**Audio Essay Script Rough Draft**

[Sounds of typing on iMessage heard faintly]

We’re living in the most digital society ever.

A society with same-day delivery services, instant door-to-door amenities and the ability to stream full seasons of TV shows within seconds.

[Scrolling on Netflix sound]

Our digital lives have developed so quickly; it’s really astonishing when put into perspective.

[Ted Talk Excerpt (1): “In only just the last hundred years, we’ve seen cars, planes–skyrocketing faster than we could have ever imagined, hyperloops. Time has been decreased so significantly in just a hundred years. And then boom, the internet.”

Today, more than three billion people can practically receive the same message at the same time.

With the internet shifting our ability to exchange message so quickly, it's not surprising that it has developed its own genre of quick communication… Memes.

Memes are the epitome of digital culture. Any idea, phrase, pun or mockery can be found in a meme. They’re everywhere for everything.

But what does the widespread usage and acceptance of memes say about our culture?

[Ted Talk Excerpt (2): “The importance of these memes come from their universality and their ability to touch on experiences and feelings we all have but don’t talk about because society has deemed them shameful. Oftentimes, the social media world is all about presenting our best selves, avoiding anything imperfect, flawed or human in an effort to look our best.”]

What drives popularity for memes is relatability. The reality is that memes are a fairly accurate representation of popular media and daily issues. Through memes, we’re able to celebrate the best aspects of our culture and parody the undesirable moments.

Memes help hold the fabric of the internet together. Every website [Facebook post sound] or social media platform [Tweet sound] has communities which are unique from one another, but memes serve as a universal language for all of these groups to come together.

On the other hand, having all of this readily available information may be leading our culture to become dependent on instant gratification.

[Sound idea?]

With all the endless possibilities at the tip of our fingertips, there’s some concern for how this may impact the development of future generations.

[Ted Talk Excerpt (3) “The problem is what instant gratification leads to. The problem is that in many schools – did you know –they’re not teaching the state capitols anymore? Not teaching that. And so, I asked, why would you not teach the state capitols that seems kind of important? Well and the reason that it was explained to me is that, you know if the kids really want to know that the capital of Ohio is Columbus, they can kind of just look it up. Yeah? But that’s like saying that the process of the memorization, the process of the learning, the process that has to take hold in order for the child to retain that information, doesn’t have intrinsic value.”

Has the ease of accessing information really transformed to a point where we don’t consider teaching basic facts in school anymore?

[Kids talking in a classroom]

Now don’t get me wrong, I don’t know the capitol for every state in the country. But I did go through the growing pains of trying to learn them as a kid. And that way of thinking critically, that way of testing my brain, helped me learn things about myself and forced me to practice deliberately. If we refrain from having kids go through that as they develop, we’re only holding them back.

Of course, memes are just one outlet to the instant gratification we seek, but they’re a big one. While memes continue to thrive on the internet in every way, shape and form, it is important to keep in mind how they got here and where they’re going. With a digitalized age such as ours comes repercussions. We must remember not to abstain too far from our roots, even if there’s a bunch of new trees sprouting.

External Media:

(1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0swAqcMnrO0> (2:04-2:24)

(2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9u2f44VdzBs> (2:06-2:37)

(3) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXy4eUlkLQQ> (5:14-5:54)