

LAW 424 – Discussion Outline – *Digital Media and the Human Mind*

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Key question: What are the defining movements in digital media, and how are they affecting our psychological and sociological existence?

How digital media is changing in response to societal, technological, and economic development?

1. From Information to Experience

➤ Clickbait

- Difficulties in capturing advertising revenue has led some media creators to prioritize page views over content quality, informativity, or even truthfulness.

➤ Experiential Media

- Media content has expanded from mere printed text to new mediums, leveraging video, audio, and interactive or gamified capabilities to drive user interaction.

2. From Impartiality to Influence

➤ The Malleable Truth

- The “Fake News” phenomenon: the quasi-organic spread of fictitious content can manufacture public opinion to achieve social or political ends.

➤ The Decline of Neutrality

- Increasingly, media companies are becoming unabashedly politically-skewed – impartiality is neglected as media companies further appeal to their market niche

3. From Oligopolistically-determined to Individually-defined

➤ Crowdsourced Media Creation and Dissemination

- Shift from small oligopoly of centralized players controlling media content to the public creating, disseminating, and participating in media content and news.

➤ Hyper-Personalization

- Media websites are now “learning” what people like/don’t like in attempt to drive longer page visits, higher click-through rates, and weed out unwanted content (ex. News 360, and see also social media network “feeds”).

➤ Information Overload and the Rise of Suggested Content

- The massive volume of media sources and content overall has created the need for services to organize, aggregate, condense, and recommend media to viewers.

How the changing media landscape is affecting our lives and society

1. Globalization or Isolation?

- We now have access to media from the world abroad, bringing new perspectives and cultural influences into our lives, shrinking the globe.
- On the other hand, the hyper-personalization of content creates a “reality distortion effect”, allowing us to filter out opposing content and choose the universe we want to live in.

2. Self-Actualization or Self-Defeating?

- The explosion of accessible media content has created an endless potential for discovery and research, participation in creative communities, and greater access to novel experiences.
- Oppositely, it has also led to the situation where users to find themselves lost in cyberspace and feel insignificant amidst the scale of the new, global society, leading to depression, low self-esteem, and negativity.

3. Cohesion or Division?

- The ever-increasing integration of digital media into virtually every aspect of a person’s life brings new opportunities for interconnectedness and unity across time and space.
- However, the rise of social commentary media and content filtration reduces interactions across different factions of society is leading to a more hostile, isolationist, divided society – with no return to a uniform, top-down ethical systems.