

Social media is overwhelming



John Riti

Dear friends, I feel as though I'm on the brink of madness. I'm tempted to drop out of society and seek a life of reclusiveness in a secluded woodland somewhere.

Here's why — if I have to make one more website username or create a password for a new online community, it might just be enough to drive me insane. As a society, I think we've gone overboard on the amount of online communities we use.

The problem is, we're never satisfied with what we have. There always has to be something new, whether it be a new app, website or online trend. The onslaught of new virtual communities is relentless.

These apps and online communities are abundant, readily at our fingertips and are created at a rapid-fire pace. Even though it sounds pathetic, if I don't join them, I feel like I'm missing out. No one likes to be left in the dark about something potentially awesome.

I'm aware social media is an important channel for many successful individuals and businesses. According to an Aug. 11 article on Social Media Today's website, 70 percent of business-to-consumer marketers have acquired a customer through Facebook during the past year. I get that social media is trendy and here to stay.

But isn't two or three online communities enough for us to live our lives? I think a sign we have enough is when I scroll through one social outlet, and it's nothing but links to other social media. I login to Facebook and it's just links to people's Instagrams. Or I'll scroll through my Twitter feed, and it's nothing but links to people's Vine videos or their Tumblr page. I feel like a caged hamster running on a little wheel — running in circles with no end in sight, panting to keep up with the trends.

Recently, I caved and got an Instagram. This might seem amateur to some of you, but it was a big step for me. I'm not joking when I say I gave considerable thought to this decision for a few weeks. Instagram felt like a whole arena of things happening that I wasn't a part of. According to a Nielsen statistic, 40 million photos are uploaded to Instagram everyday. Surely I was missing out?

Now that I have one, I must say I'm not a huge fan of it so far. It seems like an elitist community to me — you have to have an iPhone to get one — but also why do I need it? Can't we just put photos on Facebook? It seems silly to force people to go out of their way to see a filtered picture of the salad you ate for lunch.

Yet, we still do it, myself included. I willingly added probably my 50-billionth online username and password to my mental list of things I have to remember.

Social media isn't going to slow down, but something to pause and consider is the fact that life is hard enough. Habits are easy to form and a lot of us don't like to miss out, so perhaps just cooling it on the web communities could be a good thing. They have a lot of advantages, but sometimes the stress isn't worth it. Simplicity can be a nice change of pace.

Also, I want this column to go viral, so please be sure to share this article on Facebook, link to the Index site in your Tweets, and get a great photo of it in print for your Instagram — might I suggest the sepia filter?

John Riti is a senior English major from St. Louis, Mo.

COLLECTED STATISTICS on sexual assault

- * **84%** of women who reported experiencing sexually coercive behavior were freshmen or sophomores
- * **90%** of acquaintance rapes involve alcohol
- * **DURING 1 OUT OF 3** sexual assaults, the perpetrator was intoxicated
- * **35%** of victims were on a date with the perpetrator of attempted rape
- * **20-25%** of women reported experiencing completed and/or attempted rape during their college career
- * women living in sorority housing and students in on-campus residence halls are up to three times more likely to experience sexual assault

ACCORDING to an article from **CAMPUS SAFETY MAGAZINE***

Discussing rape prevention



Sarah Muir

Following last month's on-campus sexual assault awareness week, it is time to have a serious discussion about the difference between practical advice and victim blaming.

When it comes to sexual assault, we need to stop ignoring preventative steps that can decrease the chances of a person becoming a victim, especially on college campuses.

Before I go any further, let me make one thing clear — the victims of sexual assault are not responsible or blamable for the assault. The only person responsible for sexual assault is the assailant.

That being said, there are strategies that can help protect people from becoming victims. These strategies should not be viewed as a way to blame the victim for what happened, and ignoring these strategies for fear they might be viewed as victim blaming helps no one.

One strategy that often is not talked about is the effect of drinking on the prevalence of sexual assault. According to a 2009 "Journal of American College Health" study, 80 percent of campus sexual assaults involve alcohol. The statistics show alcohol and sexual assault are related. Stating this

fact, and educating males and females about it is not the same as saying, "If you drink you are responsible for someone assaulting you."

According to another study published in the 2004 "Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs," college campuses with higher rates of drinking also had higher rates of sexual assault, supporting the relationship between the two, but also pointing out the necessity of alcohol education when it comes to sexual assault.

Students need to be educated about how alcohol affects sexual assault, including a discussion of what constitutes rape when alcohol is involved. This education will help people stay safe and raise awareness about what rape is. This doesn't mean we should tell everyone they should never drink to avoid sexual assault. It means we should tell people about the risks so they can take measures to protect themselves, like taking a sober friend with you when you consume alcohol.

Another prevention strategy is for schools to promote knowledge of basic self-defense among students. Every college campus should offer self-defense classes and they should be free and open to any student. Again, I'm not saying victims are to blame for being defenseless. However, having a class to teach students to be more aware of their surroundings and defend against unwanted contact reduces the likelihood of anyone becoming a victim.

Think about the advice given to students who live off campus. They are warned about the higher likelihood of their house or apartment being broken into during long breaks. They use this

information when they decide to lock up their houses, hide valuables, etc. We wouldn't call this victim blaming in the event that someone doesn't take these steps and their house is broken into. Advice to protect against sexual assault is no different.

An Oct. 15 Slate article made an argument similar to the one above. Instead of being accepted by readers as good advice to give potential victims, it was viciously attacked as victim blaming. An Oct. 16 Salon article calls such advice part of rape culture. It's exactly this kind of mindset that keeps us from helping more people stay safe.

Strategies that target only the perpetrators of sexual assault will never fully prevent such crimes from happening. It would be great if telling people "sexual assault is bad" was the only necessary solution, but it's not. That solution is based on the false premise that targeting the would-be perpetrators will actually lead to positive results. We don't try to stop theft by telling people stealing is wrong, we do it by telling people how to help prevent it, and we definitely don't call the advice "theft culture."

It's unfortunate that bad people who do bad things exist in this world, but that's how it is. And if we ignore strategies that can help protect against sexual assault by calling them ways to blame the victim, we are allowing people to be put into dangerous situations with no knowledge of how to be safer.

Sarah Muir is a sophomore political science major from Lee's Summit, Mo.

How do you feel about the use of Adderall or other prescription drugs to boost concentration for studying or taking tests?

"I disagree unless it is prescribed by a doctor."

Sam Schepers Senior



"I disagree, but [I know] it is easy to get."

Katie Mackenzie Senior



"It seems like the use of performance enhancement drugs in sports ... It's wrong."

Aaron Kusmec Senior



"I think it's good, especially if they need it. But if it's for other [recreational] uses ... it should be banned."

Jessica Beadleston Junior



AROUND THE QUAD

Great works might take a decade or three



Conor Gearin

The current exhibit in the University Art Gallery in Ophelia Parish, "David Grove: An Illustrated Life," profiles the work of an illustrator who died last year. The exhibit will be open through Friday. The story behind one of the paintings, "View from the Odeon," made a strong impression on me. It suggests getting a single work right can take decades of trial and error and enormous patience.

"View from the Odeon," done in acrylic and gouache, depicts the view from an upper story window of a Paris hotel onto a night cityscape of gray rooftops and chimneys against a smoky blue sky. Among the rooftops are a few bright windows, but one window in the building just in front of the Odeon holds the viewer's gaze. Its yellow-orange glow emanates warmth like a Van Gogh sun. Grove's method of layering different kinds of paint, evolved from years of experience creating eye-catching posters, gives the painting a subtle luminous texture.

"I saw something like this in the early eighties from my hotel window — and it took my breath away," Grove said of the view in the note beside the painting. "This image, for me, somehow captures much of the mystery

and magic of that Paris that changed my life forever ... and no longer exists."

However, the process of translating how he saw the view into a painting took much longer than he anticipated. Grove spent three decades trying to do justice to his memory.

"Over the next decade, I took many photos but never managed to get the same room or the same effect," Grove said. "In the mid-nineties I started a painting that became a complete disaster. Later attempts over the next few years also failed."

I often expect an effort to come out right the first time, whether it is an essay, a chemistry experiment or something I want to say to someone. I also assume the better someone is at something, the less time they need to spend on a single work.

But failures are productive in ways we often do not realize. It reminds me of the way an ecosystem like a forest recovers after destruction by wildfire. Our first few attempts are like the lichen and moss that take hold in the charred ground and begin restoring the soil. The middle period is like the stage in which shrubs and grasses stabilize the area. The final, successful attempt is like the mature trees that take over at the last stage of succession.

By creating artwork he did not like, Grove became sure of how he wanted his final work to be.

"In March of this year, I took one last shot at it," Grove said. "This time I got it."

I love Grove's tone of simple confidence. It does not feel boastful at all, since he just admitted he painted and photographed disasters again and again. It is

humbling and encouraging to realize even a highly successful illustrator, who made a movie poster for Clint Eastwood and book jackets for Jack Kerouac and Paul Theroux, took about 30 years to get something right.

What makes the story even more interesting is that Grove's career was not mainly focused on independent projects like "View from the Odeon" but on movie posters and book jacket illustrations. Even amid his schedule of assignments, the initial image for more personal work stuck with him through the decades and finally came to fruition near the end of his life. Sometimes the ideas that move us the most take the most effort to communicate.

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