

Creative Thesis Statement

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Society today is plagued with people on their phones, missing what's around them. Constantly checking their phone, continuously scrolling through social media feeds; it's an addiction few can resist. But the problem doesn't just end with society living through this inevitable addiction, it's causing an influx of misinformation and a new term we can't seem to avoid today, fake news.

"There are only two industries that call their customers 'users': illegal drugs and software"

-Edward Tufte

Tech companies in Silicon Valley were founded with the intention to make human life better, but in recent years they have started using "persuasive design" to get people hooked to their devices (Lieber). Just like how the Earth's resources are mined for profit, these corporations have learned how to mine people's attention. The longer an individual spends staring at the screen (i.e. looking at ads), the more money the corporations make, consequently leading the individual to spend less time on something that could enrich their life (McDavid). People today are allowing these corporations to exploit their time for profit. Employing human psychology against each individual user, the corporations are making it increasingly difficult for them to put down their phones. While this is harmful enough for society, it is causing another effect that is even more threatening to humankind, the spread of misinformation.

The algorithm programmed into these social media sites improves daily at learning what each individual user wants to see in order to keep them on their devices. This has gone so far now that when two people Google the same question, they will receive different results based on their individual online behaviors (McDavid). This is the greatest factor contributing to the growing divide, in not just the American people, but people all over the world. People are only seeing information that reinforces what they believe, it is halting compromise and discussion, leading to wars and genocides (McDavid). AI is not directly destroying humankind, rather it is letting us destroy ourselves.

This is an issue that affects everyone, even those without smartphones. In my short experimental film I want to bring this problem to light through choreography of dance, sound design, projected visuals, effects in editing, and the contrasting of two spaces. Throughout the film, the dancers will, in the beginning, be dancing and interacting with each other, while a different solo instrument plays for each dancer. As dancers become addicted to their screens, the growing addiction will be represented visually by projections hitting the dancers in the reality space and ending with them falling to the ground into the computerized space. Audibly, it will be portrayed when the classical instrument ceases to play and is replaced by a synth sound. The film will end when all the dancers are laying on the floor of the computerized space, signaling their

addiction, which provides a great contrast to the opening image where they are all dancing together.

Citations

Lieber, Chavie. "Tech Companies Use 'Persuasive Design' to Get Us Hooked. Psychologists Say It's Unethical." *Vox*, Vox, 8 Aug. 2018, www.vox.com/2018/8/8/17664580/persuasive-technology-psychology.

McDavid, Jodi. "The Social Dilemma." *Journal of Religion and Film*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2020, p. COV41+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, . Accessed 18 Oct. 2020.