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IDS 300W

17 February 2025

Workshop 2 Essay Topic

The issue of declining attention spans in this digital age is very complex because it involves overlapping factors: neurological changes, social behaviors, technological influences, and education consequences. I have seen some studies that suggest that exposure to fast-paced digital content, such as social media and short-form videos (e.g., TikTok, Instagram reels, YouTube shorts etc.) conditions users to seek instant gratification, potentially diminishing their ability to sustain focus on longer tasks like reading or studying. But as it stands, attention is not solely a biological function—it is shaped by environment, habits, and incentives. Addressing this problem requires analyzing how digital media interacts with cognitive processes, cultural norms, and educational frameworks.

The impact of digital media on attention spans has far-reaching consequences in education, workplace productivity, and mental well-being. Teachers report difficulties in keeping students engaged in traditional classroom environments, employers have an issue with reduced focus in workplace task and individuals say that there are shorter reading sessions and increased difficulty in concentrating on complex task. These many problems that I just listed are pressing issues that deserve to be researched to truly identify the meaning behind their outcomes. If Unaddressed, all of these could affect learning outcomes, job performance, and even social relationships, making it a serious societal concern for everyone.

A single discipline approach like psychology or something would not be enough to fully understand or solve the issue. Instead, I believe there are a few ways to approach it. Computer science and UX design assesses how algorithms and design choices encourage short attention spans and explore potential interventions, media studies and communication can analyze how online platforms are made to maximize engagement, sometimes at the expense of sustained attention, and cognitive neuroscience investigates how digital media consumption alters brain functions related to focus, memory and information processing. By taking in these perspectives researchers can find solutions that are both scientifically and practically applicable in real life.

Integrating the Interdisciplinary research process is imperative for the conclusion of this study. The first step in the research process is defining the problem in an interdisciplinary research process, the rise of digital media consumption, specifically short-form content, appears to contribute to a decline in a sustained attention spans. This problem affects cognitive function, learning efficiency, workplace productivity, and social interactions. Then again, the problem can't be expressed with one single disciplinary lens at all, as it involves neurological, social, educational ,technical, and economic dimensions.

Justify using an interdisciplinary approach. Why is this imperative? Because the issue of digital media and attention spans is not singled out to a single academic field. Instead, it spans multiple areas of study that provides unique insights into different aspects of the issue. As previously expressed, cognitive neuroscience, media studies and communication, and computer science and UX design are a select few of the ways to tackle this situation to get to the bottom of the issue. Because these fields give us distinct but interconnected aspects of the problem, an interdisciplinary approach gives us faith for a more holistic understanding, leading to well-

rounded solutions. By gaining research from these disciplines, scholars can propose educational reforms, tech redesigns, or policy interventions that balance the benefits of the digital world with the need for sustained attention in academic, professional, and social setting.

Sources

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