

Do We Have a Healthy Relationship with Technology?



How many times do we communicate with each other face-to-face versus through a digital device? If I were to answer this question, I would tell you that most of my interactions are now through a text message, a Facebook post, a phone call, or an email. Have we lost touch with our human connections with one another? Have we lost the ability to be in the moment without a screen in our hand? Or is technology helping us build better relationships?

Patrick Frank, co-founder and COO of PatientPartner, spoke about our relationship with technology in a Ted Talk at Penn State University. He argues that technology can grow, shape, and form relationships. There are over 2 billion active users on social media and over 20 billion engagements every day. Social media is almost like our digital encyclopedia where you can reconnect with lost connections and know someone before you meet them. Social media gives you an array of information on almost anyone, allowing you to form relationships with others,

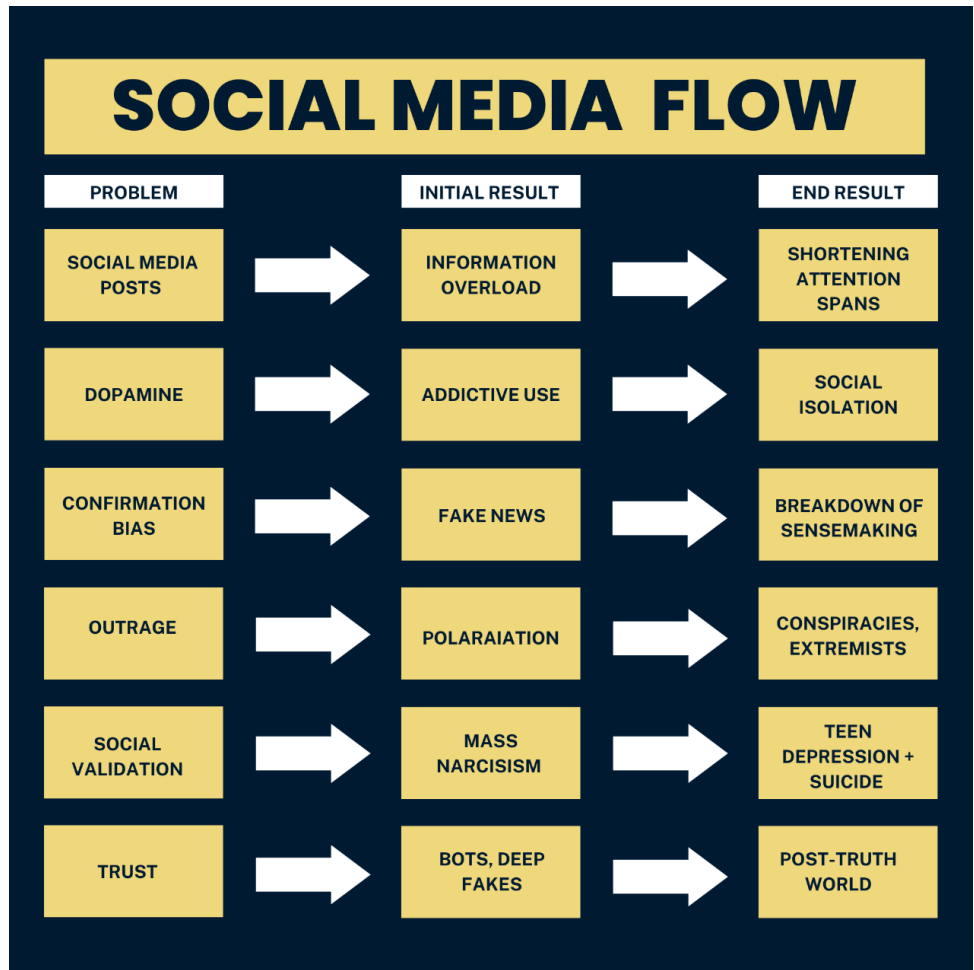
even those that you have never met. By looking through someone's page, you can find commonalities which can lead to more relationships. You may be interested in starting an online conversation with someone that you once knew, or you have never known.

Have you ever "stalked" the page of someone that you were going to meet for the first time? This has become very common, especially for those being interviewed for new jobs or going on a first date. By gathering information on others, we can find better ways to communicate with one another by mentioning interests that we have in common. This also takes away the fear of wonder when meeting someone for the first time. We know what they look like, their hobbies, their interests, where they work, how old they are, if they have children or pets, and so much more.

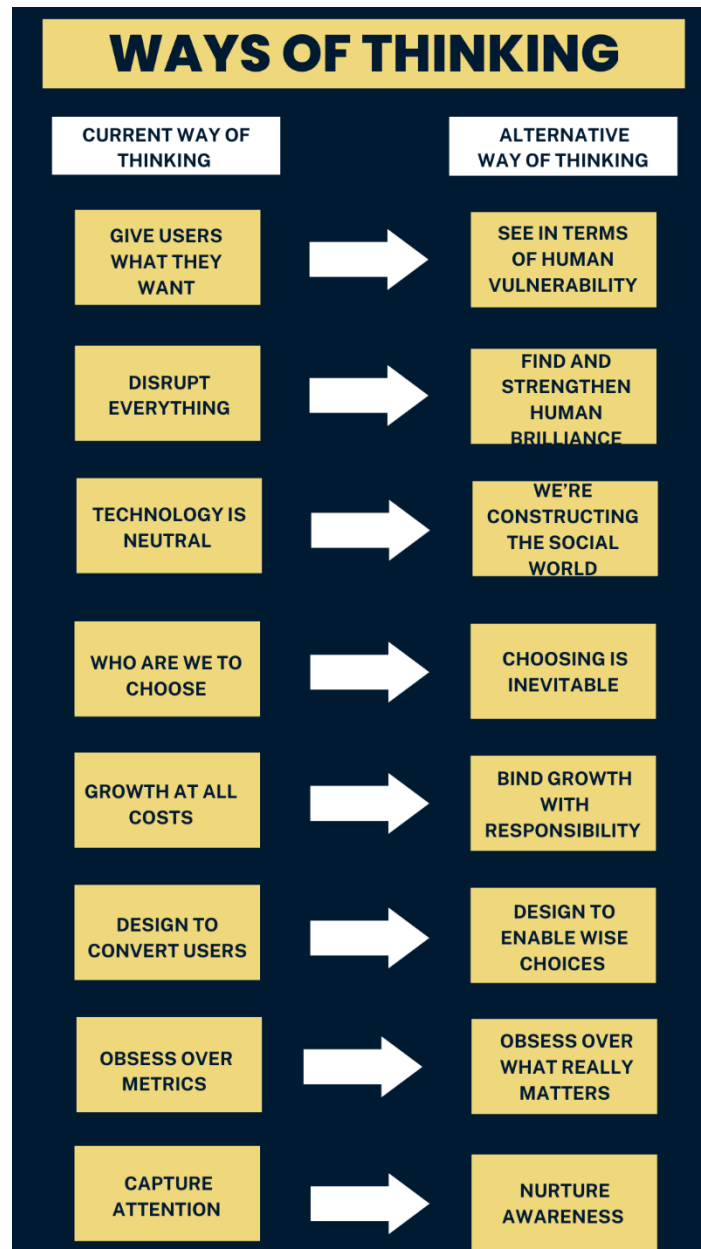
Social media also challenges us to know ourselves better. As most know, it's important to represent ourselves how we want to be known, especially in an online setting. Anyone can find information about you now, so if your posts don't align with who you are, people may question you. Again, this is very important in the workforce. It's important to have photos and posts that don't represent you in a negative way. Employers may look at you as irresponsible and immature if your posts are not to their professional standing.

With all good things, there is always some bad. Many have had concerns about the improvements in technology and how our face-to-face connections have drastically shifted. Some have called us a divided world where there are humans and a wall of screens between each other. We are susceptible to pulling out our phones to take a video or photos of our moments, rather than enjoying the moment we are in. Is there any way we can get back to our connections after this major shift in technology?

E.O. Wilson states that the fundamental problem with humanity is that we have Paleolithic emotions, medieval institutions, and God-like technology. As humans, we have cognitive limits and technology leads us to information overload, along with addictive use, mass narcissism, fake news, polarization, and bots and deepfakes. Altogether, this is an interconnected system of harms that humans have downgraded themselves.



This fear of technology has led researchers to decide how to fix the problem. Tristan Harris suggests ending attention and surveillance capitalism and change the way technology is built. He states that this happens through external pressure (policy makers, government, etc.), internal pressure (social media employees), and aspirational pressure (where we go next). To do all of that, we need to ask transformative questions to change the way that people think about these problems and questions. With our use of social media platforms, we have learned to be helpless. We search for events and topics that capture our attention, but many of these posts have negative emotions tied to them. To change this, people need to see how to take collective actions for a positive outcome, which means that we need to ask deeper questions.



The complexity of our problems and our human capacity on these platforms are increasing. The largest problems are exceeding our capacity to solve them. With human downgrading, our capacity is diminishing and degrading what is true and if any solutions are possible. However, engineers and entrepreneurs in the tech industry are trying to make better changes to break this separation that we each experience with our devices.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help break this division. Imran Chaudhri, an entrepreneur and engineer, claims that AI will be the driving force behind the next leap in device design. He created a new device and platform for AI that doesn't require a smartphone or other pairing

device, interreacts with the world the way you interreact with the world and allows you to connect with the world more. As we look at the history of technology, our devices continue to become smaller. Eventually, our technology will be almost invisible, and this new device is reaching more towards that future.

Chaudhri developed a device called the Humane AI Pin, which can record, capture photos and videos, answer complex questions, translate any language, set reminders, answer phone calls, and many other features. The device attaches to your clothing, just as a pin or brooch would. This allows us to get back to what really matters and allows us to be more present with one another. You never have to worry about missing those special moments again. You can catch your child's first steps or special moment with your spouse without a screen separating you from reality. This AI device personalizes to you and your lifestyle by understanding your likes, needs, and wants throughout your day. You can ask the Humane AI Pin if you can eat certain foods or if you would like a particular song. The Pin then stores all your wants and needs into a cloud, becoming a constant form of memory.



There have been mixed reviews about the Humane AI Pin. Users claim that it is too expensive for what it is currently offering. Users also claim that some of the information it delivers is incorrect and that it is quicker and more accurate to use a smartphone if you are wanting to know an answer to a complex, or even some basic, questions. People are also not happy about a few feature designs. To start, you can only record a 15-second video and you also don't know exactly what the device is capturing. The device also requires a subscription fee on top of the purchase fee, which is costly and only allows you to view your cloud on a computer due to the design being meant to eliminate the usage of smartphones. However, users are pleased with the design

of the Humane AI Pin. The Pin is lightweight, easy to use, and easy to attach to clothing. Users are also happy with the additional products included with the Pin, such as multiple charging attachments and the attachments for the clothing. Overall, the product has great potential for the future. Chaudhri is aware of the complications and is eager to fix the problems that users are experiencing to create a better experience for everyone.

Our separation from each other and reality is on the brink of improvement. As a society, it's important that we work together to highlight the problems that we see so we can collectively make better changes together. Our human capacity for technology is becoming too large for just one, or a few individuals, to solve the problem. We each must contribute to this change and eliminate the large problems that we each experience.

July 10, 2024, Written by: Kaitlyn Keenan, McGregor Marketing and Communication Intern

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMsQQ05u7-NQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-T5L3ypGdSM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ0PnUzRh8U>