Kaylie Griffin

Audio Clip Script

Today, we live in a world where almost any piece of information we want to know is at our fingertips. New technology has helped facilitate the creation and sharing of information and ideas at a rapid pace through social media platforms. However, has the rapid availability of information through social media has led to shorter human attention spans?

A recent study by Microsoft found that humans are now averaging about 8 seconds of uninterrupted focus whereas gold fish are believed to have at least 9 seconds of concentration. However, gold fish don’t have things like Facebook, Instagram, or twitter providing instantaneous and condensed information at lightning speed.

**1:13-1:55 of 12 news** “people are taking in about 6 newspapers worth of data per day, overloaded… what happens when you get a notification…dopamine. Instantaneous gratification… NBA”

We are constantly interrupted by texts, tweets, notifications, ads, and emails causing our brains to get hooked on that stimuli out of curiosity. The release of dopamine and instant gratification encourages people to crave more and more information and it can be difficult to pay attention to any one thing for very long.

However, some could argue that this is a case of adaptation, as we are bombarded with more and more media, we are more selective with what we view.

Instead of decreasing our attention span, maybe our easy access to information through social media is changing the way we focus our attention? Just because we are allocating our attention differently doesn’t mean that our attention span has functionally changed.

**2:14-2:51** [**https://www.psytoolkit.org/attention-span/**](https://www.psytoolkit.org/attention-span/)

These conflicting ideas about the human attention span decreasing over the last fifteen years leads me to believe that this subject matter isn’t as black and white as I first assumed.

It is apparent that the human attention span has decreased but this could be a positive consequence from social media allowing us to concentrate on what we consider to be worthwhile information.

Although our attention spans for consumptive behaviors have decreased, that does not explain our ability to spend significant amounts of time creating content to be shared through social media. This could open the opportunity for people to focus on more productive tasks at hand. For instance, the production of our own social media content.

I have learned from experience that creating social media content like memes and GIFS can take upwards of a couple hours to successfully complete. The creative thought that goes in to social media postings should allow for the viewer to successfully receive the information, interpret it, and form an opinion on the post in under 10 seconds.

I recently made a couple of memes to post on Instagram. In order for me to be successful, I had to learn the tools in Photoshop to manipulate the different aspects of my pictures. Then I had to come up with a creative and catchy caption to add to my post so that people understood the purpose of my meme. This process required my undivided attention to detail. I gained inspiration from previous social media postings to help me through this process of making my own content.

Learning that humans have lost 4 seconds of their attention spans can be alarming and cause panic that social media or screen time in general can have negative effects on humans. However, I think it is important to also look at the positive aspects of our technological innovations. Without social media outlets people wouldn’t have the space to create and get inspiration for their own multimedia compositions.

I have learned a lot through my own multimedia compositions about how to successfully create content for the internet. And as long as social media is around, people will continue to use it and like to have access to any piece of information they need.

I think researchers should shift their focus to the productivity of social media content and how it influences people to engage in a creative, unique, and challenging new world surrounding multimedia compositions.

Sources:

https://www.12news.com/article/opinion/talker/is-social-media-to-blame-for-shortened-attention-spans/397077383