



## A&E

SJSU production continues filming amid pandemic

Page 2



## Sports

Wide receiver finishes his sixth season, lands with NFL team

Page 4



## Opinion

Pros and cons of social media explained

Page 5



ILLUSTRATION BY HANZ PACHECO

# Pot entrepreneurs want equity

By **Stephanie Lam**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Some local marijuana dispensary entrepreneurs expressed frustration and disappointment with San Jose city leaders' lack of urgency to utilize more than \$700,000 in grant money from the state to create a cannabis equity assistance program.

The city of San Jose's staff applied for and received a \$560,082 grant from California's Bureau of Cannabis Control (BCC) in October 2019 and another \$150,000 in April 2020.

Establishing a cannabis equity program can assist individuals, who are from communities that are negatively or disproportionately affected by cannabis criminalization, establish their cannabis business in California's legal market, according to the BCC Equity Grant Funding memorandum.

Equity programs can help businesses receive grants to fund their operations, acquire permits and license waivers and access workshops related to industrial success. The BCC designated millions of dollars toward grant funding for cities with cannabis equity programs after it gained support in the California Cannabis Equity Act, which passed in 2018.

The goal of San Jose's equity assessment is to identify neighborhoods, police beats, census districts and demographics impacted by cannabis criminalization to better direct outreach and develop an equity program, according to an April 28 city council memorandum.

David Rodrigues is a San Jose native and owner of iFly Wellness, a local cannabis delivery service. He said he was excited the city received the grant money, but hearing the lack of progress the city has made led him to apply for existing cannabis equity programs in other Bay Area cities, including Oakland.

"[Equity programs] help people who have been in trouble that are on the right edge now," Rodrigues said in a phone call. "I like the idea of the program. I've seen it work, I just want to see San Jose make it work."

Oakland and San Francisco began receiving funds

from the BCC in 2019 to aid their current cannabis equity programs.

Anthony Russell, a San Jose native and owner of Evergreen Collective, a local cannabis delivery service, said he stopped applying for equity programs in other cities because of how confusing and lengthy San Jose made the process seem.

"We haven't tried for equity at this point because we don't know much about the programs," Russell said in a phone call.



**We're the grassroots. We're the community. We're the ones that should get a first chance to get equity permits or get our foot in the door. We should be the one that gets the opportunity. And we're not getting that.**

**Anthony Russell**  
local cannabis entrepreneur

He said Evergreen Collective is currently inactive and plans to start another service in Burlingame or Emeryville.

Russell said people like him who have operated in the market before it was legalized are the ones who should be given resources from the city.

"We're the grassroots. We're the community. We're the ones that should get a first chance to get equity permits or get our foot in the door," Russell said. "We should be the one that gets the opportunity. And we're not getting that."

Daniel Montero, chair of San Jose Cannabis Equity Working Group, said he doesn't mind that the city is taking its time to approve a cannabis program because it allows for staff to "figure it out."

"The money given to San Jose [for] studying and implementing the cannabis program is like pre-game," Montero said in a phone call. "Once you get the program, it's game time. At this stage, we don't see the money

... we've got to educate our political leaders and our business communities."

The local equity working group was formed in 2018 and comprises social justice advocates who help ensure people have equitable access to San Jose's cannabis market, according to the group's Facebook page.

Montero said city staff has taken steps to make itself ready for an equity program.

In March 2019, after receiving the first grant, city staff changed the municipal code to include criteria for equity applicants. The code defines an equity applicant as someone who's lived in San Jose for four years or longer, has been arrested or convicted for a crime relating to the sale, possession, use or cultivation of cannabis and lived in an area where at least 51% of residents are considered low-income.

Montero said the city staff doing these things is a sign that people's concerns about surviving in the industry are being taken into consideration.

Rodrigues, who has been working in the cannabis industry for almost a decade, said stigmas surrounding the cannabis industry hinder many entrepreneurs when they pursue their dispensary business.

"It's hard to fight for your rights in the cannabis industry," Rodrigues said. "You're already stereotyped ... [they'll say] 'You're not about it. You don't want to do it. You're not a hard worker' [and] stuff like that when that's not the case."

Follow Stephanie on Twitter  
**@StephCLam**

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SJSU ASSOCIATED STUDENTS



# Film production society resumes screenplay

By Madilynne Medina  
STAFF WRITER

During the 2020 Spring semester, radio, TV and film alumnus and screenplay writer Matthew Hewitt pitched a script for a dark comedy called “Staying Alive” at the annual San Jose State script pitch contest. He had no idea his first-place screenplay would be produced during the coronavirus pandemic.

Hewitt’s film features Randy, a fatigued minimum-wage worker played by theater arts alumnus Cody Nichols, who discovers he’s immortal after he tries to commit suicide.

Randy is confronted over his decision to kill himself by Arthur, his long-distance friend, played by radio, TV and film senior Gage Phillips, who arrives for an unexpected intervention.

The film was produced by the SJSU Film Production Society, a student-run club that gives students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in the film industry through the creation of original projects.

Hewitt said his concept behind Staying Alive was based on aspects of his real-life occurrences and written pieces he read in the past.

“It was kind of based on experiences. I had friends drifting apart, then trying to get closer and then coming back, seeing they’d changed and maybe not for the better,” Hewitt said.

Nichols said while his character requires the



PHOTO COURTESY OF MATTHEW HEWITT

Gage Phillips, a radio, TV and film senior, portrays his character Arthur after an eight month pause in filming because of COVID-19.

embodiment of intense emotions, such as heavy themes of depression, he was able to dive deep into his role by combining his personal experiences and his ability to immerse himself in the character.

“I would go out on a limb and say that most people who are entertainers or actors, either currently [are] or have suffered from depression in the past. That’s often what leads us toward becoming actors,” Nichols said in a Zoom interview. “For a moment, it means we don’t have to be ourselves and subconsciously, that’s kind of why we love it.”

Nichols said he

experienced depression in his early 20s, making it easy to draw from those feelings.

Reflecting on Randy’s distant friendship with Arthur, Nichols said the film also explores the difficulty of maintaining friendships in adulthood.

“We have these friends coming out of high school [and] going into college, but a lot of them fade away,” he said. “And sometimes just holding on to friends while maintaining responsibilities like a job, school, family, friends. It gets hard to hold onto some of the people you care about.”

The production of the film was delayed by nearly

eight months because of COVID-19, which presented many challenges for the screenplay crew.

Genevieve Villarreal, a radio, TV and film and communications senior and the film’s producer, said the team faced a multitude of difficulties after resuming production in spring, such as minimizing the size of the crew and reconsidering COVID-19 precautions.

She also said she felt bad having to cut people from the crew but they had to follow Santa Clara County coronavirus guidelines.

“We had to cut the crew in half, just so that it could be safe for all of us to be in

the same room together,” Villarreal said.

Despite the unforeseen pandemic, Hewitt said the postponement of the film granted him extra time to revise the script.

“Everything in [the script] was intentional to what I wanted,” Hewitt said. “I didn’t know for sure if it was going to work or not but I was like, I know why I want everything.”

Staying Alive’s filming has concluded and it’s currently in its post-production editing stage, but the proposed release date is still in discussion.

Hewitt said the team is

hoping to host a special premiere for the crew this summer and for SJSU at a later date.

Nichols and several other cast and crew members expressed their praise surrounding the film’s process and approach regardless of the complications.

“Even though this is just a student film, this felt just like I was working [at] a big studio, because they were all on top of their game and it was hard not to admire it,” Nichols said.

Follow Madilynne on Twitter @Madilynnee

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## ANALYSIS

## Societal prejudice influences media stereotypes

By Christina Casillas  
STAFF WRITER

Racial gender tropes in media, such as the depiction of a promiscuous or angry Black woman, continue to be prevalent in the entertainment industry, especially in reality television shows.

Jalylah Burrell, a San Jose State assistant professor of African American studies, said if media is put out by members of society that hold oppressive values, the entertainment industry will reflect those views.

“While multidimensional portrayals of Black womanhood remain rare, stereotypes of Black womanhood abound and the same stereotypes written into scripted television programs inform the depiction of Black women on reality television,” Burrell said in an email. “Additionally, the post-production process allows for the crafting of storylines on reality television that hew to the stereotypical depictions of Black womanhood that viewerships [accept] and savor.”

When a racial stereotype runs rampant in entertainment, it can wrongfully depict a group of people and give others outside that race racist or offensive conclusions they accept as the truth.

Though not as explicitly jarring as blackface and minstrel shows, racism and oppression continue to manifest itself in different forms on the big screen.

According to the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia’s website, there are two main types of tropes found in media related to Black women that portray harmful personas: the Jezebel stereotype and the Sapphire caricature.

A “Jezebel” is defined as a shameless and morally corrupt woman with ties to a biblical character, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary.

In the context of a racial stereotype, a “Jezebel” would be a “bad” hypersexual Black woman, according to a post on the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia’s website.

The hypersexualization of Black women can be traced back to when white men colonized Africa in the 1800s. European white men considered

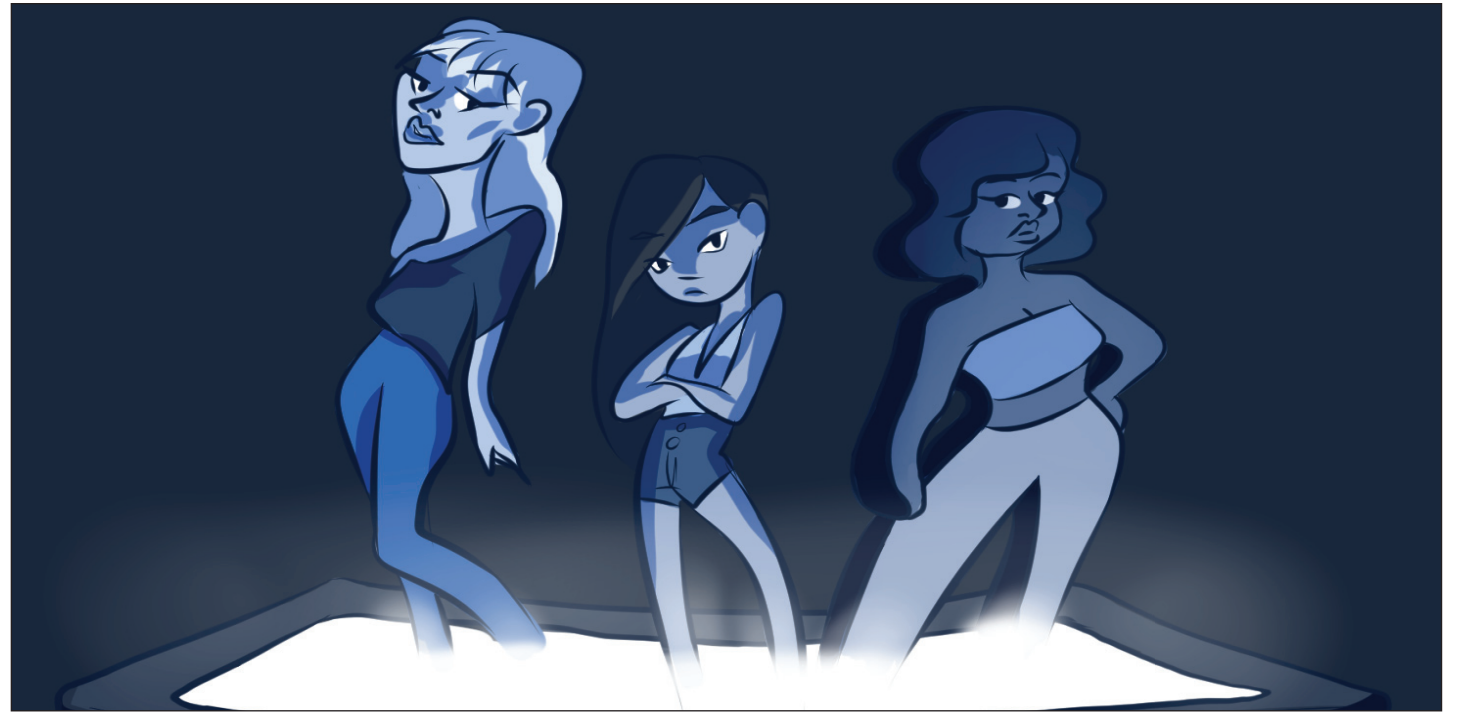


ILLUSTRATION BY DAISHA SERMAN

“

**You never really saw these all-natural Black women, they’ve always had to kind of change their hairstyle, change their personality. They just have to fit this mold otherwise they won’t be successful.**

Natasha Harris  
communications senior

the minimal, non-Victorian-style clothing African women wore as a sign of promiscuity, one of the posts detailed.

Across Europe, the Victorian-style fashion consisted of women wearing ankle-length dresses with sleeves down to the wrists and showing very little visible skin, according to The Fashion History Timeline, an online

project put together in 2015 by the Fashion Institute of Technology art department.

Meanwhile, the “Sapphire” caricature portrays an angry mammy stereotype that emerged in the 1800s and continued into the mid-900s called “sassy mammies.” This caricature conveys the image of an ill-tempered and belligerent woman, according to a post on the Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia’s website.

Edith Urbano, a childhood and adolescent development junior, said she’s watched advertisements for season 5 of the UK reality TV show “Love Island” in which a contestant, Yewande Biala, was portrayed with a stereotypical persona.

“They made her out to be very sassy, very stereotypical,” Urbano said. “She got a lot of hate for it and I’m assuming production made it that way.”

While some people push for more representation in media, especially in reality TV shows, others feel the representation is not always accurate or sincere.

Communications senior Natasha Harris said she noticed that while representation of Black women in entertainment is limited,

including in reality shows, Black women often shape themselves to fit a euro-centric mold.

“You never really saw these all-natural Black women, they’ve always had to kind of change their hairstyle, change their personality,” Harris said. “They just have to fit this mold otherwise they won’t be successful.”

Burrell said these portrayals and stereotypes can have real-world impacts that affect Black women.

“To encounter people who refuse to treat you as an individual, but as a perpetual boogeyman makes it difficult to live,” Burrell said. “Even worse is how the proliferation of stereotypes can make it difficult for some Black women to disentangle the stereotype from who they are and who they want to be.”

Follow Christina on Twitter  
@christina\_casiNEED A  
MATH TUTOR?

I am a UC Berkeley alum and math tutor who is currently accepting new students. I hold a BA in Applied Mathematics and English and have passed the CSET (California Schools Credentialing Exam) in Algebra and Calculus. I have experience tutoring college and high school students, including help with homework, exam preparation, and problem-solving strategies. I have worked with students with dyscalculia and will help them succeed. Most recently, I have tutored online through Wyzant, answering questions and explaining concepts. I am currently offering online Zoom tutoring sessions. I am flexible with scheduling and can work with students as long as they need to master the coursework.

For more information about my services, please contact at (415) 640-5057 and leave a voicemail. I can also be reached by email at [chrischjackson@gmail.com](mailto:chrischjackson@gmail.com).

I look forward to working with you!

Berkeley graduate  
Chris JacksonIcons created by Eucalyp and  
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## ABOUT

The Spartan Daily serves as San Jose State’s top news source and was named the best student newspaper in the state. New issues are published Tuesday through Thursday during the academic year with the website updated daily.

The Spartan Daily is written and published by San Jose State students as an expression of their First Amendment rights.

Reader feedback may be submitted as letters to the editor or online comments.

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Columns are the opinion of individual writers and not that of the Spartan Daily. Editorials reflect the majority opinion of the Editorial Board, which is made up of student editors.



# Spartan moves on with Green Bay

By Royvi Hernandez  
STAFF WRITER

After his sixth season on the San Jose State football team, wide receiver Bailey Gaither is leaving the program with a Mountain West Conference Championship ring and has secured a spot on the Green Bay Packers as an undrafted free agent.

On May 1, the last day of the NFL draft, Gaither signed with the Green Bay Packers along with six other undrafted players from different universities.

After graduating from Paso Robles High School in 2015, Gaither joined the Spartans and spent his first season as a redshirt, which is a year that a student-athlete doesn't compete at all against outside competition, according to the NCAA website.

Redshirt student-athletes still practice with the team on scholarship or financial aid, they just can't compete.

In the following 2016 season, Gaither played in all 12 games and finished the season with a total of four pass receptions for 43 yards and one touchdown.

Gaither started in 24 games and played 44 in his entire career at SJSU, though his 2018 season was cut short after tearing his achilles tendon.

"That hurt. It sucked. No one thought I was going to be back where I am today but I did," Gaither said in a phone call.

He said going from being an extremely active football player to not being able to walk for six months, changed his perspective on life and made him stronger.

"I didn't need anyone else's opinion, I still had it in me," Gaither said. "I had a lot to



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERRELL LLOYD, SJSU ATHLETICS

Wide receiver Bailey Gaither begins a run during an Oct. 2, 2020 game against New Mexico.

prove to myself. I'm glad I'm on this side of it now."

He said he comes from a "big football family" and he's been passionate about the sport since he was nine.

"My dad played football and sports has always been an outlet in my family," Gaither said.

After coming off his injury in 2019, he was immediately able to bounce back and play in all 12 games, hauling a total of 52 passes for 812 yards and six touchdowns.

Nathan Nguyen, kinesiology junior and SJSU football fan, said seeing Gaither grow as an athlete has been remarkable and

his speed and shiftiness speaks

for itself.

"The ability to not just catch the football, but serve as a return man makes him a promising player," Nguyen said in an email.

After a remarkable season in 2020, the Spartans won the Mountain West Championship title for the first time in 27 years on Dec. 19.

"Nobody believed [in] us, not even people from San Jose [State] thought we were going to do it, but we did," Gaither said.

He said having such a successful season amid a world-changing pandemic brought the team closer

together.

"It will be something I remember for the rest of my life," Gaither said.

His father, Robert Gaither, said playing for the Spartans helped his son turn into a mature young man and learn life experiences.

"Not only did he learn about football but life in general, living, going off to college and maturing," Robert Gaither said in a phone call.

Robert Gaither said he's appreciative to all the people who supported his son during his last six years at SJSU.

Nguyen said Gaither is one of the best receivers SJSU has ever had and deserves to be recognized with "the best of the best."

"With 16.5 yards per catch for his career, outstanding indeed," Nguyen said.

Gaither said he's ready for the next chapter in his life: professional football.

"My time at San Jose has been great, especially after this last year, which made the whole experience worth it," Gaither said. "I'm very thankful for this opportunity, I'm excited and I have a lot to prepare."

Nguyen said Gaither will bring size and athleticism to the Packers, where he could become a dependable target for whom Nguyen believes is one of the most talented quarterbacks in the NFL, Aaron Rodgers.

"Just like many other fans, I believe in him and I expect him to become a dependable receiver for years to come regardless of what team he goes to," Nguyen said.

Follow Royvi on Twitter | @lesroyvs

## CLASSIFIEDS

### CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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63														64
														65

ACROSS

- 1. Breaststroke
- 5. Heron
- 10. Short run
- 14. Zero
- 15. Apprehensive
- 16. Countertenor
- 17. Beers
- 18. Ornament
- 20. Eyewear
- 22. Cassock
- 23. Dawn goddess
- 24. Nuzzled
- 25. Accessory
- 32. Stimulate
- 33. Corporate symbols
- 34. Clunker
- 37. Sea eagle
- 38. Cut
- 39. South American country
- 40. Former North African ruler
- 41. A type of small mammal
- 42. Chip dip
- 43. Empirical
- 45. Cut of meat

DOWN

- 49. What we breathe
- 50. Poster color
- 53. Term
- 57. Avatar
- 59. Mining finds
- 60. Copied
- 61. One after eighth
- 62. Adolescent
- 63. Style
- 64. Bloated
- 65. Arid
- 1. Catch
- 2. Bulwark
- 3. Notion
- 4. A female massager
- 5. Not the youngest
- 6. G G G G
- 7. Record (abbrev.)
- 8. God of love
- 9. Apprentice
- 10. Philippine tribal chief
- 11. Assumed name
- 12. Rock
- 13. Sharpened
- 19. Parental sisters
- 21. Achy
- 25. Breezed through
- 26. Cut back
- 27. Small and weak
- 28. Lacquer ingredient
- 29. Exploded stars
- 30. Go-between
- 31. Neither
- 34. Sandwich shop
- 35. Constellation bear
- 36. Twofold
- 38. A single-reed woodwind
- 39. Nationalists
- 41. Faked out an opponent
- 42. Hissy fit
- 44. Ribald
- 45. Water vapor
- 46. Musical time
- 47. Implant
- 48. Any animal with no feet
- 51. Jewelry
- 52. Dogfish
- 53. Picnic insects
- 54. Algonquian Indian
- 55. Lascivious look
- 56. Feudal worker
- 58. N N N N

### SUDOKU PUZZLE

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

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8	6	4	7	3	2	1	5	9
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What is a witch's favorite subject in school?

Spelling

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ILLUSTRATION BY AUDREY TSENG

# Social media: Does it help or hurt society?

## Mindful digital usage benefits well-being and mental health



**Madilynne Medina**  
STAFF WRITER

After more than a year under the coronavirus pandemic's harsh restrictions, including stay-at-home mandates that stripped us away from everyday human contact, it's almost terrifying to imagine what our lives would have been like without social media.

Social media is one of the most influential forces of this time. It connects us to each other, lets us share our stories and gives us access to the rest of the world in the palm of our hands.

Out of 7.6 billion people around the globe, 5.1 billion have a mobile phone and 3.2 billion are active social media users, according to a Jan. 31, 2019 DataReportal article.

DataReportal is a data and analytics organization that aims to provide insights on global trends, according to its website.

During the height of COVID-19 restrictions from January to April 2020, most people relied on the dynamism of social media platforms, including Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok and Facebook.

However, people need to be aware of and mitigate the intensifying negative effects from high levels of social media activity so they can reap the networks' benefits.

Social media use has been directly associated with worsened mental health amid the pandemic, especially in adolescents and young adults, according to a Sept. 17, 2020 peer-reviewed article by the National Center for Biotechnology Information.

However, social media has had a monumental change in the way society operates. Society has become incredibly dependent on social media, but it's far too embedded in our lives to delete now. This means that we must start cultivating the way society uses social media and make a move toward mindful use.

According to a Nov. 19, 2019 study by Harvard University (HU) researchers, three positive health outcomes have been associated with mindful social media usage: social well-being, positive mental health and self-rated health.

In a Jan. 6, 2020 HU article, Mesfin Bekalu, research scientist and co-contributor of the 2019 HU study, said he was intrigued by the findings that suggested social media has

positive effects on the well-being of young people.

"Social media may provide individuals with a platform that overcomes barriers of distance and time, allowing them to connect and reconnect with others and thereby expand and strengthen their in-person networks and interactions," Bekalu said in the article.

**Instead of blaming the content, people need to take back control and manage their use so the digital world can transform our connections in a positive way.**

Mindful usage is a key component to monitoring the ways social media can affect you. Although some aspects are out of the user's control, such as what others choose to share, it's crucial to maintain a healthy balance between the virtual world and physical world.

In order to mindfully use social media, users should consider their intentions before opening the app, according to a Feb. 5, 2020 University of Minnesota Medical School (UMN) article. If they're unsure about their intentions, they shouldn't open the app because, at that point, it's just a reflex.

Other examples of mindful use include reminding yourself social media isn't reality, posting the content you want instead of trying to earn likes and avoiding negativity and interacting more to simulate a realistic virtual presence, according to the UMN article.

Social media represents the relationship between the content and the viewer. Instead of blaming the content, people need to take back control and manage their use so the digital world can transform our connections in a positive way.

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## Excessive media consumption has detrimental side effects



**Jamie Bennett**  
STAFF WRITER

Social media allows billions of people around the world to connect and it may seem harmless on the surface, but the effects these platforms have internally and on society outweigh all the benefits.

Social media platforms have more than tripled their userbases from 970 million users in 2010 to 3.9 billion in 2021, according to an April 26, Backlinko post. Backlinko is a website for search engine optimization training and link-building strategies.

With the global average of two and a half hours spent on social media per day, a person will spend around six years of their life browsing content if current trends continue.

Instead of scrolling through a fake reality, people could be using that time exercising, socializing or advancing their education.

Social media consumes students' time and leads to lower grades for those who actively scroll through platforms than those who don't use social media as often.

In a 2020 January ResearchGate study based in India measured how social media affected Information Technology (IT) employees' well-being and work productivity, where researchers found "consequences of social media overuse" at the workplace.

Those who heavily used social media were easily distracted from work, had a tendency to seek approvals and not meet deadlines, compromised their work's quality, and experienced sleep deprivation. They also experienced back pain and eye strain, according to the study.

The same can be said for students who spend more time on social media than they do studying or completing their assignments.

But that's not the only harmful aspect of social media, as a majority of Americans receive their news from social media apps instead of printed newspapers, according to a Dec. 10, 2018 Pew Research study.

This can lead to many people finding themselves in news echo chambers, according to a Jan. 12 ABC News article. News echo chambers are defined as an experience in which social media users find themselves viewing the same perspectives and opinions repeatedly, according to the same ABC News article.

Echo chambers within media platforms breed extremists with unconventional views and some have even been linked to be the cause of the incited attack on the U.S. Capitol, which occurred on Jan. 6.

If social media platforms continue to allow echo chambers and other forms of violence and hatred to exist in their algorithms, more

unrest and dangerous views will permeate in the future.

Elon Musk, founder of SpaceX and Tesla, said it best when he said he believes social media should be regulated because it affects the public good and social media allows fake news to spread faster than real news.

"I think there should be regulations on social media to the degree that it negatively affects the public good," Musk said in an April 11, 2018, CBS interview. "You can't have more clicks on fake news than real news. That's allowing public deception to go unchecked."

Social media doesn't just breed political extremists, it also creates unrealistic body standards for women. This leads to increased depression in women, suicidal tendencies and pre-teen plastic surgeries.

According to a November 2019 study from Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 13-year-old girls who spent at least two-to-three hours per day on social media were at a higher clinical risk for suicide when they increased their usage.

**If social media platforms continue to allow echo chambers and other forms of violence and hatred to exist in their algorithms, more unrest and dangerous views will permeate in the future.**

Filters and face-editing apps, including FaceTune, are worsening the issue as many people find themselves using such programs to change their body image into something unrealistic.

According to a Headversity blog post, this can lead to "Snapchat dysmorphia," a term coined by cosmetic surgeons that can lead young adults to pay for plastic surgery to change their faces to fit conventional beauty standards, which are applied in face-altering filters.

If social media affects your mental health or the way you view your own body, the best course of action might be to delete social media altogether.

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