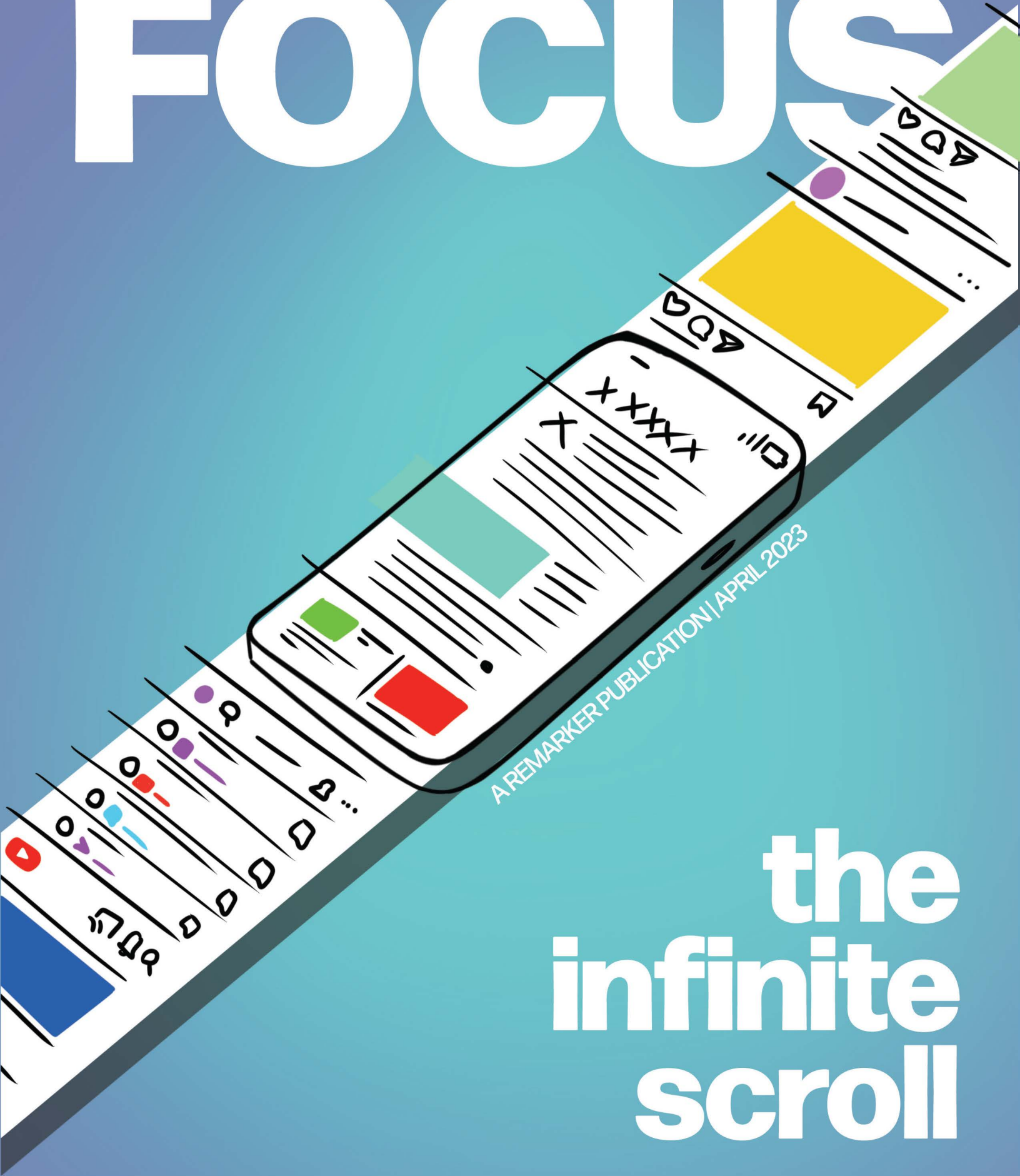


# FOCUS



A REMARKER PUBLICATION | APRIL 2023

the  
infinite  
scroll

# Focus

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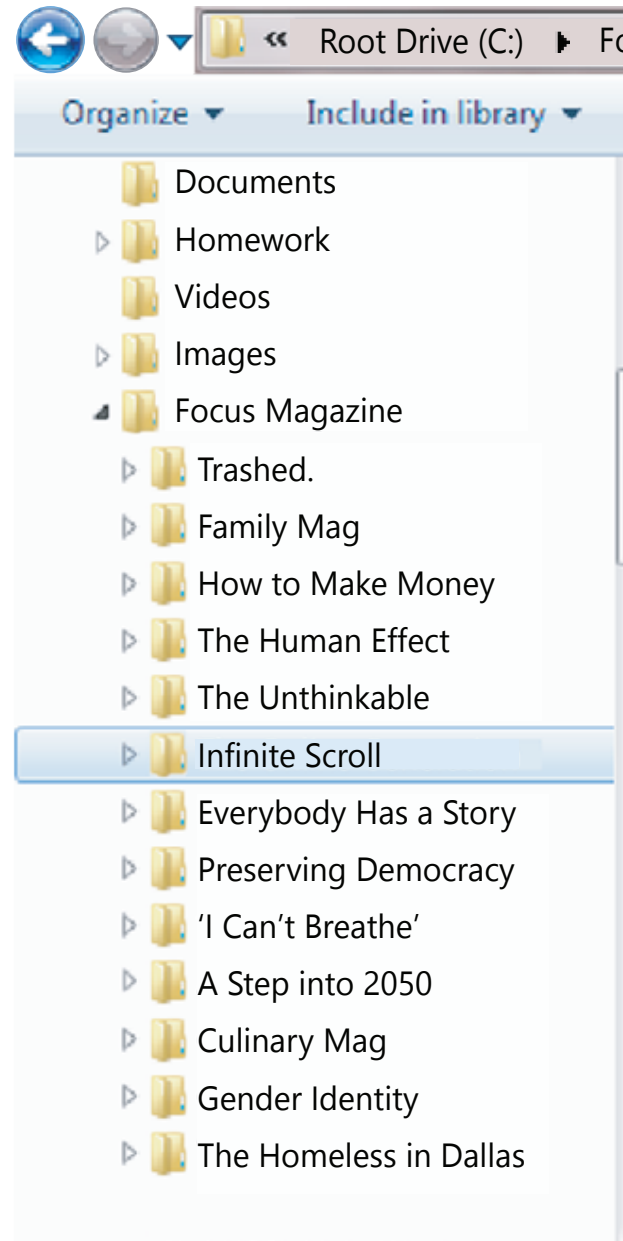
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Focus, a magazine supplement to  
The ReMarker newspaper covering a single topic, is a  
student publication of St. Mark's School of Texas, 10600  
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### Introductory Column - Notepad

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What defines our generation?

By "our generation," I mean students here and right now. What has occupied so much of our time, caused us so many problems and offered so many opportunities? The idea of "tech" in general would be too general. Tech has been improving for many years, but the present day, especially after COVID is totally without precedent in work, school and leisure alike, but somewhere in the memory haze surrounding COVID, the infinite scroll began.

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It started with TikTok and then continued with the many imitators of that app. Content was not sought out, but rather came to the user with only a passive swipe. It supercharged every addictive instinct that came with social media, but it was also clearly enjoyed by many people.

This world is one that brings an incredible amount of new opportunities in nearly every aspect of our

lives, but it has also become completely unavoidable in every aspect of our lives. It is this condition that has become what every one of us at school has experienced, and now we don't have a choice.

Zoom became necessary for many classes, Twitter became an irremovable part of our political discourse and TikTok is capable of creating an international confrontation. A new class of tech CEOs have

a disproportionate impact on society. The infinite scroll has totally changed the world, and its impact on the rest of our lives can only begin to be considered.

From the effect on children to attention spans to new ways of self-studying, this magazine will start to record and understand this impact.

—Myles Lowenberg  
Editor-in-chief

# Molded by media

Faculty members around campus explain tech's role in the lives of Lower School students while also shedding light on the dangers technology can present to younger children.

**Story: Shreyan Daulat, Nolan Marcus**

**I**t demands discovery, it controls our attention and it dominates every aspect of daily life; technology has impacted the lives of people of all ages, but its effect on children is continually scrutinized.

At the school, technology has become integrated into aspects of student life in all grade levels. With tech-savviness being vital to survive in this day and age, computer skills from online math and reading to coding are a key component in Lower School courses per Lower School Computer Science instructor Aimee Whitaker.

"We noticed it was necessary to integrate technology into every subject in different ways, not extensively, but in some form," Whitaker said. "For example, iPads are used in art class for animations, in science to do research and look things up, in music class to simulate notes and keys. Times have changed, and so has the way

we've approached our curriculum."

However, the curriculum is not overly-dependent on technology due to the risks it poses. Head of Counseling Dr. Gabby Reed says tech-use from a young age can inhibit important stages of brain development.

"There is a big explosion of brain development between 11 and 13, so that's a particularly bad time to be overusing technology," Head of Counseling Dr. Gabby Reed said. "There a big explosion between seven and nine for the imagination as well."

**Another concern** with children using technology is the amount of time wasted on their devices.

"One of the effects that you might not think about is that time spent in front of technology is time not spent elsewhere," Reed said. "For example, let's say your toddler is on the iPad for an hour a day;

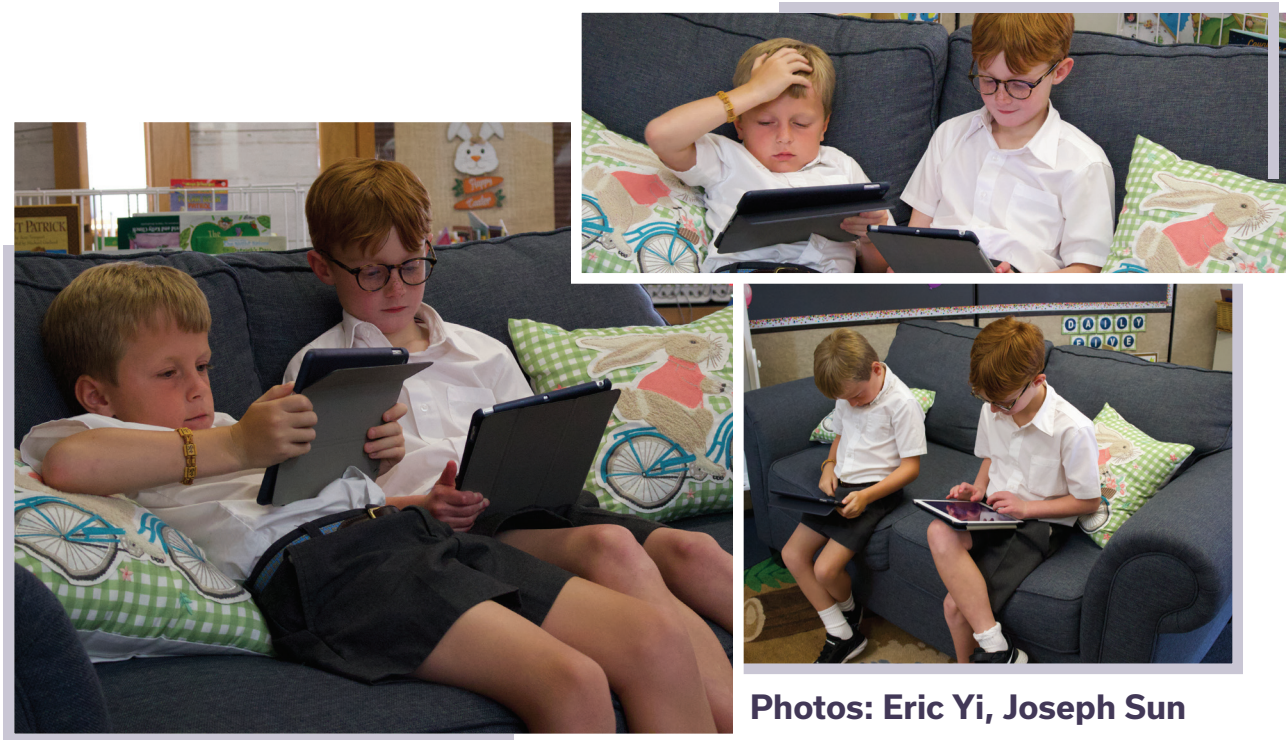
that is an hour they are not playing with their toys, instruments or other people. It is all about opportunity cost."

Reed also shares her concerns for children losing their real-world creativity. "Imagine a toddler is using an app that puts 'fires' out," Reed said. "He or she is in charge, and it's kind of fun moving your finger around putting the fires out, as opposed to that same toddler playing with a fire engine pretending that he is putting fires out on a doll house."

Reed stresses the importance of helping a child develop their imagination in a multi-dimensional world.

"Playing with the app where you rescue people is not using your imagination; you just see what is on the screen," Reed said. "But when you play with something that is 3D — something in real life that you can hold — you are imagining that you are there and you engage with it."

Recently, Reed has seen increased



Photos: Eric Yi, Joseph Sun

**TECH IN THE CLASSROOM:** Though used as teaching tools, iPads often pose problems to the well-being of Lower School students. iPads are used in various Lower School classes, and their use is often integrated into the curriculum.

issues with children being unable to plan something as simple as an afternoon without the use of technology.

“They have a hard time picturing themselves in the future and being future thinkers,” Reed said. “Some of that has to do with not having developed the imagination as children and a lot of that is because they wasted time on devices.”

Additionally, from apps like TikTok where the change of content is rapid, people of all ages become more dependent on passive entertainment.

“Technology can make other things feel boring in comparison,” Reed said. “If you are a person who really likes tech and you are at home, you’ll probably turn to your phone or TV before reading a book. Reading or playing a sport is active entertainment, but we often choose the route of less difficulty: Passive entertainment.”

Head of Lower School Sherri Darver believes the best way to teach kids responsible technology habits is by first educating the parents. Darver has worked with Reed and Whitaker to further this endeavor.

“In discussions with Lower School parents,” Darver said, “we’ve been emphasizing the importance of simply playing a board game with your son or cards or sports, or anything like that. We’ve also been talking about no devices in the bedroom, because kids often are tempted to look at their phones first thing in the morning and last thing before bed — which is a really bad habit to form from a young age.”

For many children, passive entertainment can morph into issues surrounding focus in class and the ability to retain information. Getting distracted becomes easier, and for a teacher, getting

kids’ attention becomes harder.

“Getting accustomed to passive entertainment becomes a problem for children when they are used to constantly being entertained,” Reed said. “For example, Instagram is an app that you keep scrolling through and get quick changes which keeps your attention. You don’t develop the ability to keep your focus on things for a long period of time, and that can translate to work at school.”

But through all of these potential difficulties regarding technology use for children, Reed still believes that some things will never truly be affected.

“I think handling awkward situations face-to-face will be harder because people are so used to texting,” Reed said. “But I don’t think friendships will get any less deeper. I think that’s a human aspect, and everyone will still share deep thoughts and care for one another.”

# Fighting an UPHILL battle



**UP ALL NIGHT:** Students often find it difficult to overcome the addictive nature of social media, and choose to scroll for hours over other practical activities such as getting homework done or sleeping.

Graphic: Joshua Goforth

## Story: Grayson Redmond, Dawson Yao

**W**ith nothing to do, it was basically inevitable. His fingers scrolled, swiped and typed through mounds of carefully filtered content. For hours on end, he watched reel after reel liked post after post.

Just like that, his time is gone.

What should have been time for anything else has turned into absorbing the wonders of social media. And as he closed his phone to finally take a break, he wondered:

Was it worth it?

**As with many** other students, sophomore Jack Frary started using social media apps as a way to connect with his friends.

"It felt like it'd be fun, and I didn't want to be left out," Frary said. "[Social media] definitely helps with communication. I talk to my friends all the time on these apps, like Snapchat. I'd also say I've hung out with my friends more in real life because of it."

Since he began to use social media, Frary has enjoyed using it as a way to connect with not only people he already knows, but also people he doesn't.

"I know it helped people find homecoming dates freshman year, and a lot of my friends got to know their dates better through social media," Frary said. "I also met girls through Snapchat that I'm still friends with now. You don't get that just walking down the street, so social media is a really great way to meet new people."

After a long day at school and sports practices, Frary spends most of his free time on social media instead of traditional activities such as reading or conversing with family members; he suspects many of his peers do the same.

"I typically spend around two and a half hours per day on social media," Frary said. "Over the past four days, I was on social media for eight hours, and I'd say that is about average for people in our grade."

However, even while spending so

## With a seemingly inevitable crawl towards digitization, what are the benefits and disadvantages of social media platforms?

much time on these apps, Frary still recognizes their addictive potential and tries to control it as best as he can.

"I know these apps are addictive, so I try to limit how much time I spend on them," Frary said. "In the end, it's hard to balance schoolwork and social media, so I try to limit my screen time by deleting apps like TikTok during the school week."

Frary now mainly sees social media as a good backup plan — a second option if face-to-face communication is not possible.

"Interacting with people in person definitely develops more of a connection

than doing it on social media," Frary said. "You can have experiences like doing something together or sharing a laugh over the phone, but it's not as genuine. You can't see their facial expressions or body language to really build a connection. But sometimes you can get caught up with other things and social media can be the only option."

**The topic of** how social media stacks up to real-life connections has been in the media for some time, and researchers are finally beginning to scratch the surface of this issue. Humans need intimacy and trust to effectively communicate and function socially, something often missing on social media apps.

"Social media platforms often emphasize metrics over the humans behind the "likes" and "followers," which can lead teens to simply post things about themselves, true or not, that they hope will draw the most attention," Mitch Prinstein, chief science officer with the American Psychological Association, said at a hearing of the Senate Judiciary Committee. "In other words, social media offers the 'empty calories' of social interaction that appear to help satiate

our biological and psychological needs, but do not contain any of the healthy ingredients necessary to reap benefits."

This effect is much more profound in adolescents and teenagers than in adults due to their developing minds. According to Prinstein, the regions of the brain associated with restraint develop much later than those which desire immediate validation and crave attention from peers.

Additionally, this lack of restraint leads to an increased risk of addiction in young people, as, according to Prinstein, research has shown that, "regions of the brain activated by social-media-use overlap considerably with the regions involved in addictions to illegal and dangerous substances."

**Junior Ethan Gao** tries to stay away from social media as much as possible, and has found an increased focus on the things that really matter to him as a result.

"I think one of the main advantages of not having social

media is that you have so much time to do things that are more important," Gao said, "such as focusing on your schoolwork or something like your college applications."

Being involved in many extracurricular activities in addition to his classes, Gao feels as if social media would only serve as a distraction from his many responsibilities.

"Some years, especially junior year, are very busy, and we have to use every little bit of time we have to finish our work," Gao said. "I have sports after school, and with homework and striving for eight hours of sleep, that's a lot to balance. If I put an hour or two of my time into social media use, I wouldn't have time to do much else."

Although he has tried to get into social media before, he quickly found it unimportant, and he criticizes its heavily edited content.

"I've made social media accounts before but then got bored in a day because keeping up with social media was just too much work," Gao said. "I thought it was not worth it to put that much effort into putting out a fake persona of myself or, for example on Snapchat, just taking pictures of the ceiling to send to your friends. What is the point of that interaction? That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard."

However, even though he dislikes certain aspects, he still recognizes that there may be some purpose: namely, connecting with friends.

"The downside of not having social media is that you don't get to see what your friends are doing," Gao said. "Sometimes they can post some interesting things about where they're going, what they're doing and other things like that, which you kind of miss out on. But, you could just talk to your friends in-person if you really want to know."

Gao also warns about the dangers of using social media as a way to make friends, which is a major selling point for most users.

"If you use social media to see how your friends are doing or what trips they went on, that's okay. But, when meeting online friends, you can either get catfished or have a fake relationship. You think you know all about the other person, but you can only see their face."

Age:	Percentage that owns a smartphone:	Percentage that uses social media:
10	42	11
12	71	38
14	91	46
17	95	75

**AVERAGE SCREEN TIME PER DAY AMONG TEENS: OVER 8 HOURS**

Source: Mayo Clinic

# From the Page to the screen.



Graphic: Matthew Hofmann

## Story: Ian Dalrymple, Matthew Hofmann, Joseph Sun

**J**ust a century ago, today's phones were books, computers were scribbled notes and gaming consoles were jumping ropes or chess sets.

Technology consumes us daily, as we stay invested in our OLED screens on the way to work, at school or on the toilet.

**Last year, students were** able to take a new English elective for the first time: Dystopian Literature. English instructor Cameron Hillier '13 wrote the course curriculum, which includes four books. The first of these books is a collection of essays titled *Amusing Ourselves to Death*.

The author, Neil Postman, argues that the telegraph was a turning point in history. Once people could communicate instantly across long distances, they

started talking more and more, no matter how unimportant the subject might be.

"We needed to start filling that space with stuff," Hillier said. "Television took this one step further. There are dozens of channels that just run news 24 hours a day."

Postman argues that, because television stimulates people with nonstop information, and because there is no time to process that information, it erodes people's patience and critical thinking.

"For example, take the Lincoln Douglas debates," Hillier continues. "Over a hundred years ago, people would post up for a picnic to watch them debate for seven hours. Postman's point is: who could do that now?"

Postman says that, rather than

information, the news has become entertainment. That, he says, was how news catered to the population.

"This is how the television has perfected it," Hillier said. "And my premise with this class is how social media has taken this one step further, where companies like Instagram and Twitter have perfected that even more."

There's an approaching danger of disconnected, disembodied information.

"If I wrote a book about a controversial topic, we would have to sit and read it. It is impossible to read it without thinking critically about it," Hillier said. "A tweet decontextualizes information that someone posted since it isn't long enough to convey any serious meaning. But that's how we communicate now."



### THE SCREEN AND THE SCROLL:

With so much in today's world dominated by technology, media consumption and social lives have rapidly changed, yet Postman's book, written decades ago about similar topics, is still being discussed.



Graphic: Creative Commons

We're forfeiting our capacity to engage seriously. We've lost our ability to think."

Senior Brandon Song has taken the Dystopian Literature elective and says that, despite the book's age, it has held up through the years.

"The first thought I had after reading it is that Postman had the right idea," Song said. "The book was published in 1985, and for a person at that time, I think he was pretty spot on about how the world was going to turn out, especially with the advent of technology and its effect on modern people."

However, Song doesn't agree with Postman on everything. While Postman says that inventions like the telegraph, which revolutionized long-distance communication, led to useless information overload replacing meaningful thought, Song believes the

problem has more contemporary roots.

"I don't think that some of our problems started when we could transfer information quickly from place to place," Song said. "I think it's more of the development of modern media, not really the speed of how information travels. Just because we can send emails and texts doesn't mean that people will be immersed in technology."

Regardless, Song largely agrees with Postman, and reading *Amusing Ourselves to Death* has had an impact on the way he lives his life.

"In general, I've tended to stay away a little more," Song said. "That doesn't necessarily mean I've been reading more books; I've just been abstaining from looking at too much media on my phone."

Song says that he would recommend the book to others.

"I think it's a good read, especially if you're looking at the 21st century," Song said. "I think it definitely shows a new perspective on technology, and I would definitely recommend it."

Not only is the book enjoyable to read for many, but its powerful message about technology, the truth and civil discourse is something Hillier hopes students will grasp.

"The destruction of truth is a root of so much of the division and hate that we see in the country now, and a lot of that stems from decontextualized information through technology," Hillier said. "Today, people cannot even agree on the most simple things to lay a foundation upon which to have a good debate, so my hope is that students recognize this and learn from it."

**"A TWEET DECONTEXTUALIZES INFORMATION THAT SOMEONE POSTED SINCE IT ISN'T LONG ENOUGH TO CONVEY ANY SERIOUS MEANING."**



# Teaching technology across generations

A Marksmen-led club founded in 2019 is going strong with one goal in mind – helping older generations grow more comfortable with our increasingly digitized world.



Story: Arjun Khatti, Linyang Lee, Akash Manickam

**T**hey sit scattered in pairs throughout the retirement home's dimly lit conference room.

Two beige office chairs face each open computer, their occupants — one far older than the other — on the edge of the cushions with their noses less than a foot away from the screen.

Brows furrow in concentration. The elder asks a question. The teenager answers.

Some residents, pen in hand, scribble down notes: "How to create a shortcut in Word."

They're already halfway through a notepad.

A sophomore helps a woman transfer contacts in her address book to her phone. She tries it out and calls her best friend with just a tap on the screen.

A junior helps a man create a shortcut on Messages — it's the 90-year-old's favorite app.

The man scrolls to his son's text but stops to show his young helper an odd message:

Click [HERE](#) to start your 30-day weight loss journey!

They laugh.

All around the room, people of all ages solve problems, exchange stories, share smiles.

Together.

**In a world changing constantly**, many senior citizens have found themselves stuck on issues with the technology now essential for their lives. Taking note of this issue, tech-savvy Marksmen in the Teaching Technology Across Generations (TTAG) Club work throughout the school year to alleviate the older generation's technology problems. Founded by Sai Thirunagari '21, TTAG is currently run by senior Aadi Khasgiwala, who believes the club addresses an issue that many overlook.

"People assume, and even I did before I got involved with TTAG, that the older generation would just figure out technology just like we did growing up," Khasgiwala said. "But since we've been surrounded by technology at such a young age, it's easy for us to adapt to it. For them, it's not as easy."

Community service at this school impacts a variety of people through tutoring, food packing, construction and more. By addressing another community in need of help, TTAG strives to expand the ways in which Marksmen can serve.

"TTAG brings a different style of

help that addresses a unique demographic," Khasgiwala said.

"Aside from technology, the club spreads the word that service, in general, should extend across generations."

TTAG's accessibility makes it an easy option for senior citizens struggling with technology.

"There are not many people who are helping with technology for free," Khasgiwala said. "A lot of people will get hired to fix certain issues, but we're high school volunteers."

The club holds sessions every week, alternating between visits to the Ventana by Buckner and Edgemere senior living centers. This level of reliability sets the club apart from other forms of technology help that residents may turn to.

"For a while, the only time we would regularly get tech help was when the St Mark's students came," said Cynthianna Hahn, a resident at the Edgemere location. "That consistency of knowing when they would be here — Sunday afternoons in the seminar room — has always been helpful."

While club members originally focused on teaching residents different aspects of technology through weekly lectures, they



Aadi Khasgiwala



Cynthianna Hahn

have since moved to a more personalized approach.

“What works best for us [residents] is independent, individualized instruction,” Hahn said. “And one of the things that I’ve liked is that the volunteers are very good at telling me what to do but not doing it for me. It takes much more patience for them to say, ‘You’re supposed to click on that key. No, not that one — it’s the arrow that goes the other way.’”

Even though most of the issues are easy to fix, resolving even the simplest technological problem can make an impact on the resident.

“There was one woman that couldn’t get into her husband’s old computer,” said sophomore Jack Frary, one of the coordinators for the Ventana by Buckner location. “He had passed away. She was very happy when we were able to get into it. Then there are other times when residents will be like, ‘This means so much to me, can I pay you or something?’ Obviously, we say no to that. But I know they’re definitely very grateful for our help.”



Jack Frary

This individualized attention not only resolves issues like learning to use devices, sending emails and texting, but also creates connections.

“We helped [one resident] fix his email,” Frary said. “When I first met him, I didn’t know he was one of my friend’s grandparents. As he was showing me his

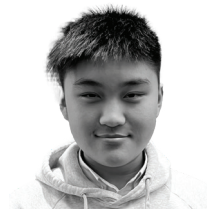
grandkids, and I was like, ‘Oh, I know your grandkid!’ I actually met and talked with him again at Grandparent’s Day.”

This grandfather has dropped by TTAG regularly to talk. Others have, too.

“There’s this one person who comes in every single time to show us her Instagram and talk about her third-grade grandson who goes to St. Mark’s,” sophomore volunteer Max Yan said. “She comes in and asks, ‘What is this? If it says ‘following,’ does that mean that I’m following them? Or does it mean they want to follow me? What is ‘following?’ How do I get rid of these ads?’”

In fact, many residents come in just for the conversation.

“We had someone come in with a CD player that wouldn’t turn on, but it was just missing a battery,” Frary said. “And then once we replaced the battery, she just sat down and talked to us for 30 minutes about her family and her grandkids, and then she asked us about our futures and college plans.”



Max Yan

Regardless of how it comes about, Khasgiwala believes chatting, telling stories and sharing advice are essential aspects of the TTAG community.

“Part of the club is just conversing with the residents and learning about them as people,” Khasgiwala said. “I remember helping an author one time, and he was trying to figure out how to include a diagram in his book. It seemed

pretty refreshing for him to talk about his books with high schoolers who are also helping him at the same time. Residents want that connection because a lot of times, not many people are talking to them. They don’t have the constant outlets that others have with sports, clubs and school communities. The conversation that extends beyond just technology creates more of a community between us.”

Ultimately for volunteering Marksmen, TTAG gives them an opportunity to broaden their efforts in a meaningful way.

“Most of the interaction we get with the older generation is through our grandparents,” Khasgiwala said. “TTAG is a way to expand that. So, instead of just having two or four people to help with technology issues, Marksmen can impact 20 or even 40 during their time with the club. It helps build that community beyond just family.”

## TTAG LEADERSHIP

President: Senior Aadi Khasgiwala

Edgemere Coordinators: Sophomore Jack Frary, sophomore Zachary Yang

Ventana Coordinators: Senior Hudson Bloom, senior Henry Nichols, junior Ethan Gao

**BRIDGING THE GAP** Since TTAG was started in 2019, the club has been serving senior residents in two local living centers – Edgemere and Ventana by Buckner. Left is the first group of volunteers in 2019, while right is a scene from a recent meeting.



# Social media or spyware?

TikTok is quickly becoming one of the most-used platforms in the world. But is there a darker purpose lurking behind it?



**Story: Aaron Augustine, Myles Lowenberg**

One app alone has skyrocketed in popularity across the world over the past few years, taking its dominant place in a field as prominent, lucrative, world-important — and personal — as social media.

It's the app, obscure less than half a decade ago, now used daily by a majority of teens, according to Pew Research's polling.

It's the app banned on state-owned devices by the U.S. Senate, 19 governors and counting.

It's the app described by the chair of the House of Representatives committee on China as "digital fentanyl." Its owner is the subject of a federal investigation over alleged spying on journalists.

Beloved by many teens and hated by many in the government, TikTok is at the center of a divide that spans generations and geopolitics — and forces authorities to make decisions about its usage everywhere from the White House to high schools.

**TikTok is currently embroiled** in a personal security crisis, which has forced many public officials to be banned from using it on their personal devices, but these concerns extend to everyone.

When determining whether or not to ban an app on campus, chief technology officer, Thomas Eckel considers many reasons.

"Each [app] will have to stand on its own merit or fall on its own merit," Eckel said. "TikTok is one that we would not allow. It's not allowed to be downloaded on school devices."

For Eckel, the potential security risks are just too much.

"We look at where [TikTok] is headquartered," Eckel said. "So if they're from a country that the FBI lists as potential threats to the U.S., that would determine whether it gets blocked."

While TikTok claims to keep user data secure, such promises can be empty.

"You upload pictures, and where those images are actually being saved is important," Eckel said. "TikTok sends a lot of their data back to China."

While individuals have to be cautious about their own personal data, the schools is responsible for much more.

"We're entrusted to protect quite a bit in terms of personal banking information," Eckel said. "It's personal data from students, teachers, former students and parents, so any potential breach needs to be blocked."

In addition to security issues, TikTok can show inappropriate material to underage audiences.

"For certain age groups there's inappropriate content," Eckel said, "most students here are under 18. And so there's really no way on Facebook or Instagram to limit what you can see. That kind of opens the door up to content that isn't age appropriate for the majority of the student body."

TikTok and other social media applications also can serve as a distraction in the classroom.

Teachers have looked for ways to fight against the disruption caused by social media. Matthew Anderson, a teacher of

10th grade English in Coppell ISD, believes that the key to preventing interruptions is through establishing relationships with students.

"It can be a big distraction," Anderson said. "At the beginning of the year, I set up the expectations in my classes, which are everybody puts up their own personal devices before class starts."

Anderson's students are also not allowed to download any social-media apps onto their school-issued devices, which he believes help to alleviate any possible disruptions.

"The students that I teach have school-issued iPad," Anderson said, "and they are not able to put any kind of social media apps on them right now. So I don't really encounter a lot of that. We don't really interact with social media in the classroom right now."

Some concerns have been raised about whether the banning of TikTok on state-issued devices could lead to a dangerous precedent, in which the government can ban certain applications, however, Anderson believes this to be a misplaced worry.

"As both a public employee and a teacher," Anderson said, "I don't see TikTok being used as an essential tool for information. So I don't necessarily view it as some sort of intent to censor information."



**Thomas Eckel**

# Learning OUTSIDE classrooms

```

53 @app.get("/test-data")
54 async def chart_data(request: Request) -> StreamingResponse:
55     response = StreamingResponse(generator(request), media_type="text/event-
56     response.headers["Cache-Control"] = "no-cache"
57     response.headers["X-Accel-Buffering"] = "no"
58     return response
59
60 # query url parameters
61 @app.api_route("/update", methods=["GET"])
62 async def update(wind_speed: float, wind_direction: float, temp:float, humid
63     global c_test
64     c_test.update({
65         id: {
66             'wind_speed': wind_speed,
67             'wind_direction': wind_direction,
68             'temp': temp,

```

Story: Will Spencer, Aaron Liu, Zack Goforth



**PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMING** Senior Neil Song has been self-studying coding throughout the past few years, taking up projects in his own time. Past projects include Discord bots, AI apps, and a cloud-based weather data website for information engineering.

## Why'd you start self-studying coding?

I started a programming course when I first started coding, but I dropped it around a third of the way through because it felt kind of boring for me. The exercises were all sandboxed and seemed pretty pointless with no clear applications. That's how I got started with self-studying and coding on my own.

## What was the process you went through to learn coding?

I started by using the C++ language, and I did that by working on olympiad problems and learning to solve harder problems. In the process, I learned a lot from resources online, like from reading problem solutions and also using online reference sites. After a while I got started with app development with my friend [Senior] Anthony [Wang] and we worked on a lot of projects together, like creating a Discord bot that gathered stats about popular words in a server. I learned a bunch just going through documentation on GitHub and StackOverflow forums during those projects.

## Did you self-study any other subjects?

**How'd it compare to self-studying coding?** I self-studied a decent amount of AP classes too, like Calculus BC, Chemistry and Physics C Mechanics, though coding is definitely way easier to self-study, just due

to the sheer amount of resources available on the web. Also, coding just doesn't have that many underlying concepts to learn — it's mostly just practice, intuition, and Googling.

## What was the hardest part about self-studying?

The hardest part was when I first started reading full documentation on my own. It's a big transition to go from being told how to use tools (like through guided tutorials) to figuring out how to use tools you're just given descriptions for (like API library documentation).

## What was your favorite part about self-studying?

My favorite part was getting to work on so many different projects. Self-learning for coding in my mind is almost synonymous with project-based learning, and being able to make stuff I wanted to make was very nice.

## Would you say self-studying is worth the effort? What kind of people would you recommend self-studying?

For me, self-studying was definitely worth it, especially for subjects like coding which are more skill and time-based rather than just intelligence-based. As for which people self-studying would work best for, mainly just people who are self-motivated

by some sort of intrinsic passion for coding or a strong long-term goal.

## What advice do you have for other people trying to self-study coding?

Google is your best asset, tool and friend. Learn how to Google well, and you'll learn how to access the knowledge of essentially 8 billion people on the internet.

## Do you still want to go to college for coding? Why?

I think one challenge of self-studying coding is learning about strict algorithms and theory, so that's the kind of stuff professors can really help with teaching. However, I think college is most useful for networking, career opportunities and getting a degree — that's almost a must in Computer Science now, with the field getting so competitive.

## What's your biggest takeaway from the self-studying experience?

Self-learning is an incredibly beneficial skill — especially if you're a coder, since the field is moving so rapidly, and tech is constantly becoming obsolete. On the other hand, even if you're not into coding, self-learning also trains your problem solving skills and teaches you to be resilient in solving your own problems, which, nine times out of 10, will be important and relevant at some point in your career.

# TIMELINE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

By Morgan Chow

## 1983

The internet is officially invented through the communications protocol called the Transfer Control Protocol.



## 2011

Snapchat, the viral video-sharing service, launches, transforming the way younger citizens communicate through "snaps" and "stories."

## 2010

Instagram is founded as a photo-sharing app and would be bought by Facebook in 2012.



## 2018

TikTok merges with Musical.ly to quickly become one of the most popular apps in existence.

## 2020

The pandemic hits, sending a surge in social media use as users spent more time at home.



## 2021

Former president Donald Trump is barred from using Facebook and Twitter.

## 1993

The first mobile smartphone, the IBM Simon, is invented. It included many functions and a touchscreen with a QWERTY keyboard.

## 1996

Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act is passed to shield companies from being sued for what is published on their platforms.

## 1997

The first modern social network Six Degrees is launched. It allowed users to create a profile and interact with other users.

## 2007

The original iPhone is invented, allowing for people to access information through digital media on a single device.

## 2006

Facebook and Twitter are launched, both surging in popularity in its ability to give practically anyone a platform.



## 2005

YouTube, the first video hosting/sharing site, is launched. Reddit is also launched in this year and would quickly become an extremely popular social commentary site.

## 2022

Gonzalez v. Google first goes to court. The current judicial review in 2023 by the Supreme Court could challenge Section 230 and change whether tech companies are liable for the content posted on their platforms.

## 2023

Senators unveil a bipartisan bill empowering the government to ban TikTok and other platforms that pose threats to user data.



# GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Technological advancements and their usage are a uniquely generational experience – they both shape and are shaped by attitudes toward communication, information access and socialization. It is no surprise, then, that people of different ages would view the technologies available to them in wildly different ways.

**Story: Nikhil Dattatreya, Ian Dalrymple, Lawrence Gardner**

**P**op culture references, cute cat videos, homework help and WhatsApp family reunions.

**Through the internet**, our world has grown more interconnected than ever, but one thing that has increasingly begun to divide us is the very technology we use to connect to one another.

As technology use becomes ubiquitous in many aspects of everyday life, we have to ask ourselves whether we can reach a unified idea on how technology should affect our lives.

Senior Ian Dalrymple, junior Lawrence Gardner and senior Nikhil Dattatreya talked to fourth-grader Rayaan Sadruddin, eighth-grader Blaize Schuhmacher and Rekha Mehendale, grandmother of junior Raja Mehendale, to gather perspectives.

**Ian Dalrymple: When did you get your phone?**

**Fourth-grader Rayaan Sadruddin:** Sometime in 2020. I was in second grade.

**ID: How often do you use your phone?**

**RS:** I probably use my iPhone for about

an hour a day. I think work and games are equal. Half an hour for work, and half an hour for games.

**ID: How do you think having technology has affected your life?**

**RS:** I feel like it's made it better. Now, I actually have something to do during the day.

**ID: Do you think it ever impacts your social life or your interactions with friends?**

**RAS:** I think it's helped. Since we're always busy on the weekends, the only way I can interact with my friends is by talking to them on the phone. That way, I can see them after school every day.

**ID: Do you think it improves your learning in any way?**

**RS:** A little bit. I'm starting to type faster, and I know how the computer functions. There's also websites to learn other stuff. Our teachers send out websites to help us, and it's actually helped me a lot.

**ID: How much time on your phone do you think is too much?**

**RS:** I don't know, maybe three hours a day.

**ID: Do you have a time limit on your apps?**

**RS:** No.

**ID: How has it changed your family?**

**RS:** I think it's brought my family a little bit closer. My parents are going on vacation this weekend. But I can still talk to them anytime I want. Because, with a phone, we can socialize no matter how far apart we are.

**ID: What would a world without technology look like to you?**

**RS:** Everything in my life would probably just be a little boring. Like reading books all day.

...

**Lawrence Gardner: When did you get your phone?**



**Eighth-grader Blaize Schuhmacher:** I got my first phone when I was 12 years old.

**LG: How many hours a day do you use your phone?**

**BS:** I use my phone for around two and half hours a day. My screen time for today was two hours and twenty-two minutes.

**LG: What was the breakdown of your screen time?**

**BS:** I had one hour and 14 minutes on social media, 37 minutes in other and six minutes on creativity.

**LG: What technology do you find yourself using the most?**

**BS:** I use my phone, TV and computer. I watch TV almost every day and I use my computer and phone for schoolwork and homework.

**LG: Do you feel technology is a distraction?**

**BS:** I think it can be a distraction if you can't control yourself, but if you have self control it can also be good.

**LG: Do you find it to be a distraction for you?**

**BS:** I feel that I can control myself pretty well but sometimes I slip up and end up watching YouTube or Netflix.

**LG: Do you feel technology is essential to everyday life?**

**BS:** I think it is important because it can really help people connect, but it can be dangerous if you rely on it too much.

**LG: What would a world without technology look like to you?**

**BS:** I think it would make social life a lot harder because I wouldn't have the opportunity to communicate easily with

my friends and make plans with them.

...

**Nikhil Dattatreya: How have your views on technology changed as you grew up?**

**Rekha Mehendale:** Technology has become more and more advanced much faster than we thought it would.

It can be an amazing thing when you use it for good — with the internet, the world is becoming a small place, where you can reach any information anytime you want.

**ND: Do you find yourself reaching out to old friends through the internet more than over the phone?**

**RM:** Technology has helped us a lot through Facebook and WhatsApp, especially if you are outside of the United States, where WhatsApp has a big user base.

Video calls are a great tool for me to get in touch with my older friends and family outside of the United States, so they have been very helpful for people our age.

**ND: When did you first start reaching out to people over the internet?**

**RM:** I grew up in the 1960s, and the only way we had to communicate was a dial-operated radio. I would say we started reaching out to people [over the internet] in the early 2000s, but until then, it was foreign to us. I think it was a lot later than others, and people our age are not that technically savvy.

It takes time for us to learn — we might have to reach out to our grandkids to show us how to do it, but once we get the hang of it, it is wonderful.

**ND: Do you remember when you got your first cell phone?**

**RM:** I believe it was around 2001 or 2002. FaceTime and other video chats weren't

available on the phone, and we were just using it to receive calls.

Slowly, as they started improving the models, the phones had new features for us to use, but somebody had to show us how to do that. We used to be afraid to touch the [cell] phone in case something might break, so it took us some time, but they have been wonderful.

**ND: Do you meet people nowadays more in-person or online?**

**RM:** Mostly in-person. I would say most people in my generation are more comfortable to meet in-person.

**ND: Do you worry about the usage of technology by young kids nowadays?**

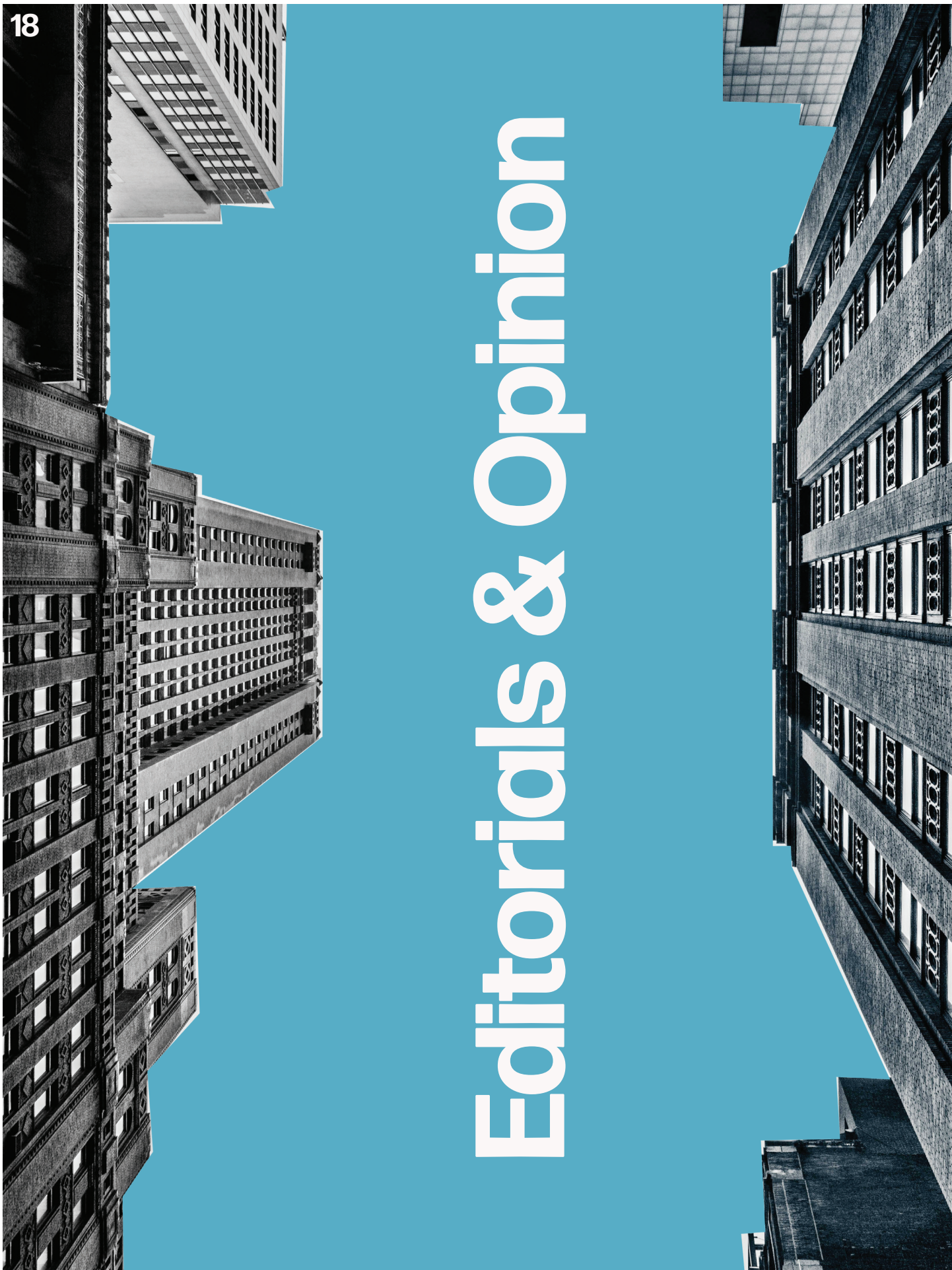
**RM:** Like I said earlier, technology is a wonderful tool when you use it for good, but nowadays, some people use it for nonsensical things which they should not be using it for. I saw on the news that children in high school are using AI to write their essays. They don't even have to use their brains to write; they just go to a website to have essays written for their college admissions. Nobody uses their brain to calculate anything: the calculator is right there in front of them.

I am also afraid of young children getting into trouble by using smartphones to befriend people they don't know. Technology has to be used wisely, and parents have to keep an eye on their children's phones.

I found another problem last year, when I had gone to visit my niece. We were taking her 8-year-old daughter to the school bus stop. I asked her how many of her friends take the school bus, and she said about 10 or 12. Then I said "You're going to go talk to your friends there, right?" She said, "No, because all of them are looking at their smartphones." That childhood interaction is gone because everyone was busy with their phones. It was sad to hear that.

**"SHE SAID, 'NO, BECAUSE ALL OF THEM ARE LOOKING AT THEIR SMARTPHONES.' THAT CHILDHOOD INTERACTION IS GONE BECAUSE EVERYONE WAS BUSY WITH THEIR PHONES. IT WAS SAD TO HEAR THAT."**

# Editorials & Opinion



Is drastic

**ACTION**

needed?

The downsides of social media are widely acknowledged, but is a recent proposal to ban it for all people under 16 the solution?

One specific type of policy looms over the discourse on youth and social media: a ban on all people under a certain age — sixteen is most commonly suggested — being able to use it. Although it doesn't seem likely under the current government, the idea has been winning over many of those in power.

Most recently, Missouri Senator Josh Hawley proposed the Making Age-Verification Technology Uniform, Robust, and Effective (MATURE) Act, which would make it illegal for social media companies to allow someone to create an account unless they verify the account will belong to someone over the age of sixteen. Hawley's press release announcing the Act said: "At best, Big Tech companies are neglecting our children's health and monetizing their personal information. At worst, they are complicit in their exploitation and manipulation."

**There are clear reasons** why this policy is attractive to many: a shortening of attention spans, kids losing familiarity with interpersonal relations through

an entire generation of iPad parenting and anger, division and hatred spread through poorly-regulated and badly-led social media platforms are recognized as serious national issues by people of all political stripes. Although there could certainly be other factors involved, teen depression has risen massively since the advent of mass social media usage among kids. Wanting to tackle these issues with decisive action and ensure the welfare of the many kids who have been negatively affected by social media is an admirable cause. But a blanket ban is not the solution.

The obvious downside to this idea is that even if it was a completely good one, it would still be unenforceable. In fact, the current mandated age for being able to approve the terms and conditions with social media companies is 13, but this has gone unnoticed by the vast amount of kids under that age who freely use social media. If the government cannot endure kids that young are abiding by current policy, how would it be able to regulate high schoolers?

More importantly, the portrayal of social media's adoption by minors

as uniformly catastrophic misses so much of the nuance of our childhoods. Nearly every kid will acknowledge its downsides, but social media has resulted in many positive experiences: there is now an incredibly easy way to find useful information, socialize with people it would otherwise be tough to contact and hold governments and public institutions to account. Even at a young age, it is impossible to dismiss these benefits.

**The optics of a top-down ban** on something fundamental to many kids will spark a backlash that will result in an effect opposite to the intentions of the ban's proponents. We should encourage responsible and healthy social media usage, but it should start with the users themselves, not a mandate from a higher authority. There is a consensus among kids that social media is often harmful and should be used in moderation — governments should preserve that by not making that idea seem imposed by someone else. Social media being truly beneficial to society at large must start with the individual.

# WHY DON'T YOU JUST GET OVER IT

## SENSITIVITY ONLINE BY MORGAN CHOW

# YOU'RE FAKING IT STOP BEING SO SOFT SUCH A SNOW FLAKE

**A**s of right now, there are hundreds of thousands of videos and over 16 billion views of #trauma on the social media app TikTok. It's clear that the traditional boundaries of sharing personal information have changed.

This influx in mental health talk has warranted a pushback reaction for some. Are the videos part of an overblown trend, or has social media truly opened the gateways for a new language for mental illness?

**This trend has allowed** our society to learn about the previously silent struggles of the people around us, but with it comes a new array of problems that has dismantled the potential positive effects of this new education.

One side deals with real issues like users faking conditions for popularity or rampant misinformation. But these problems do not excuse the blatant

insensitivity of what is said online in response.

From offensive comments based on race to accusations of "being too soft," the internet is a cesspool of hatred. Even in cute puppy videos, one guy always complains about how a baby playing with the face can lead to a dog's severe illness.

When it comes to conversations about mental health, the same thing happens. We're lucky to be in a generation where we can more freely have these conversations about issues like mental health, so it's disheartening to see them treated as a sign of weakness or worthy of shame.

People are different. Some are fine being the butt of a joke. Others are not. So

instead, let's all be more cognizant of what we say online. The internet is a powerful tool for us to learn and empathize more with the people around us, but the lack of accountability that comes with it leads some to post without any regard for the consequences.

Social media is our most potent means of interacting with new concepts and people. But with this new platform comes the responsibility to respect those we come in contact with.

One may consider a reaction overblown, but we all have lived different lives. We should not judge others for having a particular response when we have not lived in their shoes. Something that may be run-of-the-mill banter for one might be bitter reminders of past pain for another.

We will all be better off if we always remember we don't know everything about those around us.



Morgan Chow

# Can ChatGPT Write this Column?

**Spoiler Alert: I asked ChatGPT to “Write a funny column pointing out the limited functions of ChatGPT outside of highly structured and generic writing not relevant in the real world, anyway.” I’m pretty sure mine was better.**

**By Myles Lowenberg**

I went back to my search history to find out exactly how long ChatGPT was really interesting to me, and it was around two days in December.

But, hey — those were two really fun days. By the way, ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence that you can, well, chat with and ask to do some funny things. I made this poor robot create and converse in a language called Gloobyglarbus with the words sounding exactly how you expected from the languages’ name and write a sonnet in Shakespearean dialect about exactly how many dogs are in the world and explain the Israel-Palestine conflict, except it’s about people who hear “Yanny” versus people who hear “Laurel” (“The conflict has been ongoing for decades and has caused much suffering and loss of life on both sides”).

**After my first days of using ChatGPT**, I now know how my dog feels when he gets a squeaky new toy to chew on and rip apart until the stuffing gets everywhere. And then it got boring, quickly. Its poems about Peter Griffin finally meeting Joe Biden could never be in true iambs, it kept creating new grammatical formations without warning in the Toothpaste-ian language, and even if ChatGPT could become proficient at those technical details in the future, it would still be forever doomed to write

like a soulless robot.

In case you ever become sentient and/or get access to our nuclear arsenal, please don’t take that personally, ChatGPT. Good writing is just not something you’re made for — and I know that sounds super condescending, but I mean it in the best way

Of course, the big controversy around ChatGPT has something to do with my main criticisms of it: that it sounds like a soulless robot and is incapable of good writing. There are plenty of school assignments that are fine with both of these. I don’t know how all of society never saw it coming. Those with knowledge of artificial intelligence were so quick to point out that of course the blue-collar jobs in things like manufacturing and trucking could get replaced by robots. But the rote regurgitation of widely-known facts in the exact same paragraph structures over and over again that I excelled at in school? Why, a robot could never do that!

The discovery that it’s a whole lot easier for a robot to earn a 5 on an AP exam than be part of an assembly line in a car factory reached the over-18 crowd much more quickly than I expected. In flowed

the opinion pieces and shocked coverage of the children’s horrible desecration of the beautiful, predictable, generic essay. (The obvious solutions are either more interesting prompts or a return to handwritten tests, by the way.)



**Myles Lowenberg**

As much as people like to downplay it, yes, grades in school are one of the more important factors in determining a future after high school. So if those grades could also be achieved by a robot, maybe we should reevaluate their worth. Maybe we should place more emphasis on creativity or independent thought or literally anything that can’t be accomplished by a bunch of tubes inside a metal box.

ChatGPT will only get better, so the world of school has only two paths ahead: either go back in time or go forward. Wind the clock back a decade and give everyone handwritten tests, or unleash a new era of more interesting assignments that a robot could never complete. Take this little chatbot as a chance to finally rethink all the aspects of school that have made people dislike some of my favorite subjects. Maybe it’ll take a robot to make our thinking less robotic!

# The new home for EXTREMISTS

Story: Aaron Augustine and Neil Yepuri

**M**isinformation used to be harder to find. Sure, it's always been there, but it was never consistently widespread, across multiple platforms worldwide.

With the rise of social media, that changed.

Now, worldwide, people can find partially or totally untrue information on these platforms with the click of a button. And, as they engage with this content, the platform gears up more and more related information – likely untrue and potentially maliciously spread.

**Unfortunately,** this series of events is becoming increasingly common on social media, due to different apps and algorithms being designed to feed viewers content.

"Facebook and more recently TikTok are prime examples of social media sites that use algorithms to their advantage, manipulating users' content to show them what they want," computer science instructor Kurt Tholking said. "What we saw in the last election, especially on Facebook, is probably the biggest example of manipulating what users see through algorithms."

In programming, algorithms are specific sets of instruction designed to accomplish a task in a finite amount of time. On social media apps, they are used to track a user's interactions with certain posts, and then provide new posts based on these interactions.

US Code 47 Section 230, enacted in the Communications Decency Act of 1996, grants legal immunity for tech platforms from being liable for potentially harmful posts on their sites. Initially, this statute was added to encourage free speech on internet platforms. Now, it is beginning to bring about some unfortunate side effects.

"Now, the dangerous part is when it gets into false information," Tholking said. "If you read and even react or comment on something, then it will give you more of these type of articles."

The use of this system, though, can create an echo chamber-like situation where increasingly extreme beliefs are compounded — and intensified.

"So if you make a comment, and if you'd like more information, you're only hearing more of what you want to hear," Tholking said. "You're not going to get a lot of opposing view, and in the chance that you do, not a lot of it is fact-

checked."

And, with social media being largely unchecked legally, this system is quickly leading to changes in the political machinery of the country — especially with politicians constantly under the public eye.

"Politicians know they have to say the things that get reactions — the things that get likes and comments," Tholking said. "They're not going to make a safe comment if possible, because it doesn't get any reaction."

With the intentional spreading of misinformation coupled with the circular content algorithms, it is now easier than ever to become radicalized online. And, Upper School counselor Dr. Mary Bonsu says that young people are especially at risk.

"Children are more vulnerable because their frontal lobes have not been completely developed," Bonsu said. "Inhibition and those executive functions that relate to sound decision making are still developing."

However, many see this risk as unavoidable, given the growing presence of social media in the lives of young people.

“The thing about online social media is that it’s very attractive,” Bonsu said. “People like to connect with their friends and it’s a very easy way to do it. It’s free, it’s available and it’s abundant.”

With a growing number of young social media users, exploitation becomes easier — especially for malicious groups.

political or powerful gain.”

But, the outlook for the future is not solely negative. Tholking believes that there could be a positive solution in the works, but he notes that fixing the problem is largely counterproductive for these companies.

“I know there are institutions and

On campus, the Counseling Department is already beginning to combat this.

“We are definitely planning on targeting media literacy and digital safety,” Bonsu said. “We are inviting a speaker to talk to all of Upper School about both the fun and dangerous aspects

“EXTREMIST GROUPS WILL EXPLOIT THE FACT THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT EXPERIENCED.”

“If a young person is inexperienced, they might be more susceptible to an extremist group,” Bonsu said. “Extremist groups will exploit the fact that these young people are not experienced.”

This problem is one of the more dangerous and unforeseen side effects of social media.

“[Social media apps and websites] are having a very difficult time keeping up with the traffic and filtering things out,” Bonsu said. “When social media platforms came out, it was all about sharing with your friends. I don’t think anyone foresaw exploitation of this for

organizations out there that say they’re cleaning it up or working on it,” Tholking said. “But, it’s not in [the social media companies’] interest to shut down. It’s in their interest to keep people on their platform.”

Bonsu also thinks there is a way to fix this issue, but it will probably be challenging.

“There’s so many different parameters; social media companies need to do a better job of monitoring their traffic,” Bonsu said. “And then people who use social media need to be more educated and be more aware.”

of being on social media and ways in which you can navigate these things.”

In computer science, teachers are also on the task, especially when it comes to younger students.

“In my eighth grade and Upper School computer science classes, we talk about data collection, big data and about these companies and their algorithms, trying to educate them,” Tholking said. “A lot of times, you get off to college, get broader views and then you’re at that age where you’re about to vote. But it starts with people using the apps at a younger age.”

Poll:

Did they make the right decision?

Absolutely!



50%

Definitely not!



50%

Vote

**DIFFERENCE OF OPINION:** As a part of systems that encourage user interaction, many media platforms have polls that make users choose between two opposing views.



#### SMALL DURATION, LARGE STATURE:

Though Vine was discontinued in 2017, it paved the way for the present wave of similar platforms. In October of 2020, TikTok surpassed 2 billion mobile downloads worldwide.

**T**he year is 2015. Vine, a pioneer in short-form video entertainment, is at its peak of popularity. For Vine's 200 million active users, the platform's six-second videos are a delight, a pleasant distraction, a guilty pleasure or something in between. But for many others, seeing millions of people consuming bite-sized videos again and again is inexplicable — and alarming.

In May of that year, Microsoft published a scientific report including a provocative claim: The average human attention span has dropped to eight seconds (shorter than a goldfish!) In a social climate where Vine reigned supreme, such a shocking discovery was lightning in a bottle for reporters. *Time*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and just about every other publication in America announced to the world that *you* now have an eight second attention span.

Hindsight tells us that this statistic is bogus, as later reporters failed to identify the actual scientific source of this claim. Though this debacle demonstrably failed to reveal anything of value about the human mind, it succeeded in revealing our societal fear of short-form content. When  
six

second videos are king, we can't help but worry they're affecting our attention for the worse. It's been eight years since 2015. Vine is gone, but short form content is picking up steam yet again. With the rise of TikTok, YouTube Shorts and Instagram Reels, the word is out once more that our attention spans are slipping. Are our minds at stake, or is this just the goldfish ordeal all over again?

**While your "standard" form** of online video content might be about 10 minutes long, platforms like Vine, TikTok and YouTube Shorts feature videos usually shorter than a minute. Upper School Counselor Dr. Mary Bonsu worries that too much short-form content might acclimate the user to an environment of high audiovisual stimulation.

"With the apps going frame by frame, they're only 10 seconds long, giving you this little 10-second shot of dopamine," Bonsu said. "Then you move on to the next shot, and then you move on to the next. It probably impacts your ability to sustain attention because you get used to being stimulated at a rate that is incredibly fast."

Bonsu theorizes that the power of short form content might be in its ability to hijack deep-seated instincts in the brain.

"We are drawn to things that are interesting and shiny," Bonsu said. "Our eyes have evolved to be able to catch patterns and things that are a just little bit off or outside of the norm because that's what we needed to do to survive. You need to be able to spot predators.

You need to be able to see when something's not right in your environment to protect yourself."

Reflecting on the possible harmful effects of such stimulation, Bonsu suggests that a brain



Dr. Mary Bonsu



# Stimulation. Stimulation. STIMULATION!

Recently, short-form content has been on the rise. As the content we consume gets shorter and shorter, are our attention spans shortening too?

Story: Arjun Poi, Hilton Sampson, Will Spencer

constantly bombarded with pleasure signals is less likely to be thoughtful or creative.

"If you're getting something interesting every five seconds, then you don't even give yourself time to think and be creative," Bonsu said. "It's just stimulation, stimulation and stimulation."

Bonsu claims that short-form content rewards the part of the brain that gets distracted, training the user in a way that is not conducive to daily productivity.

"When you are tasked with things that require sustained attention — like being a student, studying, getting good grades, academic achievement, your work, things with your job and career that require you to be fully focused and fully paying attention — if you train your brain to have difficulties with sustained attention, then you're not going to be able to complete tasks on time," Bonsu said. "If you're not able to ignore distractions, which is also a facet of attention, that will make it very difficult for you to complete tasks."

Along with the rise of YouTube Shorts and TikTok, many conventional internet content creators have switched to shorter form videos. Along with this shift, there are those who worry that short-form

content will displace longer-form videos. Film studies teacher Mark Scheibmeir is, by all accounts, a greater friend of long-form video. Scheibmeir, however, sees short-form video not as a threat but instead as just another fluctuation in the free market of consumer content.

"It's more just evolution," Scheibmeir said. "As we move through it, we the audience will decide whether or not we want short clips over and over and over, or if we want longer narratives."

Scheibmeir asserts that short-form content is unlikely to take many eyes off of longer videos, films or TV because they appeal to different audiences.

"I think the people that are drawn towards film and TV are drawn to it because of the longer narrative," Scheibmeir said. "I don't think I've seen the longer form stories on social media. Different people are drawn to different things in that regard. I wouldn't mourn the loss of people consuming social media instead of film because what they want is different."



Mark Scheibmeir

Though long-form and short-form content seem to be competing forces on the surface, Scheibmeir simply sees them as different artistic choices that different creators can make.

"I don't view those [videos] as threats or anything," Scheibmeir said. "I think it's all a continuation of this visual art form that we're all working on together."

Though short-form content stands to eat into long-form video's share of the market, Scheibmeir believes that long-form audiovisual media will always be around as a form of art if not as a form of mass entertainment.

"Theater doesn't seem like it's really going to die ever," Scheibmeir said. "We support it as an art form. I don't know that film would ever truly die. It may just become more supported as an art form. I'm here for all of it."

Though they're certainly different in important ways, Scheibmeir views the overall purpose of all visual media as the same: telling stories. To Scheibmeir, long and short-form content will always have their places because the stories we want to tell are both long and short.

"We're always going to tell stories, it's how we make sense of things," Scheibmeir said.

"IF YOU'RE GETTING SOMETHING INTERESTING EVERY FIVE SECONDS, THEN YOU DON'T EVEN GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO THINK AND BE CREATIVE. IT'S JUST STIMULATION, STIMULATION AND STIMULATION."

# Building and retaining a multimedia audience

Online networking, though relatively new, has quickly become a key aspect of some careers. Specifically, growing a platform can be extremely beneficial for large companies and small content creators alike.



## Story: Shreyan Daulat, Dillon Wyatt

**F**acebook — 2.9 billion monthly users.  
 Youtube — 2.5 billion.  
 Instagram — 1.4 billion.

It's reasonable to say all Marksmen contribute to these and other social media statistics — posting pictures with friends on Instagram, streaming their favorite Youtube creators, scrolling through hours worth of TikTok videos.

Looking beyond the plethora of things social media brings to the table — local and global connections and sources of information, to name a few — it has transformed the job market and made a thriving online presence crucial for long-term success, for large companies and small content creators alike.

But building an audience and retaining is not for the faint-hearted. Kami Mattioli is Director of Digital Content for the Minnesota Timberwolves, and she has spent over 11 years in social media strategy and marketing and execution for media brands, live events and sports teams.

**Before the introduction** of social media into the sports world, fans would have to rely on only a couple sources for their news. Now, there is a democratization of sports information that allows fans to find out about anything and everything sports.

“As a fan, I think people are now more

connected than ever to the teams and to the leagues that they watch,” Mattioli said. “I think it's become such a critical part of how stories are told about sports in general. It's a really cool thing to have these platforms where people from all over the world can watch a game in different time zones. They could be on Twitter and be talking about it in real time, or they could see the highlights on Instagram or Weibo. Wherever they are in the world, they're still able to connect to this team, which I think is something that social media, specifically, has made unique.”

Another sport drawing a hefty audience online is ninja, a form of obstacle racing popularized by the reality show American Ninja Warrior. Senior Christian Youst, a four-time American Ninja Warrior world champion, began posting his talent on TikTok in early 2020 and has amassed over 300 thousand followers and over six million likes.

“I started posting during the pandemic because there was a lot of dead time for me to get into it,” Youst said. “I was against TikTok originally because it was known for just dancing videos, but there's

really a whole lot you can do with the app. You can make it whatever you want. So, I was pretty successful with my ninja videos and have just stuck with it until now.”

Similar to Youst, Mattioli has found great success using social media platforms to gain a bigger following for the Timberwolves organization as well as for networking in general.

“There's such a connected community of people who work in different facets of sports, and you start to get in conversations with them, whether it's on Twitter or LinkedIn,” Mattioli said. “I've gotten a couple of the jobs that I've had in my career through connections I've made on Twitter or LinkedIn that became real-life connections. I really like the ability to approach anybody and learn something from them in a space where you might not be able to see this person face-to-face, but you still feel like you know a little bit about them and they know a little bit about you.”

With these networking opportunities abounding, pursuing a career in sports has become easier than ever. Mattioli says



**Kami Mattioli**



**Christian Youst**

that the first step in the process is finding something you can see yourself pursuing for years to come.

“I think it’s really about finding what your community is interested in and what you’re passionate about, but also what you’re good at,” Mattioli said. “When I started, I worked for Temple University when I was a junior in college, and I got

participate in a way that’s authentic.”

Youst also speaks to the necessity of finding and pursuing a passion in the video-sharing world since it’s likely to take many videos to achieve viral status.

“If you really want to grow your platform, you have to stick with it, because I’m sure your first videos are not going to do very well,” Youst said. “It’s just a given.

avenues and types of content that have come out that have become more popular,” Mattioli said. “People who make memes, art, or parody videos, those really weren’t part of the sports community before, but now, that’s a big part of it. There are so many different ways to contribute to the conversation now that I think that’s going to continue to evolve. The hot topic that

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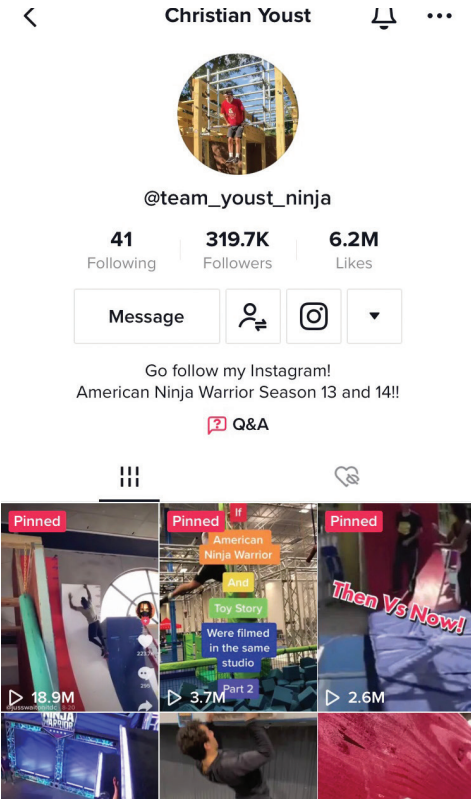
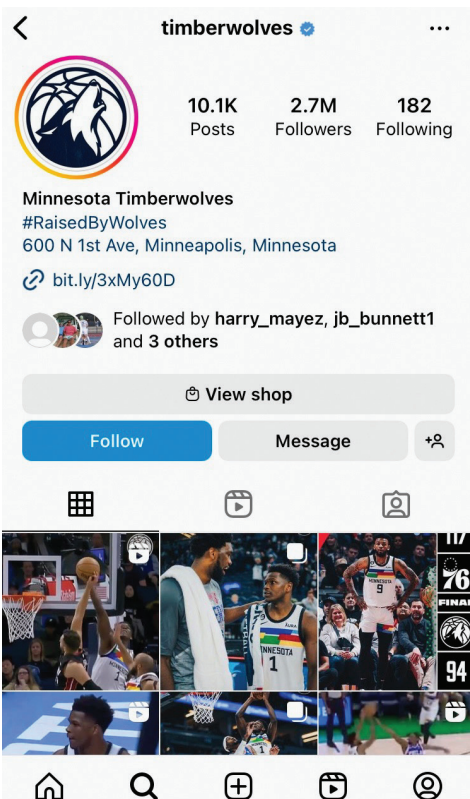
that position because I was on Twitter a lot. I was watching a lot of live sports in Philadelphia, and every time the Phillies would play, there’d be a live conversation about the game on Twitter. You’d start to see these accounts emerge, it would be the same people over and over again talking about the team. It’s important to be a regular contributor to that community or whatever community you’re in, and

But if you do it long enough, you’ll get a video that goes viral. Find a theme that you can stick with and, eventually, you’ll get videos that get more attention that people want to see.”

With the versatility of social media outlets, there is a niche for everyone who has the drive to pursue it, and no formal education is needed to get started.

“I think that there’s been so many

everyone talks about is the metaverse and augmented reality and eSports. Whether that’s going to be successful I don’t know, and I can’t predict that, but I think we’ll see a lot of people enter into that space that are from non-traditional backgrounds. We’ll see a lot more people who don’t go to college or who come from more non-traditional majors carve out their own paths.”



**WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS:** The Timberwolves’ Instagram has engaged millions through their consistent and appealing posts (left). Youst’s TikTok page features ninja videos with millions of views (middle). Mattioli’s posts sometimes spotlight specific players (right).

