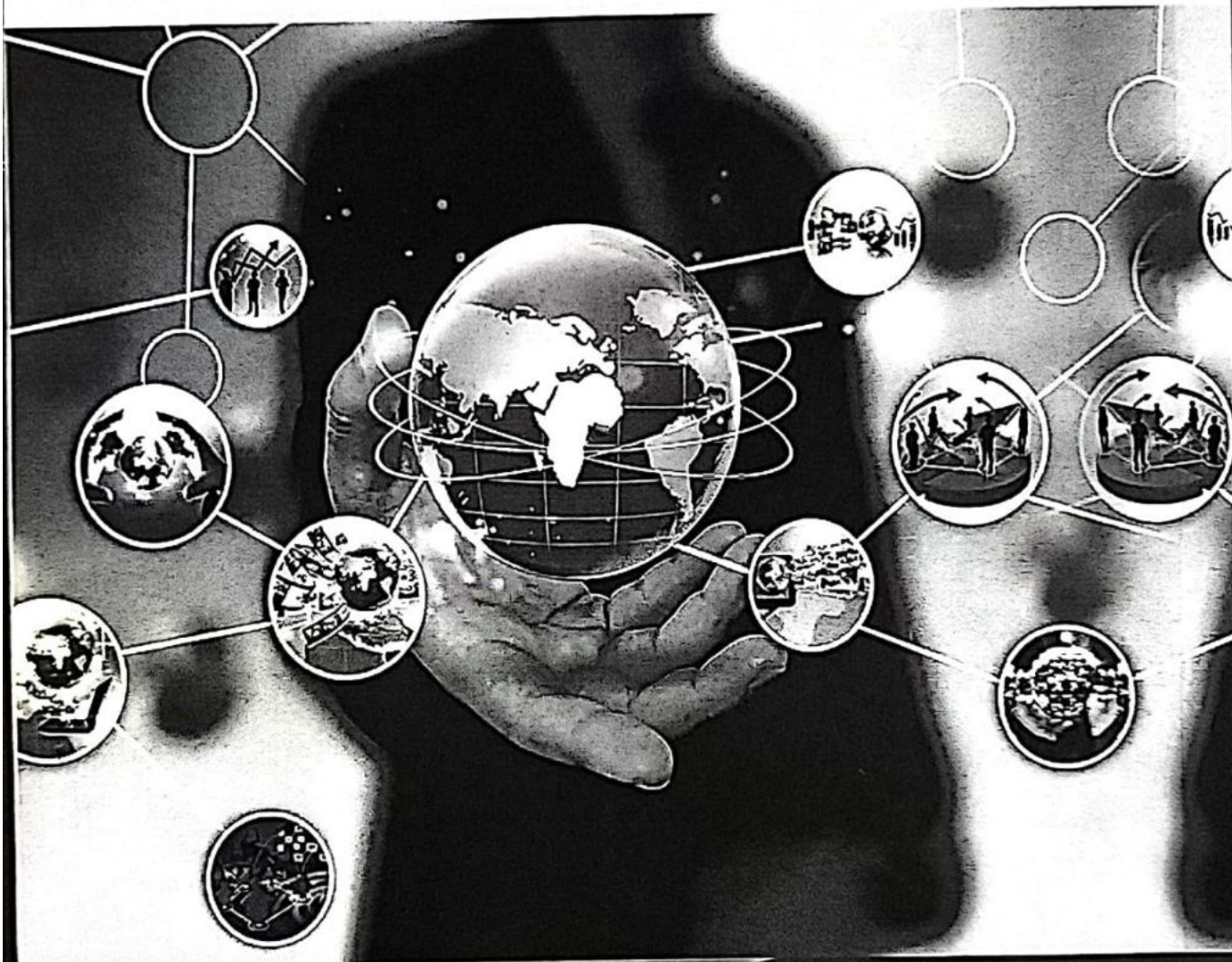# Information Explosion and the 21st Century Youth:
## Prospects and Challenges

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# Impact of Information Overload on Knowledge Formation through Digital Media

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## ABSTRACT

*Modern society witnessed enormous changes in communication technology. Digital gadgets play r▬ in each and every part of life. Nowadays everybody have in reach to access information through the use of Smartphones, Laptops and their personal computers. Due to ease in internet access the situation like information explosion has arrived. The digital media contents became abundant and it turned impossible to retrieve useful information when needed. Social media also faced such an information overflow as the information get multiplied in manifolds within no time. Accurate 'news' became hardly accessible. The internet world as well as social media delivered manipulated and fake news, thus the integrity of the media is lost. The credibility of the digital media is questioned. This study tries to figure out the causes of information overload and the consequences of information overload. Study has also tries to find out how the digital media users can cop-up with the problem. Proper use of technological gadgets and tools will help us to combat with Information and News overload.*

## Introduction

We all know that knowledge is power but few understand the role of digital media and specially the social media in empowering knowledge. The most common use of digital media is making through use of social media. Through social media, anyone online is empowered by an unrestricted flow of information to add to their knowledge bank. In today's world, it is undeniable that social media plays an important role in impacting our culture, our economy and our overall view of the world. Social media is a new forum that brings people to exchange idea, connect with, relate to, and mobilize for a cause, seek advice, and offer guidance. Social media has removed communication barriers and created decentralized communication channel and open the door for all to have a voice and participate in a democratic fashion. It enables common interest based groups such as students to work in a collaborative group projects outside of their class. It provides a platform for collaboration with a wide range of people on a number of issues such as education, economy, politics, health, and relationship etc.

Information Overload is a situation where the presence of too much information prohibits a person to find out required information and it causes difficulty in decision making. It is also called infobesity or infoxication. The information can be in the form of texts, images, sound, videos etc. The viral videos in YouTube, countless emails in our inbox, the endless stream of interesting articles on Facebook, innumerable tweets per second in Twitter are some examples of overloaded information. The huge amount of information causes our brain to function stressfully. In long term this will affect our thinking pattern. Our decision making system will remain confused. It will stop us from making good decisions or interrupt from choosing a right option. We will end up by making wrong or delayed decisions.

During the past few years the growth of social media was quick. It helped to easily manipulate, duplicate and share information. All information including news content is manipulated and faked. Thus the problem became worst. Ironically, social media is in effect turning us into one of the most antisocial generations, yet. We prefer texting to phone conversations, online chat to a face-to-face meeting, and many have replaced human interaction with convenient platforms such as Whatsapp.

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Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The negative impact of social media can be divided into three ma[in] categories. First, social media fosters a false sense of online "connections" and superficial friendship, leading to emotional and psychological problems. The Second harm of social media is that it can become easily addictive taking away family and personal time as well as diminish interpersonal skills, leading to antisocial behavior. Lastly, social media has become a tool for criminals, predators and terrorists enabling them to commit illegal acts. World Wide Web became common for the last half a century. Advent of modern computers caused information to duplicate and spread faster. Social media became a 'must' in everybody's life and allowed people to become news editors or manipulators. These duplicated information spread through World Wide Web. Many of the information are manipulated. People started to access news content through digital media, which mainly include online media. Thus digital media devices connected to the internet have a significant role in causing Information Overload.

## Objective of the Study

The objective of this theoretical paper is to find out the reasons of information overload, and the problems caused by it, and to provide the strategies to combat the problems facing by mass media and social media users due to information overload.

Nowadays all the media devices became digital in a sense. But, in this study, online media and equipment including computers, smartphones, tablets, phablets, etc. are considered as digital media.

## Information Overload: Causes

Information overload had been recognized and addressed as a problem long before in mid-[nineteen]th century. Scientists like J. Murray Luck, assistant professor of biochemistry at Stanford [Univer]sity, pointed out that they are failed to reassemble appropriate information for their research [work.] Later in a report of the U.S. President's Scientific Advisory Committee's in 1963, addressed the [problem]. The phrase 'Information overload' is first mentioned in 'The Managing of Organizations', [a book] by Bertram Gross in 1964. But it was popularised by the futurologist Alvin Twofer in 1970, in [his book] 'Future Shock'. He predicted that information abundance will cause big problems in near

Nowadays devices having internet access, like computers, smart phones, tablets and many [other digital] devices are the major mediums to diûuse information. A wide variety of sources are there [about] information. Social media and other online resources are the primary cause of information [overload.] The same news item is repeatedly distributing from different news sources. These information [are fake] and authenticity is always dubious. The primary reasons of information overload are –

- [Easy] and widespread access to the Internet.
- [Mass u]se of social media.
- [High rate] of new information generation.
- [Social M]edia and Internet Sharing become popular.
- [Informatio]n duplication and transmission becomes easy.
- [Increasing] number of information channels of the same news conten.
- [Lack of] techniques to organize and control information.
- [Lack of content] filtering tools.
- [Difference in] accessing the sources using various information tools.
- [Inconsistencies] in available information.
- [Contradictions] with newly created information

## [Information] overload: Consequences

[Most common] use of digital media is depicted through social media. Now a days most of the [people have] Smartphones which remain on 24/7. People remain in continuous connection with [messages] and news. When considering the societal consequence, information overload is [affecting] social development. It prevents accumulating new knowledge, thus delays new [Although] it has brought about many benefits like allowing us to easily connect with friends [around the] globe, allowing us to break down international borders and cultural barriers, but [digital] media has come at a price. On one hand social media has a negative impact on our

lives as global reach has eroded our culture, and replacing the human fellowship, physical and emo[...] support we once drew from each other with virtual connection. While on other hand, infor[...] overload through the social media is making us psychologically unstable and create confusion in dec[...] making as the ability to think independently is ceasing.

Since persons are the building blocks of the society thus, personal consequences are [...] important to take in consideration. Some of them are mentioned below -

» Make people untidiness
» Kills their precious time
» Increases person's stress and anxiety
» Destroys their self confidence
» Challenges people's cognitive capacity
» Creates Analysis Paralysis i.e. paralysis due to analysis
» Reduces their creativity and productivity
» Makes persons fail to stay in-focus
» Create confusions in taking decisions and actions
» Makes monetary losses.

Information overload causes confusion in absorbing facts, which in turn causes [...] peace of mind. The lack of attention reduces concentration in works. Overloaded informa[...] lose precious time. Thus we will lose productive outcome. Information Overload leads to [...] time to catch the necessary information. This reduces available time and causes stress [...] Information Overload often causes "Analysis Paralysis" or Paralysis by Analysis. It is a [...] taking a decision or action by over thinking, as a result paralysing the outcome.

**How to combat with Information Overload?**

If technology is the primary cause of information abundance, technology too [...] Intelligent use of technology will eliminate the actual problem for sure.

Information overload grown as a wide problem in the society. Eliminat[...] overload is not at all impossible. Well organised information is easy to handle. Our in[...] is not organised and diûusing vague ideas to the society. New information channels [...] causes to duplicate and manipulate news contents. Researchers can easily collect rele[...] complete their works in lesser time. Internet traffic will reduce and thus the bandwi[...] productively for the growth of business, academic and other purposes supporting [...] Quick access of relevant data will help us to save time and that will help to concentrate on [...] thus productivity will increas. Librarians can organize more numbers of books and do[...] limited space.

## Need Of The New Approach

The modern society termed information overload as a negative aspect, but it is the [...] perspective. The lack of proper information is the actual problem. Actually we have lots of info[...] which is widely spread everywhere, and this is a positive point for us. Only problem is that, [...] information is hidden and not accessible easily. Therefore we need some techniques to find [...] information we need. Information overload became a problem when a user become unable to [...] relevant information using their own knowledge and acquired techniques. We are reluctant to [...] techniques that are the real problem. Technology itself has solutions. For instance, when sea[...] Google, we can use operands like AND, OR, NOT etc to get more relevant results. Putting a doub[...] (") between the most relevant word in the search keywords will give more precise search resul[...] For example - Smartphones NOT tablets > it will exclude 'tablet phones' from search result

**How to Get Access to the Relevant Information?**

Everytime it is warned that beware from fake news and ambiguous content but how to [...] the challenging issue for most of the digital and social media users. However organising onlin[...] intelligently and preventing the forwarding of unwanted massages will eliminate unwanted info[...] Below are providing some techniques, useful to retrieve online as well as offline informatio[...]

- » Decide priorities for the information needed
- » Identify the unwanted information
- » Say No to irrelevant Information
- » Make continuous observation on information
- » Stop forwarding the ambiguous content
- » Evaluate the retrieved content
- » Use only trusted sources
- » Learn search strategies
- » Do Keep suggesting to friends and known to stop forwarding unwanted data.
- » Do proper planning before retrieving information
- » Create a precise idea about what is going to access
- » Use specific terms to search
- » Write down the ideas immediately
- » Connect with known information
- » Keep a Disciplined and Organised Mind
- » Not accept more than five results at a time
- » Use smartphone Apps
- » Use Google alerts, Feed Aggregators etc to get relevant updates
- » Use tools like 'Gmail Tabs' to organise e-mails

Remember in case of shopping, we often ignore thousands of items and pick the right one in time. How it is being possible? Either we know the brand of the particular product, or ask our friends for opinion about a product. Then compare with products of other brands and make a choice to buy one you are convinced with. Choosing the right information is similar to it. Source is very important like a brand name. Always depend on credible sources, and re-analyse its credibility occasionally. We need organised and 'easy to access' databases. The unimportant, irrelevant information should be destroyed. Internet contains mass amount of duplicate information. Same idea is duplicated thousand times and it should be cut down. Using modern algorithms it is easy to scan and filter duplicated information. This will assure quality and unambiguous information.

## Conclusion

The accumulation of information and communication of pertinent information is the indication of knowledge generation which is related with human growth in all dimensions. Without new and upgraded information human race won't survive. But, it is also essential to develop and communicate proper or useful information in a proper way in the right time. We can't stop the production of new knowledge. So we need to think consciously by changing our attitudes towards the problem. Now it becomes compulsory to find out the right ways to tackle information overload. As we know, technology has created the information overload and the same technology can be used to reduce the problem. Nowadays social media is an important part of information system, but the credibility of the contents is lost. The major reason for this phenomenon is that the digital media handles news and related information as a means to spread hatred. Careful use of digital media as suggested here can be helpful to combat the information overload. The one of technological innovations is artificial intelligence (AI). If AI can be used to control and arrange information systems it will avoid duplications, return better search results and keep the database organised. There should be a filtering mechanism in media industry too. Digital media should retaliate to reclaim its credibility. It is very essential for a growing society to tackle information overload.

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