



technology” (147). Smart devices take away our choice. “In the next five years, many of you will start interacting with technology using your voice. Your ‘defaults’ will be chosen for you by your habits. Your ability to navigate the world and understand your choices will be defined by the tech companies you use. More urgently, your access to services, people and tools will be defined by the relationships those tech companies have with other tech companies” (176). Be smart with your tech choices. If you want to have access to the data collected, only buy devices that allow you access.

“Part Five: Wisdom (2014–2016)” covers spirituality and self-love. Dancy recommends changing five things on your phone to gain back control. First, remove any labels that show how much battery you have left to reduce anxiety. Second, change your time format to military time if that is not the standard to force yourself to slow down and confront your crazy schedule. Third, clear your home screen of any widgets. Fourth, organize the apps on your phone by their icon color to help your mood. Fifth, use different but complimentary lock screen and wallpaper to help broaden the depth of feelings. He also suggests rearranging your phone apps by putting the most used out of reach and the apps you would like to use within easy reach in order to force you to think about what you are doing. Use alarms and tasks on your calendar to live more in the now and to prompt you to be mindful of desired actions and responses in the future. After compiling data on almost all aspects of his life, Dancy decides that the last thing he needs to confront is his lifelong struggle with

depression, anxiety, and rage. He begins to remember episodes from his past and logging them electronically. He would then bring up the notes when he began having an attack so he could review his symptoms and compare his past experience to how he was feeling at that moment. He would then realize that he had done this before and was able to work through it. Another way he started handling his suicidal thoughts was googling it and reading about other people’s struggles with anxiety and depression. This helped him feel like he was not alone and helped him through the dark times.

While it was interesting to read about the different technology and the way Dancy used it to learn more about himself, hearing his story was a bit like a train wreck where one just cannot look away. Dancy comes across as an arrogant jerk through much of the book, but it did make one curious to know if all of this self-awareness has really changed his personality at all. It almost makes one want to watch his interviews, listen to his TED talks, and read his interviews to see if he really has used technology to become a better version of himself. It is amazing to see everything he did to compile this data but one can assume that most people would not be that dedicated or have the technical knowledge to accomplish what he did. Some of the information in this book is helpful to the average person, but a large part of it seems completely insane and very much out of the realm of reality. Readers who are interested in self-help topics and technology will be interested in buying this book.

Why Social Media Is Ruining Your Life

Author _ Katherine Omerod

Publisher _ Cassell, 2018. 256 pp. Hardcover. £12.99. ISBN: 978-1-7884-0062-6.

Reviewer _ Sarah Grace Glover, Assistant Professor, Reference and Instruction Librarian, Collection Selector for Modern and Classical Languages and Spanish Departments, University of North Georgia

Katherine Omerod’s *Why Social Media Is Ruining Your Life* takes a cursory look into social networks and their effects on mental health and day-to-day life. As a fashion blogger who uses Instagram as the main source of her business, Omerod uses both personal accounts and academic research to address current issues and bad behaviors developed through frequent social network use. Omerod’s main argument is that social media exaggerates self-esteem and mental health issues. She discusses how social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram interact with the brain like an addiction. Each time we get a “like” from a picture or status we have posted, our brains receive a dopamine hit. She goes further to point out that

social networking companies have created algorithms to keep our addiction alive; this is often done by limiting how many people see, and thus “like” our posts, as well as timing when the post is shown so we are continually refreshing our app for updates. As we become addicted to these networks, we also become addicted to curating our online image. With the advent of editing apps such as Facetune, it’s easy to get caught up in erasing our faults, causing us to be overly critical with ourselves, which can lead to body dysmorphia. And as often as we edit our own images, we tend to forget that others have done the same, which can lessen our self-esteem and heighten our sense of inferiority. Omerod’s advice to counteract these



negative feelings often falls flat as she merely suggests “don’t let your digital persona overwhelm you” or to “cut yourself some slack” (56–57).

Omerod discusses how social networking sites have become a source of constant critique of how others live their lives—one of the most targeted groups is mothers. Social media has turned a watchful eye on how women choose to parent their children, whether it be using formula instead of breastfeeding or being a working or stay-at-home mom—social media users feel inclined to share their opinion. There is also constant comment and expectation on quickly losing baby weight and becoming fit. This pressure is unhealthy, both mentally and physically. New moms are under the extreme stress of taking care of an infant and often dealing with symptoms of postpartum depression. While social media does provide a community for new moms to share and connect, it doesn’t outweigh the images of stick-thin moms months after giving birth or silence the constant stream of “advice” from “friends.” Again, Omerod’s advice for dealing with this intrusiveness falls flat. She suggests you simply give yourself some space and ignore the haters.

Social media is now firmly centered not only in our social lives but our financial lives as well. Our posts are centered around filtered versions of ourselves, including how we spend our money. Images of high-end meals and cocktails or run-throughs of our new shopping spree or exotic vacations make users seem relevant and as if everyone around us is living a life of luxury. It can put added financial stress on users to seem up-to-date when they are only scraping by financially. These stressors contribute to the false narrative we present through our posts; often these vacations or work trips are stressful and not the pleasurable time we post about (179). The other side is influencers, who are being paid to post ads. Many celebrities or celebrity bloggers can make all of their income from endorsing products on Instagram. This turns into its own debacle of pay based on your follower counts.

While others are seemingly jet-setting around the world for their glamorous jobs, those of us left behind in the cubicle are left to follow online (190). The temptation to check your phone repeatedly throughout the work day greatly affects workplace performance. Taking frequent breaks from work to check social media accounts rewires our brains’ functioning and thus creates a big issue with attention deficit. If we are constantly rewarding ourselves with little media breaks we are interrupting our workflow and harming our attention span. Soon we start reaching for the phone and taking these quick breaks without even noticing it.

We have all noticed the infiltration of political opinions on media feeds. Social media has offered the opportunity to share opinions with a safe distance between us and our followers. This has led to people being much more open and vocal about political beliefs, but at the same time much more closed-minded and hostile to opposing beliefs. As we learned with this past election, users seem very willing to post articles that align with their own beliefs without checking the validity of the source. The spread of fake news is as alarming as the people who believe it even when confronted with its faults. Facebook is a free app; it makes its money from selling user data. So it’s no surprise that they cashed in on the windfall of the 2016 election, selling data and posting user targeted ads regardless of the intent behind the ad. After the election, many American Facebook users admitted that the Facebook ads and articles they were shown influenced their voting decisions.

It is important to note that Omerod herself is an Instagram fashion blogger who builds her career on her social media presence, and while she offers insightful thoughts she ultimately gives no concrete solutions for today’s problems with social media. *Why Social Media Is Ruining Your Life* is easily digestible for all readers and suitable for anyone with a surface interest in social media.

We the People: A Progressive Reading of the Constitution for the Twenty-First Century

Author _ Erwin Chemerinsky

Publisher _ Picador, 2018. 320 pp. Paperback. \$16.00. ISBN: 978-1-2501-6600-5.

Reviewer _ Ross Allan Sempek, Oregon Library Association Intellectual Freedom Committee

With government machinations, scandals, and conflict bombarding our American consciousness, it’s easy to overlook the core of our country’s identity: the US

Constitution. The first three words of this dearly regarded text remind us that we are the constituents who fulfill the ideals of this document. We the People are the progressive