

The Amorphousness of the Exposure Sphere

Authors : Nipun Ansal

Abstract : People guard their beliefs and opinions with their lives. Beliefs that they've formed over a period of time, and can go to any lengths to defy, desist from, resist and negate any outward stimulus that has the potential to shake them. Cognitive dissonance is term used to describe it in theory. And every human being, in order to defend himself from cognitive dissonance applies 4 rings of defense viz. Selective Exposure, Selective Perception, Selective Attention, and Selective Retention. This paper is a discursive analysis on how the onslaught of social media, complete with its intrusive weaponry, has amorphized the external ring of defense: the selective exposure. The stimulus-response model of communication is one of the most inherent model that encompasses communication behaviours of children and elderly, individual and masses, humans and animals alike. The paper deliberates on how information bombardment through the uncontrollable channels of the social media, Facebook and Twitter in particular, have dismantled our outer sphere of exposure, leading users online to a state of constant dissonance, and thus feeding impulsive action-taking. It applies case study method citing an example to corroborate how knowledge generation has given in to the information overload and the effect it has on decision making. With stimulus increasing in number of encounters, opinion formation precedes knowledge because of the increased demand of participation and decrease in time for the information to permeate from the outer sphere of exposure to the sphere of retention, which of course, is through perception and attention. This paper discusses the challenge posed by this fleeting, stimulus rich, peer-dominated media on the traditional models of communication and meaning-generation.

Keywords : communication, discretion, exposure, social media, stimulus

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