Internet Media

1. Provide 3 real-life examples of internet commercialization:
    1. One very common and very annoying example of commercialization of the internet are "newsletters" which companies start sending you after you sign up for their service. Nowadays there is generally an option to opt out, but it is small and hidden away so people don't click it. These "newsletters", which were intended to keep you up to date with the service you are using, are often used to just spam the user with advertisements for the company's product(s), even though the user probably never asked for them. As an example, I created an Adobe account quite some time ago and have since been getting a constant stream of ads and notifications about products I never expressed interest in.
    2. An different kind of online ads are those that are embedded into regular content so they look like they belong there. I guess this system became popular because people became pretty good at ignoring the banner ads at the top and sides of the webpages and if you do not recognize the ad from a mile away you might actually click on it (even if it's an accident).
    For example, my German e-mail provider WEB.DE implants advertisements for completely unrelated offers (like insurance) into the list of e-mails on my feed. They are even made to look like e-mails, with similar formatting of the text. The only thing that marks them as ads is a small symbol in the corner and a slightly different background color, both of those things are easy to miss when you click through e-mails.
    3. The third type of commercialization I notice on the internet are targeted advertisements based on my browsing and online shopping habits. Two main examples come to mind when I think about targeted ads. One is the recommended page on Amazon, where they show you what other people with similar shopping habits bought. Amazon is banking on the fact that these recommendations will move you to buy more stuff, thus making them more money. Even though I don't like it, I have to admit that their recommendations fit the stuff I would think about buying very well (even though they have never directly lead me to a purchase).
    The second example I can think of are targeted pre-roll ads on YouTube, which for some time only showed me online learning platforms for programming languages because I searched for tutorials more than once. These ads are more annoying than anything else, especially if they are not skippable and longer than 5 seconds. These ads have never gotten me to popusefully click on them.
    It is interesting to note that I receive significantly fewer ads on YouTube etc. when I am in Kyrgyzstan compared to when I am in Germany, even though my browsing habits are relatively consistent. I would hypothesize that the Kyrgyz market for online advertizing is not as big or developed as the one in Germany or that my type of ad-profile is less common in Kyrgyzstan and thus not targeted as much.
2. *Think of an example of how social media help bring community problems into the spotlight in your country/city.*
    I thought about this prompt for a while and I cannot think of any case where that happened in my city or country that I noticed. This is due to me mainly living abroad for the last 2 years and not really following social media in either Germany or Kyrgyzstan. One thing that is happening in Germany, but also all around the world, are the Fridays for Future climate protests. These protests were started by Greta Thunberg, a Swedish teenager who took time off school to protest climate change outside the Swedish parliament in Stockholm. Her protests quickly gained popularity and international traction. Greta has also given talks in front of the EU Parliament and the 2018 UN Climate Change Conference (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greta_Thunberg).
    The largest protest yet is planned for this Friday, where children and teenagers around the world plan to go on a climate strike to show force and make their voices heard. The protest takes place 3 days before the UN Climate Action Summit in New York City, where the mayor has decided to allow students to skip school in order to attend the protests (https://nyti.ms/301d92L). The General Secretary of Amnesty International has also sent out an open letter to school around the world urging them to let students participate in the climate protests (https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/09/amnesty-chief-urges-schools-to-let-children-take-part-in-climate-strikes/).
    Social Media played a big role in organizing the protests and coordinating the efforts of thousands of people who fight for a better future. Without easily accessible social networks it would be really hard to plan and execute protests on a global scale. A couple of decades ago such international

organization would have been much harder, as the barriers to writing a Facebook post that can reach thousands are so much lower than the barriers to getting your own radio or TV segment to spread your message. The media might still spread the news of the protests, but the way they are portrayed would be out of their hands.