

Information Deluge and Digital Experience

Is technology really making us better? Or is it just giving us the tools to access information quickly without retaining much of the information and causing stress? My essay compares this point of view from two authors.

In Information-rich & attention-poor, author Peter Nicholson explains that there is a price for the superfluous amount of digital information in relation to the limits of an individual's attention. He mentions that anyone can become an amateur "expert" without actually retaining information or gathering in-depth insights on a particular subject.

The three technologies responsible for the information revolution are data transmission, computation and data storage. Over time they will multiply in power but decrease in the cost per unit. This abundance of information and scarcity of human time and attention, affects our behaviour and culture.

As a result of the scarcity of time, strategies are now required to process the new "flow" of information in the digital world. The exchange of electronic information such as Wikipedia, changes the rate of depreciation resulting in a "24 hour knowledge cycle". A new world of indexing and searching has emerged with Google being the leader.

He explains that because many have access to the online world, intellectual authority is reduced, and a type of "crowd wisdom" appears, making it harder for the real experts to gain authority. The irony of this is that everyday online amateurs still rely on the opinions and insights of those who have gained knowledge from a more traditional form of learning. In the 21st century Peter Nicholson predicts that it will be difficult to access information in an efficient manner from the internet and this predicament will become the main problem for educators.

Author Erin Anderssen's article "How we are seduced by distraction" says that "super-charged distraction takes a serious toll on our mental and physical health". In essence, we have become "digital junkies". Research from Stanford's Calming Technology Lab discovered that people tend to take shorter breaths while conducting a web search.

Ms. Anderssen explains that this chronic behaviour has coined the term "unchecked infomania" from researchers at King's College Institute of Psychiatry in London. This condition can lead to physical or mental problems and according to researchers it can also result to a temporary 10-point drop in IQ.

Due to the risks of "unchecked infomania" – a new industry of wellness experts have emerged into this untapped market and apps are created to assist to the path of wellness. However, consumers are being tracked when conducting searches, causing a double-edged sword. If advertisers know more about us, it may make it easier for them to also distract us using the various apps we use to reduce our online stress.

Ms. Anderssen contends that we are causing more stress by becoming consumed with being constantly connected to the internet 24/7. She questions if this connection is just a status symbol for some people, and states that it may be our own egos in dealing with technology that causes the distraction and stress in the first place.

I enjoyed reading the articles from both authors and I can relate to the distraction of social media and anything digital. As a creative person, I naturally got involved learning the latest online graphic

software and all its wonderful tips. I learnt a little of everything but it was impossible to remember the nuances of each graphic program. There was a vast amount of information so I decided to focus on a few main software programs and do a Google search whenever I required more information.

Another example is my connection to social media. It took valuable time out of my everyday life. More importantly, I had trouble focusing and felt drained by constantly updating and checking contacts, along with a nagging feeling of “keeping up with the Joneses”. I removed my connection from some social media links and concentrated on a few social media networks such as Pinterest.

The above articles are relevant to digital marketing because it discusses the vast amount of data available on the internet and ways in which advertisers and marketers can expose their brands to consumers. Digital marketing uses digital channels (i.e. mobile apps, pay per click) to market or promote products and services to businesses and consumers. The challenge is to find the right “niche” for your particular target market and provide “content rich” information to pull the consumer’s attention to a specific service or brand. The marketer’s goal is to try to attract the limited attention of their audience. Digital marketing offers “real time” feedback and experience but on the same note, time and attention is a scarcity for many people and it is imperative to find the proper balance.

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Press Release example:

Winners named in the 2014 BCRSP Scholarship Program

Mississauga, ON, March 17, 2014 – The Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals (BCRSP) is pleased to announce the two scholarship winners for 2014. Congratulations to Ms. Lisa Lowndes and Mr. Hassan Siddiqui both from Ryerson University's Bachelor of Applied Science – Occupational Health and Safety Program. Ms. Lowndes and Mr. Siddiqui were selected out of a group of ten (10) eligible submissions and will each receive a \$4,000 scholarship. All eligible submissions were reviewed and judged by the BCRSP's Scholarship Review Committee.

The purpose of the scholarship program is to enable students to enter the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) profession in support of creating the healthiest and safest workplaces in the world, to provide financial assistance to undergraduate students in OHS, and to raise awareness of the CRSP certification amongst OHS students and faculty.

Awarded annually, the two (2) \$4,000 national scholarships were made available to students enrolled, either full-time or part-time in two, three or four year OHS related program leading to an OHS certificate, diploma or degree at the undergraduate level. In addition to the cash scholarship of \$4,000, a credit coupon will be issued in the name of each winner for the value of the CRSP Application Fee. This coupon is valid for a period of one year after a scholarship recipient meets the three year experience eligibility requirement.

Ms. Lowndes and Mr. Siddiqui met the scholarship's eligibility requirements and excelled in their grades including the mandatory word essay on a topic chosen by the BCRSP. The essays of both winners will be published on the BCRSP website. In recognition of each of the respective programs that Ms. Lowndes and Mr. Siddiqui attended, the BCRSP will also present a \$1,000 award to Ryerson University's Occupational Health and Safety Program.

The BCRSP's Scholarship Review Committee offered some insight in their decision on the essay submissions. "Both of the contest winners had well thought out, well written responses. By focusing on the ethical obligations for an organization and the cost benefits of an OHS program the winners demonstrated a thorough understanding of how an OHS professional's skills increase the value of an organization by offering a competitive advantage and increased profitability" stated Adrian Goodburn, CRSP. Scholarship

committee member, Mark Wasney, CRSP also commented “Lisa and Hassan’s submission’s both stood out from the field. Both essays were clear, succinct, and well thought out.”

The BCRSP hopes that this award will encourage and assist other students to enroll in the scholarship program and also bring awareness of the health and safety professional in today’s workplace.

About the BCRSP

The Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals (BCRSP) is a federally incorporated self-regulating, self-governing, ISO 17024 accredited and ISO 9001 certified organisation established in 1976. The BCRSP sets the standard for the certification of occupational health and safety professionals in Canada to create the healthiest and safest workplaces in the world. Professionalism, high standards, continuous learning, and an established Code of Ethics drive the BCRSP. The BCRSP grants the Canadian Registered Safety Professional (CRSP)[®] designation to individuals who successfully complete the certification process through application assessment, interview and examination. The Board governs its certificants in order that the public interest may be served and protected.

For more information on the BCRSP visit the website at www.bcrsp.ca

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