

Calphen Lei

Professor Roe

HS 165

18 May 2020

COVID-19 and the Effects on our Media Consumption

This semester my RTVF 110 class had a semester-long study on our media consumption habits. We had weekly journal entries to record our hours of screen time and also write our experiences observing our practices. The first few entries, life was still normal and we were still having in-person class. One can really observe as the weeks go on, without access to the outside world, a lot of us have slowly adapted to heavy media consumption habits. From online shopping to binge-watching, and mindless browsing of social media, many forms of media consumption have increased due to COVID-19 and can have negative effects on student health and academic performance. Especially due to online learning, many students have adjusted to the comfortable life of shelter-in-place, and it shows. I won't include the full journal entries as they include unnecessary curriculum from another class but I will do my best to summarize my findings in my own experiences.

February 12th, 18th, 25th, 2020

The first few weeks of this journal showed normal results. Media usage was normal and the media outlets that I used the most were usually on my phone. My phone was used a lot more to socially connect with my friends and also to be used in work for classes. Due to having in-person class, I would have less personal time and would often get home from class at around

7-8. I would still have homework and other responsibilities to do after I got home. The only entertainment I really tuned into was the Spotify playlist I would listen to during my commute or an occasional movie I would put on the background as I worked. Overall my media consumption was pretty consistent throughout these weeks and most of my usage were just messaging apps for me to reach my friends or family.

Media Chart from February 18th:

Media Type	Frequency/Location	Time Spent	Notes
YouTube	2 /At home	70 min	Car, fashion, food, gaming, music videos
Messenger	60 / home, in class, toilet	90 min	Messaging friends
Instagram	21 / home, in class, toilet	85 min	Scrolling, browsing, cars, updates from friends, animals, comics
Snapchat	15 / home, in class, toilet	30 min	Checking snaps sent by friends
Spotify	5/ walking to class	75 min	Music for my commute
Netflix	1 /At home	80 min	Watching shows while eating/working, comedy

March 17th, 24th, April 14th, 2020

March 17th, was the first week of quarantine and on that day my media habits had not yet changed. My most-used apps were still communication apps but I did notice a decrease in usage levels. Not being required to leave my room for classes was a luxury that I had not yet adapted to and I was enjoying all the extra time I had. The use of communication applications decreased,

however, my use of other entertainment sources increased significantly. Due to not being in class as often, my daily routine opened up more time for leisure and I took advantage, seeing as there wasn't much else to do. I felt like I was social distancing even at home. Though I wasn't communicating with others as much, I still consumed a lot of social media and it slowly became a habit to pull out my phone whenever I was bored and scroll Instagram or FaceBook. I was also consuming more Netflix and movies than I did previously just to pass the time and I even started playing some online games. I think my fascination at this time with online games had to do with when I was running out of movies to watch and the inside was sort of driving me nuts. Online games allowed me to escape life in my room and actually go outside in virtual worlds. At the end of these weeks, I had started to become accustomed to my new Zoom schedule but my new screen time hours were noticeably higher than the previous weeks.

Media Chart from April 14th:

Media Type	Frequency/Location	Time Spent	Notes
YouTube	8 /At home, out of class	160 min	food, gaming
Messenger	5-8 / home, in class, toilet	30 min	Messaging friends
Instagram	25 / home, in class, toilet	90 min	Scrolling, browsing, cars, updates from friends, animals, comics
Snapchat	15 / home, in class, toilet	30 min	Checking snaps sent by friends
Netflix	2 /At home	160 min	Watching shows/movies while eating/working, comedy or thriller
Online Games	5 / home, in class	180 min	League of Legends, Apex Legends, Minecraft

April 22nd, 29th, May 6th, 2020

My screen time for these last few weeks was at an all-time high and these last journals definitely made me feel bad and got me thinking about taking a few steps back from technology. Outside of Zoom classes, my routine for the day is almost completely online. I leave my room for the meals of the day but I usually don't have many "plans" for the typical stay-at-home day. My parents are still on-call for their jobs and I am usually left alone in the house. It was hard the first couple of weeks finding activities to keep myself busy but by these last weeks I had already found out what can entertain me for the day. After doing my media charts, I saw how many hours my screen time had increased to and thought about the benefits of spending less on consuming media. I noticed my sleeping schedule had been really skewed and I wasn't eating all my meals. I felt very lethargic and out of energy despite not going outside or working much throughout the day. I noticed I had gained weight and had trouble communicating with my family/peers. Knowing all this, I started plans to decrease my online gaming time. I started plans to fix up my backyard garden. I began a project to renovate my pet turtle's tank. I even started watching more videos on cooking and began to experiment with baking as well.

Media Chart from May 6th:

Media Type	Frequency/Location	Time Spent	Notes
YouTube	2 /At home, out of class	80 min	Food videos
Messenger	2 / home, in class, toilet	5 min	Messaging family because I'm too lazy to walk over
Instagram	7 / home, in class, toilet	25 min	Scrolling, browsing, cars, updates from friends, animals, comics

Snapchat	2 / home, in class, toilet	5 min	Checking snaps sent by friends
Netflix	1 /At home	120 min	Watching movies before bed, comedy or thriller
Online Games	5 / home	200 min	League of Legends, Apex Legends, Minecraft

May 18th: Looking Forward

This semester has been a struggle for me surrounding the issue of media consumption. I started the semester using mostly communication applications and devoting most of my time to school. I would still say that I was on my phone often but I felt more productive going through school and completing assignments. As soon as quarantine hit, it took a couple of weeks for me to fully adjust to my new schedule. With the implementation of online classes, I found myself a lot more distracted than usual. Slowly, my daily routine became integrated online and all my homework, leisure entertainment, and communication with others were all in front of the same screen for the whole day. I knew this could not have been good but I could not resist the comfortable nature of the stay-at-home lifestyle. I had to take a step back because I started to notice the harmful effects of my increased screen-time. One can observe the health impacts of isolation and how the new norm can also harm the academic performance of students. I became less focused on school, Zoom calls were harder to pay attention to, and the transition to online learning was overall not very smooth. As for me personally, I think I need to work on managing my screen time during these times. Without classes or other responsibilities, it can be hard for individuals to limit their media consumption so it is important that we are careful to not become addicted to our devices and take time to appreciate the world.