting, cyberbullying, and public criticism.

Social media has made it easy for K-pop fans as well as the general public to share their opinions (both good and bad) on various topics, which can some-

times result in harsh critiques. Several K-pop idols have faced body shaming and cyberbullying, notably Wendy from Red Velvet, Jihyo from Twice, and Umji from Gfriend, all of whom have been fat-shamed. This caused them to go on diets and strenuous workout schedules in order to gain the desired thin figure.

However, some K-pop idols have also been criticized for being too skinny after losing weight or just for their naturally skinny figure. This includes both female and male K-pop idols like Jimin from AOA, G-Dragon from BigBang, Daehwi from AB6IX & Wanna One, and Hani from EXID. Jimin (AOA) was criticized for her skinny figure after an Instagram post she made of herself in a swimsuit. Some comments she received from K-Netizens include:

"Elementary schooler"

"I hate her whiny voice when she raps. Her body's like a 3rd grader's too"

"Is she really a celebrity?... She has no curves at all…"

"Maybe it's cause she's a skeleton but I feel nothing from looking at her… Her body's hard to look at that it's not even worth getting judged."

These comments all criticized Jimin for her skinny frame, comparing her to an elementary school student, and judging her for her lack of curves.

Similarly, Lee Daehwi (former member of Wanna One and current member of AB6IX), got criticized for his skinny frame. Back in 2019 during the TV program Not the Same Person You Used to Know, Daehwi weighed himself on camera. He revealed that he was 51.5kg (113.5 lbs) and 173 cm (5ft 8 in) tall with a waist of around 17 to 20 inches. "After the episode aired," Daehwi received body-shaming comments from K-netizens criticizing him for being "too skinny" for a man.

As you can imagine, this constant media and public scrutiny can seriously deprecate the mental health of K-pop idols. Indeed, research has found that cyber-bullying is linked to body dissatisfaction, especially among adolescents, which can lead to the development of eating disorders. Several kpop idols have had eating disorders in the past, including IU (soloist), JinE (former member of Oh My Girl), and Sojung (Ladies' Code member) due to either company demands or public pressure.

Comments made by K-netizens about Daehwi's figure and stature (translated by Koreabo).

Media's Negative Impact on the Public

In South Korea, K-pop idols often serve as the models or brand ambassadors for various products and companies. This can cause the general public to become increasingly self-conscious of themselves from these propagated beauty standards. In fact, exposure to K-pop idols has caused kids as young as 5 to 6 years old to develop negative body images due to weight concerns. One study found out that "the thin-idealized images of young female [K-pop] stars" led to increased "body image concerns" among these South Korean kindergartener girls. In another study with "165 female adolescent K-pop fans in Indonesia," the researcher similarly found that exposure to K-pop idols has caused their fans to develop body dissatisfaction, causing these Indonesian K-pop fans "to go on diets or other attempts to change their body shape." This is known as the Contrast Effect, which is a cognitive bias where people highlight the differences between two or more things after comparing them. This relates to K-pop idols and fans since the latter frequently develop negative body images of themselves due to constant comparison to K-pop idols.

Since K-pop is readily accessible through social media platforms, the public is exposed to K-pop content and the unrealistically high beauty standards set by these idols. If certain K-pop idols go on diets or get plastic surgery for physical appearance purposes, fans are likely to imitate their actions. An anonymous K-pop fan even stated that her "beauty standards started aligning korean ones, so [she] became more conscious of specific things (head size, body proportions lengthwise, etc.)," a real-life example of the tragic Contrast Effect.

Increasing Body Positivity

On the other hand, the media's propagation of the K-pop industry has helped break down gender norms (for the most part). Male K-pop idols generally perpetuate soft masculinity and more gentle images compared to traditionally masculine and tough images for guys, in addition to wearing makeup. Oftentimes, K-pop fans have defended K-pop idols on Twitter after people bashed them for wearing makeup and not fitting the traditional notion of a guy. For instance, when Twitter users were bashing Jimin (BTS) for being "too feminine," his fan[s] spoke up in his defense, one even stating that "appearance doesn't matter, talent matter[s]."

There has been more body positivity and acceptance in the pop industry through the years with K-pop idols like Hwasa and Jessi being more body positive and accepting of their physical appearances. Specifically, Hwasa received hate from netizens due to "her body type and [darker] skin tone," which differ from the typical standards "for a female [K-pop] idol." Later on, she also received criticism "for her revealing stage outfits," but she did not get "hurt by the[se] comments." Rather, she remained body positive and encouraged her fans to do so as well. Jessi has gotten a few plastic surgeries in the past, but on an episode of Radio Star in 2020, she revealed that she is now against plastic surgery. She encouraged people to love themselves for "their uniqueness" and realized that she "can't be perfect." These idols can then encourage fans who get exposed to them through the media to become more accepting of their own body types and more comfortable in their own skin.

Conclusion

Mass media in the K-pop industry has helped to popularize the genre by increasing its accessibility to the public, leading to both positive and negative impacts. Media has made it easier for people to make appearance-related insults directed at K-pop idols who don't necessarily meet South Korean beauty standards, and fans are also impacted by this. Fortunately, as body positivity in the K-pop industry becomes more prevalent over time, we can see a positive socio-cultural shift in the general attitude towards what is considered attractive. There is no one way to be beautiful, for everyone is in their own way.

Media Misinformation

BY ADELENE "ADIE" GUO AND ENOCH NAKLEN

Credit: Sarah Rieke, Stanford Engineering

The world of media has been around for well over a millennium of years—just not the way we modern-aged individuals would imagine it.

The oldest recorded form of mass media actually dates back to the 1450s, with the Gutenburg press, in which the revolutionary printing press allowed public information to be spread exponentially faster than it had ever before. While, at the time, this was considered a universally great thing, time pursued, and as the saying goes, "all good things must come to an end." Pretty soon, numerous forms of mass media began to spread biased, opinionated information, used for concentrated propaganda towards certain groups of individuals. Consequently, as soon as mass media was a good thing, it became a tool of pure evil.

In short, the revolution of mass media is a controversial one, and its resultant biases were ultimately the catalyst for the misinformation of public news that ensued. But, what exactly is misinformation?

Well as the word may imply, the idea of misinformation is "incorrect or misleading information". The etymology dates back to the 1580s, when the earliest forms of mass media were still being developed.

Since then, mass media has developed into 5 main groups: newspaper, radio, magazines, the Internet, and television. Although each form has its noticeable differences, one thing stands prevalently clear: the reach of each has exponentially massive impacts on the view of the audience it reaches. Moreover, because of the influential nature of media itself, many of its creators are now exposed to…everyone? Yes, despite the potentially destructive nature of these platforms, nearly every individual is able to contribute the output of all forms of media, fairly easily at that.

Therein lies the source of misinformation. Because the flow and creation of information have become increasingly easy and accessible to society, the quality

of such has become a bit more complex, to say the least. Due to the nature of the human mind, every individual around the world is subject to an opinionated point of view. Consequently, biases are created to offset the purity of media.

As the filtering process becomes increasingly complex, the production of misleading information grows more and more unstable by the day. With this prevalent issue throughout the world of media, many users will undoubtedly be impacted by this.

It is no surprise that social media and technology have a huge influence over us, but the people behind those pages and profiles are the ones who actually influence the way we think. Sharing, retweeting, algorithms, and many other features exacerbate false facts and convolute their authenticity. Widespread use of social media means millions of people might reach for misinformation.

Misinformation may seem straightforward, but its impact and damage are much more extensive. It is destabilizing democracy, creating financial struggle, perpetuating health hazards, and much more through hearsay. Though it seems too pessimistic or out-of-base, misinformation is actually more widespread and deceitful than you would think, for it can even mislead inexperienced or financially-struggling audiences.

Private companies sponsoring social media accounts purposefully prey on unknowing property owners, health-care seekers, retiring workers, and all who seek financial guidance. These social media accounts create posts favoring their sponsors or wherever the money leads by utilizing unreliable sources and rumors. Without solid and backed-up facts on the news of the current economy, these accounts can trick consumers into making bad investments where they lose money.

Rumors and conspiracies are also being spread by social media, instilling wrong ideas into society. Here is where social media's impact is the greatest. Millions of tweets perpetuating misinformation and fake stories spread until no one can trace them back to their roots. Mass media has the potential to suddenly transform implausible and usually ridiculous news into alleged facts, which are then spread by more accounts and may even be mistakenly used by reputable sources and celebrities. This makes them even harder to debunk.

There can be no positive in this. The "stolen election" theory in the 2020 elections instilled a feeling of distrust of democracy among others. The QAnon cult conspiracy spread fear through social media sources like Discord and Reddit. Pizzagate conspiracy theories that stemmed from antisemitic and white supremacist groups originated from Reddit but were spread by news sources like CBS, former writer David Seaman from TheStreet, and celebrities like basketball player Bogut and even Minecraft programmer Notch. All of a sudden, people started living in fear of fake child-trafficking or cult rings that were "taking over" America such as in the Capitol Hill Riots. And the worst part is that this is what these accounts want; they take advantage of fear to push others into believing in some kind of one true "savior" to manipulate people.

Kelly Loeffler, a former US Senator, attended several briefs about the coronavirus which was just emerging at the time. Soon after these meetings, Loeffler sold $50 million dollars worth of stocks, anticipating a stock market crash. However, her actions did not match her words. Later, Loeffler tweeted, "Concerned about #coronavirus? Remember this: The consumer is strong, the economy is strong, & jobs are growing, which puts us in the best economic position to tackle #COVID19 & keep Americans safe." Not only did she illegally use nonpublic information in the stock market, but she influenced thousands of Americans to continue funding a lost cause for her benefit when she knowingly distributed wrong information.

Posts denying the effectiveness of masks against COVID-19 put Americans in danger and killed thousands. By the time these posts were debunked, 130,000 American lives were unnecessarily lost because people refused to wear masks. And the list goes on…

The dangers of misinformation are well-known, and social media is spreading it like fire. This question

is how we put it out. Social media companies could directly mitigate misinformation right at its root by not only having a report function but an algorithm that could fact-check posts and their sources before it blows up.

Unfortunately, it could take a while for these companies to take initiative. So, we will have to check and pick our news sources carefully. One simple precaution anyone can do is to check if the account is a reputable one; usually, an account with many followers and little following signifies a professional source. Just by doing this one thing, our news will be more reliable and you will stay safer.
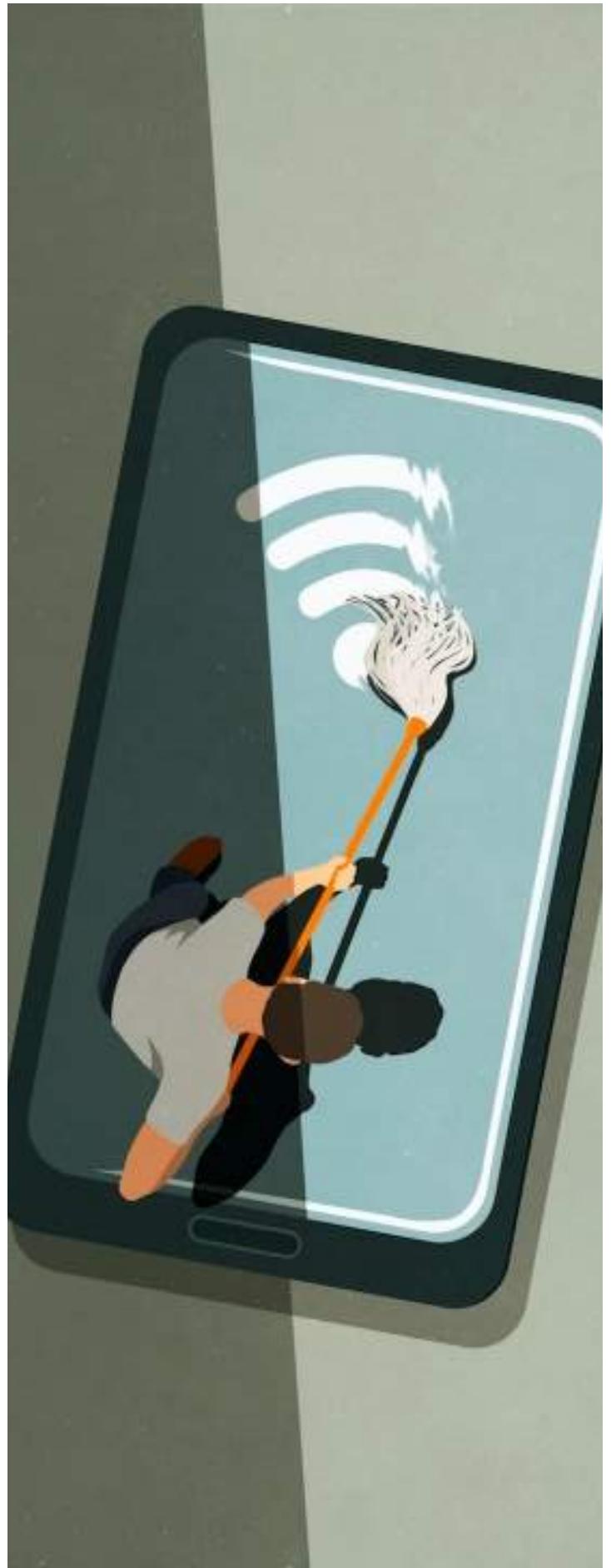
How Does Mass Media Affect Digital Consumption In America?

BY STANLEY HUANG

Imagine yourself on an early morning train in New York with the occasional noise interrupting the awkward silence that fills the air. You steal a glance at the person's phone right next to you; they are playing Candy Crush. Their face glows from the bluish tint, almost as if they were under a trance. As the train slows down, the person rises to get off their stop, never taking their eyes off the screen.

There is no doubt that now more than ever, our contemporary lifestyles greatly rely on technological access. People are more dependent on their phones. Whether it ranges from online lessons to remote work, people find themselves immersed in a digital world. Students use apps like Google Classroom for classwork and homework. Small businesses build online websites in hopes of selling physical or digital goods. So the question is, what exactly prompted this technological era? Well, it was none other than the famous Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution's Long-Term Influence

The period of the Industrial Revolution was marked by intense economic growth and increased pro-ductivity. During this time, major cities like New York City underwent massive population influxes, which led to the development of many urban life innovations. From an economic standpoint, the Industrial Revolution introduced new manufacturing methods such as the assembly line and the specialization of certain tasks.

With more cheap labor available, the Total Factor Productivity increased from 0.1 and 0.35 to an astounding 0.8. The Total Factor Productivity is determined by looking at the economic efficiency and taking into consideration the different per-capita incomes. In addition, there were rapid advancements in all sectors of life, from healthcare to technology. Overall, the Industrial Revolution provided the groundwork and the competitive economic atmosphere that was needed to drive substantial changes and growth.

Today, phones serve as a reminder of the advancements of the Industrial Revolution and the 21st-century technological era. In the U.S. alone, 96% of all American adults own some kind of a cellphone device, with 81% owning a smartphone. It is undeniable that these devices have become an integral part of our lives. But what specifically revolutionized this de-

vice to facilitate the spread of information at rapid rates? The culprit is what is known as "mass media."

Mass media is defined as "the means of communication that is able to reach a large group of people, specifically televisions, social media apps, and radios." In an increasingly digital world, electronic devices are essential for work and school. But even so, the average American adult spends an upward of 12 hours, while teens spend up to 7 hours and 44 minutes. Furthermore, these digital devices have transformed the industry of communication, rendering the traditional forms of mass media obsolete. Specifically, the newspaper, although still used, has become less popular ever since the 1950s. The new medium by which people obtain news information is the internet. With just a single search, hundreds of blog posts, online news sources, YouTube videos pop up. This method of finding information proves to be way more popular than the traditional form of media, which requires you to go to a local shop and buy newspapers that pile up over time. Not only do people save time, but they are exposed to much more information with just a click.

Social Media On Consumption
SALES & PURCHASES

Social media apps, specifically, are at the forefront of mass media. Apps like Instagram boast 800 million monthly active users and 500 million daily active users, while Facebook reaches upward of 2.2 billion monthly active users. As a result, billions of social media users are actively exposed to all sorts of computer-generated advertisements from big corporations to make a product seem more appealing. For instance, many digital marketing tactics are employed all over the Internet with the aim to reach large crowds through bright, appealing color schemes and seemingly urgent calls to action.

Advanced development in advertising styles is made every day to maximize a businesses' return on investment (ROI) and sales. Similarly, social media apps are designed to have a "sufficient motivation, an action, and a trigger," creating a behavioral loop. Essentially, this behavior loop, also known as the habit loop, triggers dopamine release when doing something pleasurable. In this case, scrolling through the For You page on TikTok. Eventually, the habit of taking out your phone and scrolling through TikTok when you are bored becomes ingrained in your mind, so much so that people (in the US) check their phones an average of 80 times a day. With millions of users on the apps for hours, these big social media apps are able to sell advertisements and earn massive amounts of revenue.

In fact, several ex-employees of Facebook and Instagram spoke out about the companies' intentions One ex-employer, Peter Mezyk, explains that "the success of an app is often measured by the extent to which it introduces a new habit." The reason for this is obvious: the longer people spend time on their app, the more profits the company generates. No wonder that app users and consumers are victims of the addictive features of these strategically designed social media apps.

ENTERTAINMENT

Not only is social media the hub of e-commerce but also a massive form of entertainment. For example, TikTok, a prominent app that was launched in 2016, surpassed 2.6 billion downloads with 100 million active users in the US alone. This app features short 15 to 60 second videos, vibrant audios, and the ability to connect users with their favorite creators. But perhaps the one feature that makes TikTok unique is its algorithm that uses "tools and factors to personalize it for each person," which allows these short-clips and videos to easily go viral and circulate around the TikTok community.

This personalized feed filters out information that is not relevant to the users, thus producing a stream of curated videos that are targeted at specific audiences. The users are then presented with enticing videos that showcase dances, information, and humor. With these videos and various forms of other entertainment, kids from the ages 8

to 12 are spending on average 4 hours and 44 minutes a day on their devices.

DATA & INTERPRETATION

In 2019, Facebook's revenue was $70.7 billion, which was a distinct 27% increase from the previous year. For TikTok, the revenue more than doubled from its startling 7.4 billion in 2018 to an astonishing 17 billion. Similarly, Youtube's revenue in 2019 was 15.15 billion despite being a 1.65 billion dollar company when it was first founded

in 2006. These statistics show that social media is not only at the forefront of advertisements and commerce but can also entertain its viewers for long hours at a time.

The Main Point

Social media has drastically changed the lives of many individuals especially when it comes to businesses and self-improvement. Social media provides us with valuable information and the ability to connect with content creators; nonetheless, it is

advisable for consumers to practice conscious consumption. To practice conscious consumption is to be aware of when your scrolling becomes habitual and to know when to take a break.

So, when was the last time you looked up from your phone?

The Evolution of Social Media Privacy Issues

BY ANTHONY MATHAI
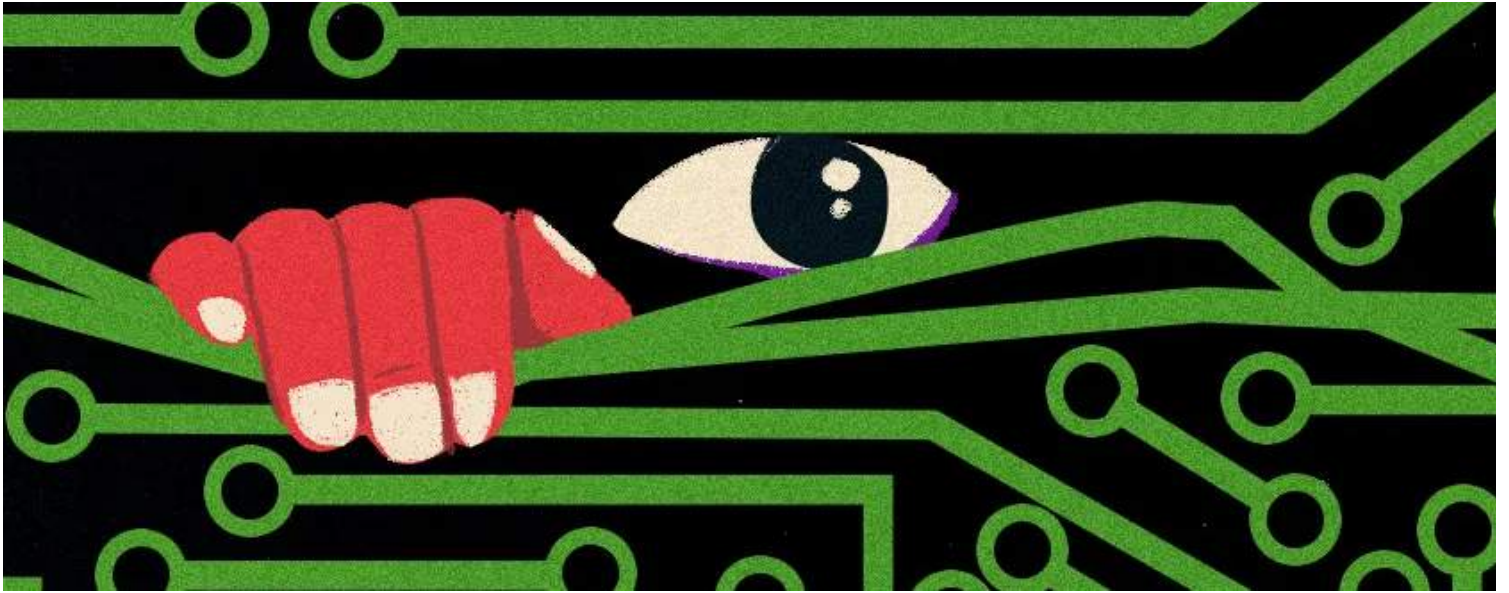
Meet Stephen. He is in lockdown, enduring the pleasures of his home. Despite being a high school junior with many different interests, he can not pin down his goals. Stephen wants to get something done, but the instant gratification monkey of the moment keeps him from doing so. This same scenario occurs day after day after day. Suddenly, it is too late for him to complete the task he wanted to do. What is this instant gratification monkey that prevents Stephen from reaching his goals? Social media.

Nearly everyone can relate to Stephen's situation. Social media has wired itself in the minds of billions of people. Nowadays, it has become a routine part of the majority of human life, not just Stephen's. The Hootsuite platform, which tracks all demographical data across all social media platforms, reported that nearly 4.2 billion, or 53% of the planet's population, use social media. This does not come as a surprise since humans are naturally social creatures. However,

with more lives being governed by this temporary pleasure, the risk of private information being hacked grows stronger each day.

When hacking scandals arise, it deteriorates public trust and makes people wonder if they have lost control over their own data. For a short time, the precariousness of privacy in the digital world is questioned. Once tighter regulations are made, public trust strengthens and more people are willing to use social media again. This ongoing cycle of public trust is shown across various digital platforms, making it difficult to pinpoint the likelihood of a cyberattack.

Stephen recently started an internship at a company with a presence on almost all social media platforms. His supervisor strongly encouraged him to create social media accounts dedicated only to the company's interests. Following the supervisor's advice, Stephen creates work social media accounts, keeping them professional with a detailed biography and profile picture. Once the accounts were made, he did not log

on for a while; there was not an urgent need to do so. Six weeks later, Stephen's supervisor informed him that his Twitter account contains vulgar content and unfavorable information that went against the company's interests. Like anyone else, Stephen is puzzled as to how this happened. Luckily for Stephen, his supervisor understood he was under a cyberattack when Stephen explained the situation to him.

What happened in Stephen's case? First of all, he left not just his Twitter account, but his other unattended. Inactivity increases the account's vulnerability to hackers and the consequences of hacking can be devastating.

It could potentially harm your brand's reputation as well as your own reputation in the workforce, especially if it contains many social media connections. As cybersecurity company ZeroFOX's co-founder and chief business officer, Mike Raggo and Evan Blair point out, social media represents one of the largest, most dynamic risks to *organizational* security, not just the security of the individual.

Stephen's case also features malware, another threat to cybersecurity in social media. Malware is any type of software specially designed to disrupt, damage, or gain unauthorized access to a computer system. In fact, the dominant form of social media cyber attacks is seen through malware. The malware allows cyber-criminals to access private files or information that is kept confidential through the use of shortened URLs, social media ads, or even downloaded links that are shared with or in the profile of malicious social media accounts. American radio personality and producer Rick Delgado outlines this process as cybercriminals "present[ing] a post intended to get the target user to click on a link. That link usually leads to the user downloading some malicious code that has the potential to steal information on the user's computer or mobile device."

In short, social media is a powerful tool, easily accessible in our current day and age. However, it remains present with security limitations. Society needs to be vigilant of these limitations, in order to prevent future cyberattacks. To provide an atmosphere where nothing is permissible for hackers and social media accounts are safeguarded to their maximum extent, there are certain safety precautions that can be taken.

Safeguarding Your Social Media Accounts

The first precaution comes with the first line of defense: a robust and effective password. Social media accounts with weak passwords can easily be hacked. Make sure to use a unique and strong password for every account. Preferably, these passwords should be different from each other to safeguard multiple accounts from being hacked at once. Passwords should not be words or phrases that can be easily guessed. Rather a series of random characters containing a mix of letters, numbers, and symbols are the best option. Lastly, keep all of your passwords confidential. You are the only person who should know them. This allows you to avoid having your information leaked to the wrong people.

The second line of defense is quite obvious: do not leave social media accounts unattended for too long. Leaving your accounts unattended leaves you at a greater risk. Potential hackers are given the time to figure out passwords and get unauthorized access to your account. With this access, hackers can post vulgar or fraudulent material that can potentially ruin your reputation or your brand's reputation, like in Stephen's case. Maintaining a consistent presence on your social media account not only increases your reputation but decreases the threat of cybercriminals targeting you.

Finally, be cautious when giving access to third-party apps or clicking links on third-party sites through social media. Giving access to third-party apps or platforms allows these users to view your social media credentials, as indicated by their terms of service. Browsing on unnecessary web pages or clicking links that send you malware can drastically increase the risk of your account getting hacked, so it is best to keep browsing and clicking on unnecessary content to a bare minimum.

Modern life consists not only of the life where we interact face-to-face with individuals but also of the life of a digital world. A world where people are constantly networking strangers across large distances. The increased interaction and tendency to post images or threads that reveal too much information opens up room for hackers. All this should not discourage anyone from using social media, but rather transform cautious social media usage into a basic intuition.
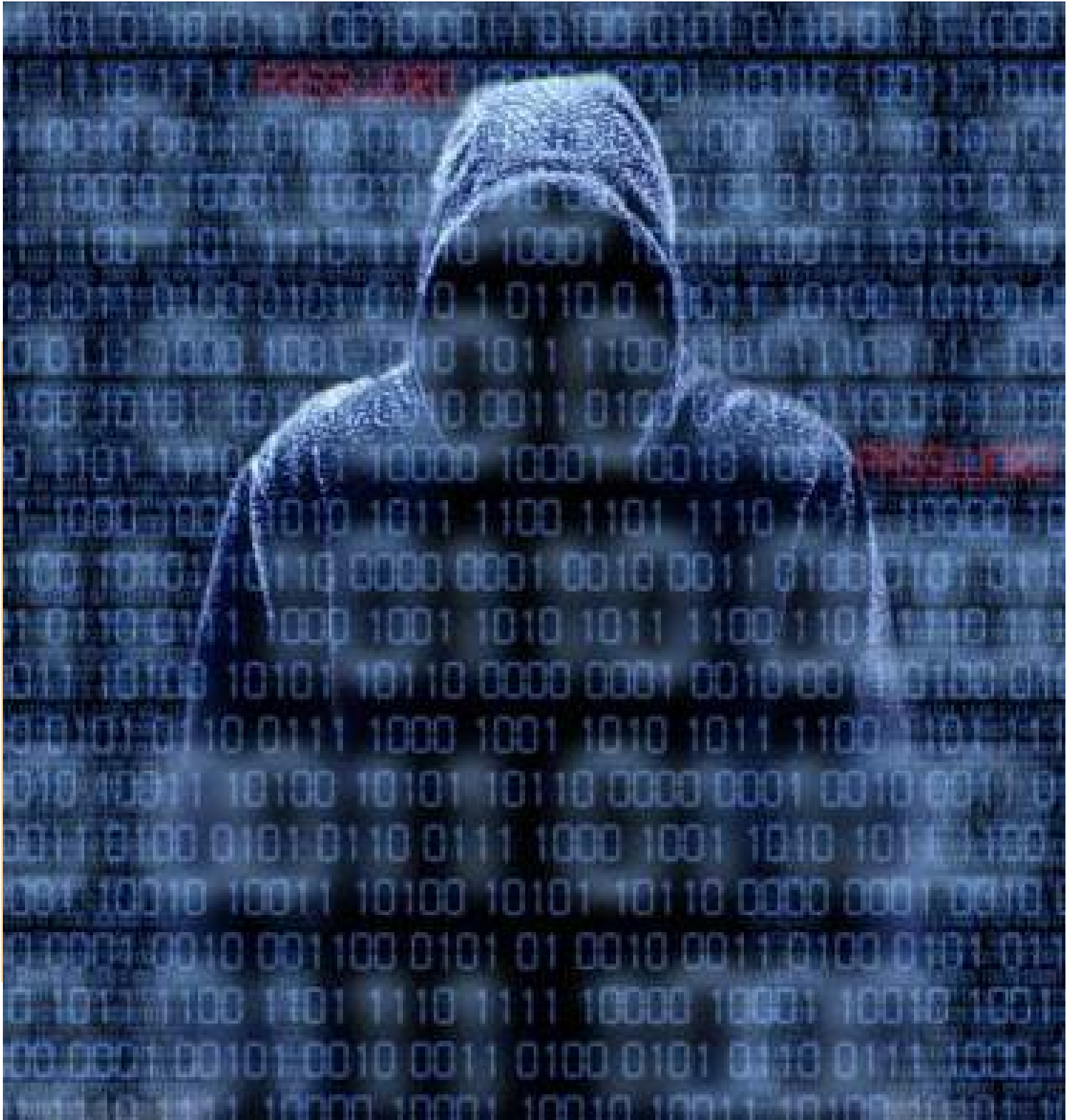
Looking Beyond Artificial Intelligence: Friend or Foe?

BY THE JOURNALISM COMMITTEE

From our smartphones & tablets to the radio and the GPS, technology is all around us. Since 1827, artificial intelligence (AI) has been a common theme in fiction. The idea of robots with human-like intelligence has been speculated within novel pages for years but it is a speculation that felt safe since it only existed in fictional worlds… until now.

Imagine five years from now, the person operating on you may not even have a beating heart. In fact, Sophia—an ambassador of the United Nations Development Programme—is a social humanoid robot developed by the works of artificial intelligence to develop a personality and character. She appeared on The Tonight Show and the Good Morning Britain Show as the world's first robot citizen; she is capable of interacting, holding conversations and thinking just like humans with the touch of science and technology. Regardless of how mystifying this may all sound, with our technology constantly evolving and new technological devices coming out annually, AI seems like a promising field. 200 years ago, all of these advances in technology would have seemed impossible, even magical. However, even with its success, there have been mishaps, thus illustrating both the positives and negatives of AI.

Positives

Artificial intelligence is an accessible source for reducing human errors in lab testing and experiments. Many humans are vulnerable to making mistakes and such faults are progressively significant in the work environment, yet human mistakes in the domain of cybersecurity can have especially detrimental consequences. Furthermore, The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has been utilizing AI more to improve their figures. As stated by Mckinsey Digital, AI-fueled forecasting can decrease errors by 30% to 50% in supply chain networks. The im-

proved precision paves the way to a 65% decrease in lost sales because of out-of-stock circumstances and warehousing costs decrease around 10% to 40%. A gathering of specialists from the NOAA discovered that, "applying AI techniques along with a physical understanding of the environment can significantly improve the prediction skill for multiple types of high-impact weather." This means that AI can serve as a protection for human beings.

John McCarthy, one of the founders of Artificial Intelligence, had once said, "Every aspect of learning or any other feature of intelligence can in principle be so precisely described that a machine can be made to simulate it. An attempt will be made to find how to make machines use language, form abstractions, and concepts, solve kinds of problems now reserved for humans, and improve themselves." The rapid advances in artificial intelligence play a key role in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and are able to allow machines to perform human-like tasks. Now just how beneficial can this be? Artificial intelligence plays a role in humans' daily lives more than one can comprehend. The phrase "human error" only exists when humans create mistakes on occasion, however, computers do not make these faults.

For the past year, Amazon has been opening actual Amazon Go corner shops and Amazon Go grocery stores across the U.S. Amazon went into an astounding degree of detail on their usage of this innovation: it flawlessly tracks and gauges the aim of everybody in the store. While they did not venture to such an extreme as to show the specific neural architectures for their models, they showed the particular issues those individual models address and how they are consolidated to fabricate the full arrangement. Also, it is more accessible to buy things with Amazon stores because there are no cashiers for checking out.

The car company Tesla has recently introduced its new feature for their car models known as autopilot, which is a set-up of cutting edge driver-help framework that includes traffic-aware cruise control, lane centering, self-parking, semi-autonomous navigation on limited-access freeways, automatic lane changes, and the capacity to call the vehicle from a carport or parking space. On the whole of these highlights, the driver is capable of controlling and being safe with their car, thus leading to a massive reduction in car accidents.

AI also plays a huge role in the media industry, which has benefitted the online community in terms of controlling bias. Defeating bias has been a major concern in today's society, with mainstream information being layered in misleading content. But AI can assist in reducing subjective interpretations and improve how society receives information by automatically converting data into various news stories that can then be distributed to journalism platforms. This not only makes our lives easier, but also removes much of the bias that goes into journal articles.

Aside from biases, AI has also been part of social media since the very beginning. From features such as image cropping tools, tweet recommendations, facial recognition, connection recommendations and content recommendations, AI has been a key component to the popular social networks we use every single day. Future advancements in AI may lead to even more advanced user engagements. Without AI, many social media aspects that you encounter daily, rather than Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok, would not exist. And social media is not the only entity dependent on AI but other forms of entertainment as well, such as TV shows, movies, sports, and videos. AR and VR media can create whole new interactive formats which have the potential to bring readers and viewers deeper into a story that 2D images and videos could never do by virtually transmitting you into the story at hand. Merged Reality ConsumerLab reports that 7 out of 10 early adopters expect VR and AR to change everyday life fundamentally, including in the media domain.

As you can see, there is a wide scale awareness of AI in our general population especially due to the

apparent use of media and technology in our current society. AI is becoming so popular and normalized as it fits into social media marketing and plays a pivotal role in receiving engagement and gaining consumers of their marketed products. In fact, the biggest names in IT and computing are jumping on the AI bandwagon; companies like IBM and Google use the power of AI to make their services have more personality and function more so as "human." AI uses machine learning to interpret potential customers' personalities, how they use social media, and what products they like based on their recent activity based on social media.

This proves to be beneficial for social media marketing because AI makes campaigning and displaying content much more effective. AI software can suggest, or even create, target posts/content such as Tweets to be published at certain dates based on the level of activity on social media by possible consumers. It is insane how the use of AIs allows for increased personalization and human-like services, yet we are more reliant on advanced technology to produce such results. AI tools and systems are continuously progressing in every waking second and because of this they are improving to a point where software will be able to forge bonds with buyers and social media users all by itself. AI will be capable of forging strong bonds that other humans may not be able to do them-

selves with the help of the media.

AI is by far one of the newest emerging technologies that have contributed to the advent and progression of human society. The term, coined by John McCarthy in the 1950s, was proposed for a way for humanity to have "any aspect of learning or any other feature of intelligence to exist that can be precisely described that a machine can be made to stimulate it." The advantages of AI range from proper reduction in human error, being able to help continuously in repetitive jobs and the existence of proper digital assistance. Even so, the fears that often are produced from AI range from the takeover of robots in the lives of humanity. Often showcased in famous movies like *I, Robot,* and *Iron Classic* and theatrical performances along Broadway, AI is still considered one of the most controversial options of development in human society.

However, in all honesty, the arguments that support the advent of AI, far outweigh the arguments that are continued to be proposed against its existence. The most obvious of this support is the environmental aspects and progression that come with the existence of AI. In any world, most people may go clearly to think about how AI can offer change to the environmental crises facing right now, but in reality AI is far more beneficial to us than we can realize. A Forbes article as of 2020 found that AI can be used to drastically decrease the carbon footprint that we place across the world. The article states that an invention made by Google known as the GoogleMind software has allowed for the company to decrease their energy requirements by up to 35%. Even more so, AI can be used for agricultural production by providing a clear monitoring of environmental conditions and crop fields.

A scene from the film *I, Robot* starring Will Smith and an army of AI robots.

In terms of transportation, AI can offer a way to decrease traffic congestion, which in turn helps reduce the usage of oil and coal across the world. In water resource management, AI can offer a way to reduce or eliminate waste entirely while lowering costs and helping to decrease gross environmental impacts. A Reuters Article as of October 23rd, 2020 found that many of Google's top heads and employees were required to strike a "positive tone" on the advent and existence of AI. Mainly because it offered a way for the company to continue to improve its production of products associated with it. Even so, the environmental conditions that continue to improve as a result of AI continue to prove as to why we should support its existence.

AI has profound effects on the economy and business world, ensuring to help people's efficiency of work but not dictate it. In some way, it complements humans because it acts as a "superpower," as it is able to predict intentions or just about anything with more precision. If a business company develops the right technology, it would preserve time and money by automating routine processes. Not only that, it would be much less tedious when work sharing, and, depending on the work purpose and nature, there would be a reduction of waste, costly defects, and delays - if the business is a company, then there would be a much improved speed of production.

Video Assistant Referee (VAR) in action during a match between Everton and Liverpool.

AI has drastically changed the sports industry for the better, although in a few cases, not so much. AI has affected the sports industry by connecting with the advertising industry on a grander scale. AI can recommend specific clips to use for the sports industry to connect with different industries and can even recommend players for specific advertising ideas for different companies. It is a revolutionized way of branding to an audience perfected by an "artificial" touch. For example, an advertising industry can submit a proposal to use a team clip in action in support of their product/brand. It is like the advertisements seen in the Super Bowl commercials, as the clips you recognize from the games tied in with the brand a specific company is trying to advertise.

After a game, AI can provide future suggestions for tactics to use based on clips of winning tactics other teams used against the respective teams using a detailed visual analysis of each player. As far as signings and recruitments for a club or team are concerned, AI comes a long way and has revolutionized this process. AI can recommend signings for a specific sports team based on their performances, the team's method of logistics, to see who would be a good fit for the team style of play or structure. AI can be used to effectively prevent injuries as well; based on injuries that have occurred to players on a certain team, AI is able to provide suggestions and guidelines to prevent these injuries from happening in the future.

Among the biggest roles of AI we see now in the modern sports industry is the implementation of various forms of AI in refereeing. AI can be used to spot a foul committed or even if a ball is out of play. A classic example of AI we see is in soccer (football) all over the world, where sports leagues are resorting to Video Assistant Referee (VAR) to "accurately calibrate the

playing field to allow the insertion of graphic overlays to support decision making." For example, VAR can be used to spot millimeter offside decisions in soccer or look for possible penalties or yellow/red cards.

Clearly, these millimeter offside decisions or decisive penalty or foul calls can cause frustration in players, especially if it seems as if the decision is against them for almost no apparent reason, and even in fans, as rival fanbases often get into heated debates and arguments over the validity of VAR calls. In the pictured scenario, the game between Everton and Liverpool was tied at 2-2, with Liverpool scoring the winning goal at the end. However, there was a player deemed to be offside in the buildup to the goal (an offside of millimeters) and eventually it was ruled out. Such tight VAR decisions cause tensions in games and fanbases, and many claim that VAR is ruining the game of soccer because of how close the decisions are.

All in all, AI has revolutionized the sports industry, but it does come with its negatives, especially social tensions if technology goes too far in impacting the game plan and its results. It comes employed in many forms and services and is especially useful in reducing human effort with a greater efficiency of results in the end.

AI is also implemented heavily in healthcare and medicine. It is specifically used by doctors for the treatment and diagnosis of medical conditions and by surgeons for surgical procedures. For medical diagnoses, one way that AI is employed is in improving the accuracy of cancer diagnosis. Medical startup PathAI created technology that aids pathologists in making their cancer diagnoses by improving the efficiency in examining tissue samples. Often-times, examining numerous tissue samples "for cancerous cells" can be onerous and time-consuming, and PathAI's technology makes this process smoother by digitizing these tissue samples, thus allowing pathologists to make quicker and more efficient diagnoses.

AI may also make room for potential future advancements in image recognition, which would make the whole diagnosis process even faster and more precise. After all, PathAI is working towards making advancements that would make possible the "identif[ication of] patients that [might] benefit from novel therapies," allowing for an expansive way of providing "personalized medicine" to a broad reach of patients. The startup also plans to make their technology accessible to everyone, especially people "in developing areas" in order to increase medical diagnosis accuracy, and thus, better quality treatment.

AI is not only used to improve cancer diagnosis. but also to improve cancer treatment. One example of such technology is the Accuray CyberKnife S7 System, which provides stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT) and stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) in a fast, efficient, and precise manner. This system is extremely accurate and allows for personalized non-surgical treatments for cancer patients. It is able to locate the tumor and shoot beams at it while limiting damage on "healthy tissue and surrounding organs," minimiz-ing "side effects" and therefore, increasing the quality of the treatments. This type of precision and "motion-synchronized treat-ment" would be harder to achieve through human surgeons. However, technology in this sector is still limited, and currently, Accuray CyberKnife S7 System remains "the only system in the world to pro-vide real-time motion-synchronized treatment delivery adaptation for all indications and treatments."

Vicarious Surgical, a software company, created AI technology that allows for minimally invasive surgery through the combination of virtual reality (VR) and robots. In this system, a surgeon residing in an area away from the surgery site is able to perform surgical operation on a patient through "a virtual reality headset," "controllers," and a tiny robot that is inserted into a tiny incision made in the patient. The surgeon can control the robot, allowing them to perform surgery while viewing the inside of the patient's body through the robot.

Overall, AI technology uses

information and learning algorithms to continuously improve. Although artificial intelligence seems scary, it is a game changer when it comes to healthcare. Specifically, AIs can be used to extract useful and possibly overlooked information about their patients. By utilizing learning algorithms, AI can provide healthcare workers with precise information ranging from various care processes, treatment variabilities, and the outcome for the patient.

As AI continues to expand, it can offer groundbreaking innovations in healthcare, cancer diagnosis and treatment, and improved surgeries. Especially as technology development is rapidly accelerating, AI can pose significant benefits, improving accuracy, precision, and efficiency.

Negatives

Lack of control is feared by many human beings. Whether it is lack of control over our bodies, jobs, or even families, humans naturally wish to be in control at all times. The future of AI is uncertain and impossible to predict. However, there is some idea as to where AI will lead the human race, and the lack of control humans will have over AI is a big part of this idea. When artificial intelligence first began affecting society in the late twentieth century, its evolution was rapid and intense. It enabled some of the most successful technological companies in the world to gain power at an unforeseen and sometimes even scary rate. These companies (Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, etc.) have used their power to influence people working below

them in society.

Is it possible that AI, although not the sole factor, has given huge tech companies too much power? That could be true, and it should be considered when thinking about what the future of AI will lead to. This power may soon grow into something human beings cannot control. In March of 2018, famous technological powerhouse Elon Musk shared his fears, stating "Mark my words, AI is far more dangerous than nukes." Echoing a concern by many that this clearly emphasizes the point that if control over AI is lost, it will not matter how much intelligence, money, or power someone has. It will affect every human on Earth, permanently.

If this possibility becomes reality, it could be destructive to the human race and society. Artificial

intelligence could become a major threat to the most extremely basic of human rights such as privacy and freedom of expression. Humanity has always tried to find a way to balance the media and reality, but if AI continues its advance, could this careful balance begin to fall apart? And if so, what effects could that have on the world as a whole?

An example of the negative impacts AI has in the real world is facial recognition technology. Police mine millions of peoples' images and information from social media, bypassing their privacy policies for facial recognition technology. The lack of regulation on facial recognition technology is damaging and exacerbates police brutality and the suppression of protests. But there could also be advantages when it comes to facial recognition if police are competent enough. Missing people could return to families. Criminals could be put behind bars with substantial evidence. Human trafficking could be prevented. That is because the way facial recognition is created and used is purely based on our morals.

Studies have shown that facial recognition is in reality, inherently racist. Though this may seem a shock being that technology is unable to form their own opinions and biases, anything to do with the layers of society has the potential to exacerbate societal issues and be discriminatory. It especially does not help that this technology was

developed by white American scientists that did not account for these biases.

A study done by the US National Institute of Standards and Technology revealed that facial recognition technology mistakes African Americans and Asians at a rate anywhere from 10 to 100 times more than Caucasians. Meanwhile, algorithms created in other countries mostly in Asia have smaller rates of mistaken identity among different races.

This flawed technology is being rushed into use by already corrupted policial hands. Facial recognition technology is extending the police's militarized overreach on civilians through their violent artillery involving guns, tasers, drones, and even military-grade weapons through questionable programs such as the federal 1033 program. Police can now track down marginalized groups at a terrifying rate with this abusive technology.

In fact, the police are utilizing facial recognition technology to go as far as to stunt movement and oppress protestors because the police can track them faster than protestors can respond. No policial reform means no reform for America. It is stopping voices from being heard and leaving rifts in America to deepen and destroy us. It is affecting us right now as seen in the Black Lives Matter movement, especially in the George Floyd protests, and you cannot expect it to not continue to hinder your right to speech in the future.

Unfortunately, facial recognition technology's drawbacks do not stop within the borders of the United States. Immigrants are being put in brutal ICE centers, separating families and darkening the future of immigrants and Americans in general. ICE is mining millions of drivers' licenses and social media photos to find undocumented immigrants, inducing harsh, unreasonable

crackdowns and disregarding peoples' privacy. Sounds unsurprisingly similar to the way the technology is used to silence activists.

The worst part now is that there has been no effort to persist in regulating this so blatantly oppressive and overreaching device as it updates to new, even more destructive heights. Only the National Biometric Information Privacy Act proposed by Senator Bernie Sanders worked to protect the privacy of Americans, and even that was proposed in August of 2020 (over seven months ago) and does not work to prevent the corrupt way the police are using it.

AI originally developed to provide safety and to advance society in general. Without the help of AI, the human race would not have been able to make the advances that we have made today. But over the years, AI has been used for other purposes, conflicting with the morals of many people. As we move forward with AI, there are significantly more risks. The original goals of AI no longer align with those of the general public.

Another common goal of AI technology is the monitoring of potentially harmful and misinforming content. Facebook, the social media platform, is infamous for relying on AI with the company's DeepText engine. First announced in 2016, the engine goes beyond using buzzwords to categorize posts, understand the meaning of posts, and figure out what step to

take next. A year later, Instagram, which is owned by Facebook, announced that it would begin to utilize DeepText to flag down offensive comments. Since then, an AI has been in charge of comment moderation.

With that, the question of how accurate the technology is has been raised. Even four years later, there are still debates over whether or not AI technology will incorrectly flag legitimate comments or will properly limit hate speech.

In 2020, a virtual conference called "The Rise of Artificial Intelligence & How it Will Reshape the Future of Free Speech" allowed a panel of experts to provide some insight on the situation. The majority of panelists made sure to emphasize that as of right now, there are definitely drawbacks to the use of AI in content moderation. However, one panelist brought up an interesting point.

Europe Policy Analyst, Eliska Pirkova stated, "We need to emphasize that this content actually differs from country to country. So, when we speak about content we are speaking about the meaning of these expressions, socio-political background, and historical background. Something that amounts to terrorist content in one country will be something completely different, and maybe even, a legitimate form of speech in another country."

Large social media platforms tend to include millions of users worldwide. If that is the case, then

there would need to be a way for companies such as Instagram, to have an AI system that is applicable to various countries' free speech policies and capable of understanding the possible background behind it. However, even this would create an issue. What gives one specific group with the cultural background of one country the right to have control over the censorship of other nations?

Although AI is a non-human entity, it is still programmed by humans who are naturally biased. Regardless of how much foresight may be put in the coding process, a coder can still unintentionally include bias in the monitoring code. With this could come a suppression of diverse speech. The process could start with limiting hate speech to evolving into limiting speech that goes against authoritarian regimes.

This reality is already present in China. The communist country's government is already known to be in control of multiple surveillance technology that keeps a close eye on citizens, along with having a history of banning certain social media platforms to limit the flow of information in and out of China. Websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google are all banned. As AI continues to develop, China's reliance on technology to control its citizens increases. Situations such as this one is why so many people are worried about DeepText being used for comment moderation.

As artificial intelligence gains

more traction, many say it could revolutionize job recruitment. With machine learning and knowledge, it can briskly analyze large amounts of data and then make decisions based on it. In the context of job recruitment, AI can characterize a job posting and screen applications to fill job openings much faster and with minimal human intervention. Thus, it results in minimal biases. It seems too good to be true, and unfortunately, it is.

As efficient as AI may seem, the technology shares the same bias as the humans who created it. This is called algorithm bias—when individuals are discriminated against by a machine learning system technology that is trained by datasets, datasets created and influenced by humans. For example, if a company has historically hired primarily white men for higher positions, the AI system uses that data and reflects a preferential bias towards candidates

similar to former employees. Thus, continuing to select only white men for similar positions.

Edward Snowden, a former National Security Agency, and Central Intelligence Agency (NSA & CIA) agent, is most known for being a whistleblower and exposing the NSA's mass surveillance and spying of the American people. He called into question if the US government violated the 4th amendment of the constitution, but his largest concern does not come from the surveillance from the US government. His largest concerns stemmed from AI and mass surveillance technology of large multinational corporations such as Google and Amazon. He believes that "we are being beholden to invisible ghosts." The reason he says this is because our online data and behavior, through the use of AI, are recorded permanently on the internet, which big tech companies

have on record and can sell. We are being held hostage and blackmailed by our online history which corporations have the power to release as the information is permanently crystalized.

With COVID-19, this concern has been amplified with people spending more time on the internet than ever, with these companies already knowing what we do on the internet, where we are, and what we shop. The concern is that they will know additional details such as our health information as there are already devices tracking our heart rates. This may not seem bad, but many fear that the use of AI has gone too far and that companies may not draw the line on which information should not be tracked, given that they already know so much personal information. Additionally, companies could use methods such as hacking into phones to violate people's privacy.

Along with AI bias, there is also a shift in societal experience—human experience. If AI starts to take over basic tasks and permits humans to substantially lessen the quantity of time they are to devote at a job, the additional free time could appear like a utopia at first. According to a two-year study from McKinsey Global Institute, by 2030, intelligent agents and robots could substitute as much as 30% of the globe's existing. human labor. McKinsey proposes that, in tenures of scale, the AI revolution could force the diverge from agricultural

labor throughout the 1900s in Europe and the United States, and, the outbreak of the Chinese labor economy.

McKinsey estimates that, contingent upon numerous implementation situations, AI will replace between 400 and 800 million jobs by 2030, which will force as many as 375 million people to change careers completely. In spite of these worries and concerns, each technological shift has resulted in generating additional jobs than were destroyed. Once specific tasks are programmed, becoming faster and cheaper, companies would need additional human workers to navigate other tasks in the procedure that have not been programmed.

Although 63% of the people believe that AI is good, 37% of the people believe that AI is bad. First, people are too dependent on technology that they are not learning how to use classic tools or how to even use their own cognitive thinking. There is a belief that AI has no potential of controlling over humans, but that is very misleading as already shown by devices like Google and Alexa. Also, the police and the government may misuse AI technology. Surveillance, such as security cameras, are being used so that the police can dominate over individuals.

Last but not least, the largest drawback is that some jobs are being lost because AI is able to complete small activities involved in the job. In the entertainment industry, actors and singers will start to be replaced by robots, which is evident in anime and the Japanese Misora Hibari AI. In the medical field, robots will be able to start checking up on patients, and robots may be able to make more accurate choices than traditional doctors. In the cybersecurity industry, AI will be able to protect private data more efficiently and accurately than humans. In the transportation industry, humans will not be needed to move around, which can be seen through self-driving cars. Moreover, in the food industry, AI will be able to farm on its own because of the repetitiveness of agriculture. Older generations are not the only ones who worry about AI taking over; researchers are also concerned. Superintelligence may be years away, but people need to be aware and prepare for whenever that happens.

A Final Thought

Virtual reality is a type of artificial intelligence, as it manipulates virtual environments. It offers us an opportunity to surf through cyberspace and enter worlds that exist only in our heads. Virtual reality can give us a vision of the media's future, as well as the way we think about and view communication. By opening our eyes to another world, we are able to express our enthusiasm and ambivalence about societal transformations through technology.

Through an endless variety of ideas that do not exist, humans are able to transform the tangible things of life into new opportunities. According to Ivan Sutherland, a revered pioneer in computer graphics and VR: "A display connected to a digital computer gives us a chance to gain familiarity with concepts not realizable in the physical world. It is a looking glass into a mathematical wonderland." This vision of innovation and creativity can be used in visual fields, such as painting and architecture. As humans evolve and expand on their knowledge through the use of VR, our society is enhanced as well.

As a conceptual take on artificial intelligence, augmented reality is an experience where designers enhance parts of users' physical world with computer-generated in-put. For instance, Pokemon Go is a famous interactive game app that allows you to search for Pokemons in the real world—all you need to do is share your location, and the app will pinpoint areas around you that carry a Pokemon. Taking the media's storm in 2017, Pokemon Go was praised by countless numbers of people of all different ages. The most beneficial part was its ability to bring home-ridden children outside and engage in physical activity.

Inkhunter is another universal app that can virtually augment one's skin and apply tattoos. Available on numerous platforms, such as Google Play and the Apple App Store, this

AI plays a large role in video games but are the benefits enough to dispel our fears? *Credit: Ray Nobuhara,@ray_music4life*

augmented reality app is an innovative and unique way for creative thinkers to design anything that would appear on their own skin. Apps, or other forms of software, take a major part in limiting one's own screen obsession and incorporate physical world aspects to the algorithm itself.

Although the world of artificial intelligence has undergone massive strides in recent years, the technology still is not nearly as advanced as we imagined. There is no Avengers Tower run by an all-seeing AI like Stan Lee pictured, or thousands of AI who live among us subservient until eventually revolting like in video game, Detroit: Be Human. But at the same time, we have progressed in ways never imagined such as facial recognition and content moderation. Both the pros and the cons hold validity in the argument. To say that one outweighs the other would be rash. The human race will forever progress as long as we are around and there will always be steps back for every step forward. However, with all the information presented we are in a unique situation. We have the power to examine all the complex aspects of AI implementation in everyday life and create a world that is as close to utopian as possible. Each pro needs to be treated as a groundbreaking achievement while each con needs to be addressed and solved like a society-damaging dilemma. It all depends on you. Will you go to one end of the extreme or strive to be a part of the moderation?

InsideFINX:

MEET TATYANA CRUZ

BY TASMIA AFRIN, TYLAH BOWEN, MARGARET KELLY, & ARITHRA DAS

Finxerunt is an increasingly growing non-profit organization led by students worldwide. Our mission is clear: to help create a sustainable future by tackling issues that affect people everywhere. Part of this mission includes ISL, or the International Socioeconomics Laboratory, which is a program made up of young adults who use research and data to come up with solutions to problems that affect all of the people in the world. Social science is an extremely important part of the organization and is crucial to Finxerunt's entire network. Without their research and hard work, it would be extremely difficult to operate any other part of Finx. We interviewed Tatyana Cruz, the Social Science Captain at Finxerunt, to learn more about her experiences and responsibilities at Finxerunt.
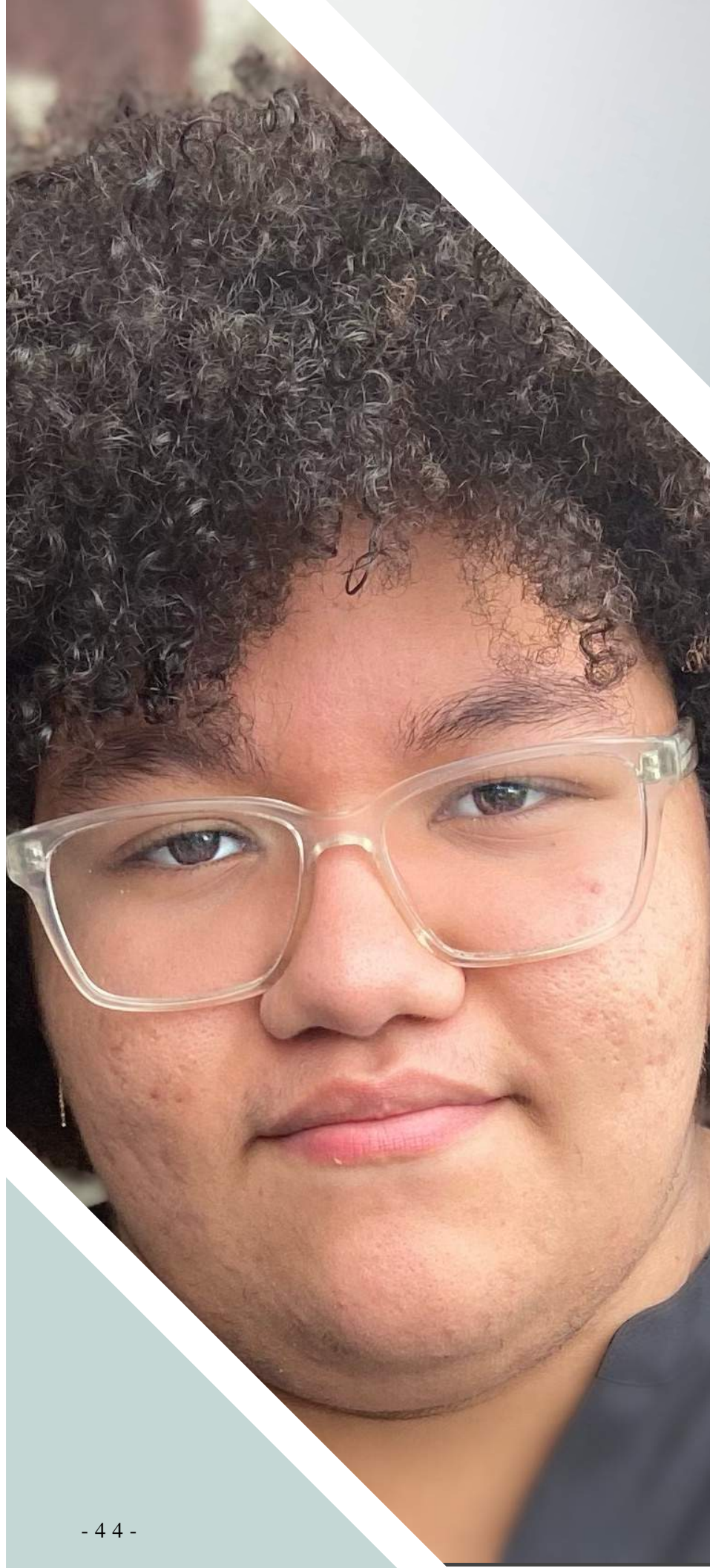
What drove you to join Finxerunt/ISL?

TATYANA: I discovered Finxerunt and the ISL through a close friend of mine. I decided to apply because I had never seen a student-led organization that approached our current societal dilemmas in such a holistic way. It is rare to see such a successful and driven organization that approaches civic engagement through multiple pathways such as film, journalism, and research.

Can you explain your role as a Social Science Team Captain? What do you do?

TATYANA: My role is to oversee the work and progress of selected research groups. Essentially, I am here to guide them through the process and aid them in communication and resources to create the best results possible.

What personal qualities as a teammate do you bring to the table?

TATYANA: My best qualities as a teammate are my extroverted nature, ability to unite people, work ethic, and morals. My extroverted and outgoing personality allows me to make any team more comfortable and it makes me more approachable. I consider everyone's best qualities and use different pieces of all these qualities to create a beautiful image; everyone is good at something. Anyone who has worked with me knows that I work very hard and I am dedicated to compromise for the common goal by never at the expense of my teammates.

What work are you most proud of from your time in Finxerunt?

TATYANA: I am most proud of the recent Policy Memo and letter I created with some of my fellow ISL members about a mental health curriculum that educates youth on the importance of mental health. A Policy Memo is a document that provides suggestions to the government regarding a new policy. This particular Policy Memo proposed a brand new addition to the NYC high school curriculum in the form of a mental health class. While I am proud of my other papers, this one stands out because of the great experience I had working with my friends to create something we are passionate about.

What is your favorite part about being part of Finxerunt/ISL?

TATYANA: My favorite part about joining ISL is the friends I have made. I can only speak of my experience as a member of the Social Science committee but I have been lucky enough to work alongside some of the most driven, innovative, and mindful students I have ever met. Through all of our challenges, no matter how difficult, we have stuck together. Working at the ISL has created bonds that I am forever grateful for.

Tatyana and the Social Science Department work hard to produce their best possible work, along with connecting and making meaningful relationships with one another. We hope that this interview with Tatyana has shown you a little bit about how Finxerunt runs and what we do as an organization.

InsideFINX:

MEET KRISTINA LIAN

BY ELIZABETH JUNG, SHINEDIP KUNDLAS, STANLEY HUANG, & KILHAH ST FORT

In the last three years, Finxerunt has made exceptional strides in the fight against global socioeconomic issues. This semester brings accomplishments that include a larger international presence and the opening of the International Socioeconomics Laboratory (ISL), a global research laboratory dedicated to finding adequate solutions to current socioeconomic issues. How-ever, what stands out the most is the implementation of our chapter network: students now have the opportunity to start ISL chapter clubs inside their schools to continue going beyond passive activism. In these chapter clubs, students write research publications and produce films all while taking a peek at what the ISL does. We interviewed Kristina Lian, one of the Chapter Network Directors, to find out more about the chapter network. Take a look at her story!

What drew you to Finxerunt?

KRISTINA: I joined Finxerunt's social science committee because I'm interested in research and really liked the idea that this research would actually be lobbied to politicians to help make tangible change. Most research internships don't give you the opportunity to have your research potentially be turned into legislative policy, so I thought this was really interesting.

What do you do as a Chapter Network Director? What are some responsibilities that come with being a Chapter Network Director?

KRISTINA: We are in charge of regulating the chapters that open locally and internationally, as well as providing the chapters with resources. We also are responsible for organizing the annual symposium. The symposium is FINX's research and policy competition, where pairs submit a research paper together and write up their own proposals to be judged.

What does the chapter network aim to accomplish during the Spring Semester?

KRISTINA: We hope to expand the ISL even more and open chapters both locally and internationally. We also aim to work with the film committee to make ISL videos in different languages to include and welcome more people from other countries.

Why do you value being a chapter network director? What did you learn from your experience?

KRISTINA: It means I can take a huge part in helping make ISL international. I really value my co-director, Angye Bardales, as she makes tasks and the role so much more fun. We are both really excited to organize the chapters for the ISL together and expand the ISL even more.

What message do you have current and incoming Finxerunt members?

KRISTINA: Finx is definitely a learning experience. You will be introduced to many new things and will learn other ways of thinking. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone, it will help in the long run.

What tips do you have for students who are interested in starting a chapter in their school?

KRISTINA: If you are interested in research, socioeconomics, policy, or all three, you should definitely create a chapter at your school! Angye and I will provide you with all the resources necessary, so this process will be easy. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact either of us at kristinalian@socioeconlabs.org and angyebardales@socioeconlabs.org!

InsideFINX:

MEET AFRAN AHMED

BY RAY NOBUHARA, SUDIPTHA PAUL, ENOCH NAKLEN, & ANTHONY MATHAI

Afran Ahmed is one of the directors of the Social Science Committee at Finxerunt. His time at Finxerunt spans over for a year. In this short time, Afran has worked his way up the leadership board and now oversees 100 researchers in their research papers and work to try and find ways that he can help the society.

What does FINX mean to you?

AFRAN: FINX provides a great opportunity for us to be able to have our voices be heard and - you know- serve as a way for us to apply what we know and what we learned under FINX, and just sort of spread it to everybody else. Especially the research sector, that I am a part of, it's been really nice to be able to teach others some of the skills that I've learned and watch how they apply it for the betterment of other visuals or just society as a whole.

How does research stand out to you against all other committees?

AFRAN:I chose to do research because it was something that I had already been doing for quite some time. And initially in the summer, I was supposed to do research and journalism, but I did not want to be alone, so I ended up switching to marketing and finance because that's where my friends were. It didn't quite click with me as much as research, clearly because that's what I have been doing for a while and I am really passionate about learning different topics. I research questions prominent in research and sort of building off of other researchers and studies, and answering questions that have not been answered within their respective studies. It all just comes from wanting to learn a lot, and I would say that I am looking for knowledge. I like learning about different things and being able to apply what I know that - you know - help other people and see what I can do that is best for the environments and communities around me.

How has COVID affected you and your committee?

AFRAN: COVID made my life very difficult. I am somebody who likes to be out there and be adventurous. I am a very socially interactive person, so for the COVID-19 pandemic to inhibit, that sort of interaction was made completely difficult. I truly find passion being around people. It's just a lot easier for me. I just love interacting because really every interaction you make regardless of the extent which you know the person is a new experience almost every time, and that experience is very beneficial to have. It's actually motivating because you get this one good experience and then next time you can expect something relatively the same or just something completely different, and that is totally fine too. It is very necessary to interact with other people and do my best to be able to do my best to make their lives better as much as I can. A lot of people say that I am a compassionate person. I love being able to help people as much as I can regardless of how well I know them - whether I know them to a large extent or whether we are just mutuals or I just don't know them at all. It's really hard to do it with the COVID-19 pandemic because I obviously can't see people the same way that I used to be able to. As for the committee, I don't think it has made it too difficult because, considering we've been virtual from the very start when we came to the research committee, it's been really free flowing and more or less the same. We've extended our staff quite a bit so it's become a lot easier on me. Before, it was just Arushi and I handled the entire committee, so it was a little difficult, and now with a lot more members and a lot more directorship to handle the committee, it's been going very well, and I really enjoy it. Today, actually, we presented our research proposals, so we would be starting with our research papers as early as some time this week. I think the committee has been very fine, and I've enjoyed it in the fall and am enjoying it a lot even now as well, and I'm going to continue to enjoy it for as long as it runs.

What would you like to do in the future with the committee?

AFRAN: For the committee in the future, I want to be able to prepare our research fellows as much as I can for their future and their reason. Whatever field they may respectively go into, knowing that I can have a part in their success within their fields would mean the world to me. Whether or not they pursue research or something different, as long as they can apply something that they learned from me or my committee, that would just mean the world to me. I hope that I can prepare them for the upcoming symposium in the event that they do compete for it, but essentially I want to use my committee to help other people. If I'm able to help other people, and if I'm able to do that, I am totally satisfied with whatever outcomes that may have. As long as I have the ability to help other people - the committee has been a good way to do that - and especially in the absence of sort of being able to socially interact with friends, most of the time I would like to be helping them, but I now have all these researchers, almost around 70, that I can help. It makes me feel a lot better knowing that I can have a difference in their lives.

Would you like to work with any other committees? If so, which ones?

AFRAN: Definitely! It was actually something that I was talking about with Ryan Curran, one of the journalism directors of ISL. I wanted to do a collaboration with journalism and also economic research and film as well to sort of work on several campaign ideas that we had in mind. I know that Ryan C had disability rights as a campaign idea, and that's something that I definitely would like to do. We've also talked about doing mental health campaigns and sexual assault campaigns. There's a lot of campaigns that I want to do with the help of some of the other committees. Most namely journalism and economics and film since they'd be sort of able to provide us with enough of a sort of range that we can cover the topic in a holistic sense. I essentially wouldn't mind with any committee - don't get me wrong - but those committees would allow us to provide a holistic sense on a certain topic, and then we could also talk with digital marketing if they want to help us make thumbnails or cover arts for some of the publications under those campaigns. Lobbying if they want to sort of help us pursue our research further and turn it into legislation. Yeah, I would really be down to work with any committee, but you know, so long as there is some sort of connection that would make it a lot easier and work together to make a difference through campaign or any other means as well.

InsideFINX:

MEET ABIGAIL TENENBAUM

BY CHYONIKA ROY, JANE VU, JOCELYN WANG, & SANDY ZHANG

Finxerunt has grown tremendously over the past three years through its outreach, campaigns, social media promotions, and its various committees. The Film Committee in particular works on creating and producing videos for a miscellany of platforms including Youtube and TikTok. They are also currently working on creating podcasts. The committee's job is important in promoting and spreading awareness of the organization and its cause in an entertaining and engaging way. We interviewed Abigail Tenenbaum, one of the heads of the Film Committee, to learn more about her experiences in this field and how she hopes to help Finxerunt with her work. Take a look at her story!

Can you recall an experience you cherish while being in the Film Committee?

ABIGAIL: A memory I cherish from my time in the Film Committee was sometime back in the fall. We had just finished conducting an interview, and we stayed on the Zoom call for around thirty-forty minutes afterward, just chatting about random topics. It was a really fun experience for me. I didn't know anyone in the committee too well yet, so this gave me the opportunity to become more familiar with the people there. It was probably the first moment where I saw the Film Committee as a place where I can make connections past some base acquaintance level. There were several moments that stood out to me, as well, but this is probably the first and most prominent memory.

What drew you to film? When did you first get interested in film, and why did you choose Finx to pursue this interest?

ABIGAIL: I've always enjoyed TV and movies, and around 12-13 I started noticing little bits of filmmaking in use (for instance, how certain camera angles can make a person seem more powerful or, on the contrary, smaller and weaker). When I was fourteen and in my first year of high school, I took an intro class to audio-visual engineering, where I got to learn how to create films and create several pieces of content of my own, as well as work several positions in my school's TV studio. I decided to further my knowledge of film and take the advanced class in my school. In that class, I learned how to analyze film even further, creating short films with my group that allowed us to practice the different aspects of film we learned about. I also joined the after-school film extra-curricular in my school, where we filmed various events around the school, from theatre performances in the auditorium to the open houses my school held. In addition to the film related extracurriculars, I continued my own trek through film in watching numerous TV shows and movies, enjoying that extra level of cinematic appreciation as I watched.

I originally looked into FINX as a way of getting involved in something during a time when opportunities were incredibly limited due to COVID. Somewhere a little before the 2020 Fall Term, I saw a shared post of FINX's that detailed its open positions for all its committees. The Film Committee caught my eye because I was intrigued by a youth advocacy organization that contained a whole section dedicated to film. I decided that it didn't hurt to apply and went through the process, and the rest is history.

What are your tips for managing your time and staying organized in the Film Committee?

ABIGAIL: I would say to make sure not to leave work to the last minute. This may seem like pretty basic advice, but it's definitely something to establish when it comes to work. Sometimes there can be a lot of work, and if you have an assignment that's particularly time-consuming, such as transcripting a lengthy clip, then it should be broken up throughout the week. It may seem like advice that anyone will give, and it is a good general tip to incorporate into any work ethic, but with the work that the Film Committee gives, it definitely helps keeping the work well spread out, or at the very least, not pushed 'til the last minute.

How does the Film Committee use mass media sources to spread their message?

ABIGAIL: The Film Committee mainly uses the FINX YouTube channel to put up the various videos we create. That's really the general holding ground for any and all videos created. Otherwise, our videos do get spread around with the use of social media accounts such as Instagram. We also will be using streaming sites such as Spotify and Apple Music to put up any episodes of the podcast we're working on. Sites like these really help push the content we create.

What are some methods that filmmakers and the film committee use to persuade, or communicate to the audience that the average person may not be aware of?

ABIGAIL: One thing we do is make the films as engaging as possible, using b-roll and graphics that keep the audience interested in the videos. Another thing we take into consideration is the time length of the film. We also try to keep the videos to at most a few minutes, because something longer might lose people's interest.

What do you think about sensitization in the media and in film?

ABIGAIL: I don't think it does anyone any good. We live in a society where people can't help but be drawn in from one tragedy to the next. I don't think anything in the news should be sensationalized or glorified, really, at least not to a certain extent. For instance, let's take a historical war movie. It's one thing to educate and present the war as something that happened, primarily as a retelling of history. It's another to glorify war and violence. I don't agree with sensationalizing stuff like war and turmoil, because there's nothing there that should be presented in that light.

We hope that this interview with Abigail provides some insight into the triumphs and challenges of the film field and the progression of Finxerunt's ever expanding media reach. Stay tuned for more!

InsideFINX:

MEET KATELYN LEUNG

BY JESSICA LIN, ADELENE "ADIE" GUO, & RIA ANANDJEE

Finxerunt has grown tremendously over the past 3 years with various projects, programs, and initiatives. To finance all our efforts, the fundraising committee works hard to find innovative ways to raise money for our nonprofit organization. We interviewed Katelyn Leung, a director of the fundraising department to learn about her experiences at FINX thus far, and her plans for the future. Take a look at her story!

As a director of fundraising, what is your role in FINX's mission?

KATELYN: My role in FINX's mission is to find ways to help fund our young adults to have the opportunity to address socio-economic issues that they are passionate about. For example, currently, we are working to get funding for our annual symposium this summer. The symposium's winners will get money to help further their research and so right now we are trying to raise enough money for those prizes.

What inspired you to get involved with fundraising?

KATELYN: I did some fundraising in middle school and I enjoyed planning and the whole process. However, with COVID we haven't been able to do any fundraisers but I am really excited for future opportunities to have fundraisers with Finxerunt.

What do you love about fundraising? How does it make you and those you help feel?

KATELYN: I love making merchandise and reaching out to people. I like meeting with a lot of different people, each with different stories and different things to teach me. I love making merchandise because it really allows me to be as creative as I want and there's no real limitation to it. Also seeing my merchandise being sold is really amazing. I also love the fact that everything that I am doing has a chance to really help a lot of young people.

What's the hardest part about fundraising?

KATELYN: A challenge would be persuading people because with COVID, numerous families have been hit hard and not everybody is able to give us money and so it's a bit challenging to fundraise with our current situation. In addition, we aren't able to see any of these people in real life and so we sort of lose that connection and it isn't as personalized as we'd like it to be.

What is a goal or what are some goals you hope to accomplish with this committee?

KATELYN: Some goals I hope to accomplish would be to get a fiscal sponsorship for ISL and getting the merchandise up and having at least 75 sales.

What would you like to do in the future with the committee?

KATELYN: Currently, staff members are giving us some potential donors and we are making promo codes for any staff that wants one, which is really helpful for our Finxerunt. Currently, we are allowing staff to get promo codes if they want one and it's a great way to help Finxerunt raise money and help with our initiatives. In the future, we will be definitely having fundraisers that will need Finxerunt staff's help, so stay tuned for that!

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