**Documentary Movie Review**

“The Social Dilemma”

2020 | 13+ | 1h 34m |Science & Nature Docs

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**Introduction:**

The Social Dilemma is a 2020 Netflix docudrama film directed by Jeff Orlowski and written by Orlowski, Davis Coombe, and Vickie Curtis. Orlowski is best known for his work as a documentary filmmaker, focusing on issues related to the environment and technology and led him to direct "The Social Dilemma." The film had a significant impact on bringing up the issue of increased accountability and regulation in the digital sector. Although, some have criticized the film for simplifying complicated subjects too much and for not offering enough solutions or actionable steps to address the problems it highlights.

The Social Dilemma, which is about how the psychological underpinnings and the manipulation techniques by which – turned out to be an existential threat to the democracy that 21st-century humans once enjoyed.

**Summary:**

The documentary features a interview to former employee in key positions at Facebook, Google, Twitter, and Instagram speaking out about the fundamental crisis how social media's design nurtures addiction to maximize profit, and its ability to manipulate people's views, emotions, and behavior and spread conspiracy theories and disinformation.

Our brains being controlled in any manner and even rewired by algorithms that are designed to get our attentions and convince us to buy items we don't truly need, including buying into false beliefs about the world, ourselves, and each other. For teenagers, this can lead to a constant stream of content that reinforces negative self-image, unrealistic expectations, and harmful stereotypes. Examples include advertisements for diet pills, cosmetics, or other goods that perpetuate negative preconceptions about gender roles or body image.

**Analysis of the events:**

“If you don’t pay for the product, YOU are the product,” says Tristan Harris, formerly responsible for design ethics at Google. This refers to the business model of many free online services, such as social media platforms, search engines, and emails. In this business, the service is provided to users for free, but in exchange for valuable information about yourself, which they can then use to generate revenue through advertising. In this sense, you become the "product" that is being sold to advertisers, rather than the customer who is paying for a product or service.

The Social Dilemma only allows us for one conclusion: if we allow these platforms to continue collect data for the sake of selling advertisements and to use algorithms to run our lives while neglecting questions of ethics, then they will be our demise.

The film demonstrates how these algorithms are designed to keep users engaged for as long as feasible.

**Creative elements:**

As the film opens, we can see that the tone of the film is serious and dark since it exposes significant problems regarding how social media affects society and the urgent need for more awareness and action to solve these issues.

**Opinion:**

At the very start of the movie, professionals are introduced, introducing the applications they’ve worked for in which some of them explaining why they left the said platform. They’re soon asked with a question “what is the problem?” and “is there a problem?”. On the very start of the documentary the film focuses on the possible conflicts within the social media such as spreading of fake news, cyber-attacks, stealing data, mental effects.

“They (these applications) are competing for your attention”, these companies are innovating applications with a goal to get and hold your attention on your screen as long as they possibly can with the use of social media algorithm. These creators or professionals were taught how they can use psychology in persuading people in the technology, which we actually witness ourselves.

The film more likely portrays the problems and negative effects of the social media and how the algorithm and psychological persuasion works together in manipulating the user. The film mostly elaborated the problem – and as some people argued – it oversimplified these complex issues and dramatically painted these tech companies to be solely motivated by money. The film does not really provide practical solutions to address the problems though it helps create awareness and better understanding of how these platform works allowing us to better navigate ourselves in the digital world.

**Relevance to your course:**

As users of these platforms or social media’s it has given as a clearer vision of how these platforms work together in pursuing their targeted audience, and as students pursuing computer science the film allows us to see the what and how the ensuing technological innovations might become to the people, how we must and should be more careful and considerate with our work, as it also would affect us and test our ethical beliefs. The documentary also portrays the heavy responsibility these experts carry with them, knowing the negative impacts it creates as it affects not only their targeted audience but as well as themselves.

**References:**

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