

IM 355

Zuboff_ch16_life_in_the_hive

Class 2

January 24, 2023

How damaging is new media, especially to young people?

- **What are the principal damages/signs of damage?**
 - addiction, failure to unplug, boredom, confusion, distress, and isolation
- **What are the factors that make young people so vulnerable?**
 - Trying to do Identity formation & relational autonomy
- **How does digital media exacerbate the issues?**
 - The network effect: every social network and new media experience connects and multiplies;
 - young people thinking they need to create a personal brand;
 - comparison effects; looking for “social proof” of acceptance;
 - over indulgence/time spent—Checks a phone 157 times a day;
 - New media is designed to hook them:
 - -Behavioral science and high-end design especially designed to hook young people: engrossing, immersive, immediate.
 - As “traditional” social stuff fades, requirements for digital increase exponentially
 - Surveillance capitalism pushes it all forward: addiction by design
 - “like button” as the start of “the rewards”; news feed as a “social mirror.”

Engineered self vs self-made self

- **Remember: “the self” is a concept. No ultimate “there there.”**
 - **Traditional social science put self-development into a social context**
 - **We know a bit about how that works among people to people**
 - **Mass media interposed comparisons to celebrities and far-flung others**
 - **We don’t know quite as much about how mediated self-development works (but we know a lot about it)**
- **Engineered sense of self is relatively recent.**
 - **We’ve not had enough time to study it and mobile devices make the work very difficult.**
 - **But Zuboff presents many/most of the current concerns.**
 - **She doesn’t spend time with potential up-sides. She believes they get used as bait and then cancelled out by the reality of the engineer’s corporate goals (esp. profit)**

Engineered self

- **The industries do more research than academics/scientists and implement it to sell their products services.**
 - **They operate outside of the human subjects protection protocols required by the government and universities.**
 - **They've gotten pretty good at knowing what works, for them.**
 - **They "work it" 24/7 across ubiquitous platforms and activities.**
- **This doesn't even begin to include factors of the "filter bubble" that social media companies develop as they shovel "the information they want" at adults and young users.**
- **Feeling that "this is just the way it is," youths forget it is engineered rather than inevitable as they are encouraged to conform (FOMO)**

You will inevitably say “I have to build my professional brand.”

- **And you will pawn it off as just being part of Interactive Media production (being in the industries).**
- **Lamoureux’s take on that:**
 - **Your skills and interpersonal and group communication relations will make/break your careers. Good writing also helps.**
 - **Your initial/early career efforts at “Branding” will look sophomoric and silly to you within 5 years.**
 - **If an employer wants to hire you based on your brand rather than your skills/abilities, run away.**