

Design Project 3

Society on a Scroll: A reflection on the mindsets of young individuals and their complex relationship with Social Media

[Link to High Resolution Report](#)

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Declaration

I declare that this written document represents my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/ source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Swati Yadav', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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Project Approval

The Design Project III titled "Society on a scroll - Exploring the complex relationship between Young Individuals and Social Media" by Swati Yadav, Roll Number 216450011 is approved, in partial fulfilment of the Masters Degree in Design at the IDC School of Design, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

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Abstract

This project explores the complex relationships individuals have with their screens in the age of the internet and social media. AI and Machine Learning techniques are used to curate personalised content for users, resulting in varied effects of mindless browsing on different individuals. Through interviews with 20 individuals of diverse age, profession, and demographics, 8 unique personas were identified. Their stories were then transformed into illustrations that depict the emotions and relationships they have with social media. The project utilises conversations and a satirical visual approach to portray the chaotic emotions they experience on a daily basis.

The project's findings shed light on the negative impacts of social media on individuals, including feelings of isolation, anxiety, and addiction. The illustrations created for this project aim to capture those implications and concerns in a humorous and thought-provoking manner. The project also captures behavioural insights from their social media usage patterns that may be helpful in exploring digital wellbeing strategies to help people address problematic digital behaviours, manage distractions and improve their autonomy around how they spend their time.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Summary / Overview: Through this project, I aimed to initiate a conversation on a topic that is common to everybody I know and I face myself too, namely a phenomenon called “Doom Scrolling” or “Infinite Scrolling” or more specifically “Mindless Scrolling”.

The internet and social media have brought immeasurable convenience to our lives, yet they have also introduced an equal measure of chaos. Through this project, I have attempted to explore the mindsets of people and their relationship with their digital devices. By conducting a series of unstructured interviews, I tried to understand the emotions associated with infinite scrolling and presented those chaotic feelings in a form of a satirical visual tapestry.

Aims / Objectives: The aim of this project is to explore the complex relationship between young individuals and social media and create an illustrated artefact that reflects the enormous impact of mindless scrolling on our physical and mental well-being. The primary objective of this research is to raise awareness about the importance of taking breaks from social media and to highlight the importance of ethics while designing and using technology.

Scope: The project outcome addresses the concerns of individuals who have felt restricted and disempowered by the continuous and purposeless scrolling on social media platforms. The project achieves this through the creation of illustrations that employ satire and criticism to highlight specific negative aspects of social media. The illustrations seek to initiate discussions regarding the ethical obligations held by both technology designers and users. While the project predominantly focuses on young individuals and their encounters with social media, the findings may have relevance to a wider range of individuals involved in the creation and utilisation of technology.

Approach(s) / Method(s):

Primary research -

1. Quantitative data for 20 users of their screen-time and usage patterns on Social media.
2. Unstructured interviews with 14 individuals, who were asked to share their experiences and perceptions of social media.

Secondary Research -

1. Research papers, articles and blogs on the impact of Social media browsing.

2. Movies, series, books and podcasts which explore the negative impacts of social media
3. Previous projects done on similar themes by other students across the globe.

Process -

Secondary Research is done to understand the problem space and the viability of the project. Quantitative data was collected to understand user behaviour and social media usage patterns. During the qualitative interviews, I listened carefully to their stories, taking note of the unique ways they interact with social media and how it affects their mental, physical and emotional well-being. I then translated these stories into a series of satirical illustrations that when stitched together to form an overarching narrative that highlight the negative effects of social media. Overall, the process involved a combination of creative brainstorming, research, and careful observation to capture the complex and sometimes chaotic relationship between individuals and their screens.

Findings and Conclusion: The project findings reveal the adverse effects of social media on individuals, including feelings of isolation, anxiety, and addiction. The study delves into the "fear of missing out" aspect, which drives users to continuously engage and keep coming back to the social media platforms.

Analyses of user behaviour of around 20 users across demographics, age groups, and professions demonstrate that individuals aged below 19 years and above 50 years appear unaffected by the negative effects of social media. The older age group exhibits non-addictive usage and takes pride in their limited engagement. Meanwhile, the younger generation, who have grown up with digital devices, view social media as an integral part of their lives, perceiving no issue with its usage. However, individuals aged 20-45 demonstrate the highest concern about digital media's impact on their physical well-being, likely due to experiencing the transition. They want to be connected to the non-digital and natural world while also experiencing the advancement of technology. Quantitative data reveals disrupted sleep and work patterns, as individuals frequently turn to their phones and digital screens.

The Final Output: The humorous and thought-provoking illustrations created for this project aim to depict those findings in a manner that invokes self-introspection. This project emphasises the importance of taking breaks from social media and being mindful of its potential negative consequences. It also underscores the ethical considerations necessary in technology design and use. By utilising satire, this project offers a creative and engaging exploration of these issues, with the potential to inspire further conversations and actions toward responsible and mindful technology usage.

INTRODUCTION

Technology is ubiquitous and a large part of our lives make use of screens to support our productivity, connectivity and leisure. Constant distractions from primary tasks increase the screen-time affecting our physical and mental health. These distractions are a result of how applications are designed to engage or hook the users into losing track of time, little to no self-control or realisation, frustration, guilt and post-use regret. While some users are aware of their excessive usage, a few do not identify the effects of the wasted time. 'Time is currency' when it comes to distractions on our digital devices as it is easiest to start using these applications but difficult to understand 'how much is enough?'. Through this project, we try to understand nuances of this complex relationship in search of answers to "Why do people scroll?", "How do they feel after scrolling", and "Are the measures taken to combat mindless scrolling effective?"

This project was also a personal journey as I struggle with the issue myself almost everyday. I wrap up my work by 11 or 11:30 PM every night and I prepare myself to go to bed. I lie down comfortably, unlock my phone to scroll my feed for a few minutes. It's 12:15 PM and I still find myself hopping from one post to another. At 2:12 am, the pattern shows no signs of shifting, it's more of the same. Thumb down, thumb up. I never really stop until my eyes give up in the unconscious battle

between my brain and my body. Each night ends the way the day began, with an endless scroll through social media in a desperate search for relaxation and self-gratification.

There is unlimited content, and the promise of something funnier, inspiring or perhaps some answers to our problems, always feels a click away. But do we find it? Not always. Today, people are living at a time with no easy solutions, a time where a lot of conflicting "facts" and "thoughts" exist in a rapidly changing landscape. There is a lot of data and no overarching narrative that helps us make sense of it. This only compounds the stress and anxiety we were already feeling. Yes, studies^[1] have found social media, when used responsibly, can have positive effects on mental health, but it can also lead to anxiety^[2] and depression^[3]. Or, at the bare minimum, FOMO.

Through this project, I aimed to initiate a conversation on a topic that is common to everybody I know and I face myself too, namely a phenomenon called "Doom Scrolling" or "Infinite Scrolling" or more specifically "Mindless Scrolling".

DEFINING THE PROBLEM SPACE

Digital devices serve as essential tools for staying connected, productive, entertained, and informed in today's interconnected world. However, certain technologies, particularly social media platforms, are specifically designed to

capture and retain user attention, promoting an always-on lifestyle that can have negative impacts on psychological well-being. It is important to acknowledge that some platforms are intentionally addictive and exploit human vulnerabilities^[4]. The use of these technologies can lead to problematic digital behaviours, causing distractions and diminishing overall quality of life.

Increase in screen-time

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought attention to the importance of prioritising well-being as our work, interactions, and lifestyles undergo significant changes. According to the 2021 Kaspersky report^[5], 53% of individuals have increased their usage of social media compared to pre-pandemic times, driven by negative emotions such as loneliness, boredom, and the fear of missing out (FOMO). There has been a noticeable surge in social media app downloads and user engagement, with India experiencing an average growth rate of 31.2%. On average, users in India spend over 2 hours per day on social media platforms.

These figures are likely to be even higher due to the pandemic, contributing to an overall increase in screen time, which is further amplified by remote and hybrid work formats. Prolonged screen time can have various effects on health, including disrupted sleep patterns, headaches, neck pain,

myopia (near-sightedness), digital eye strain, and increased cardiovascular risk factors, as highlighted by the World Health Organization (2020)^[6].

Why focus on smartphones and social media?

In today's world where multiple devices are used, smartphones have become an essential tool for carrying out various daily tasks. The convenience of accessing smartphones, their portability, widespread internet availability, and engaging applications make users highly involved with them. The introduction of personalised, entertaining, and bite-sized content like reels and stories further contributes to the development of unwanted habits among users. The term "Nomophobia," meaning "No Mobile Phobia," highlights the widespread nature of this issue^[7]. Excessive use of smartphones has been linked to negative impacts on social interactions, mental health, and overall well-being.

In the contemporary digital landscape, social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter have evolved into highly curated and filtered spaces. Users are encouraged to present only the most impressive aspects of their lives while concealing the less glamorous or challenging elements. As a result, today's youth often strive to construct an idealised image of themselves and their lifestyles, utilising filters, photoshop, and carefully selected photos that may not align with their reality.

This meticulously crafted environment of social media can be misleading and have adverse consequences, fostering feelings of insecurity, anxiety, and self-doubt among users. While social media has facilitated connectivity, particularly in the post-lockdown era, it has also transformed into a platform for active engagement with social issues and movements.

Although social media offers superficial connections, it often lacks meaningful conversations that contribute to collective sense-making. As a result, users have limited access to the social resources that genuine interactions provide, leading to a sense of loneliness and disconnection. Understanding these dynamics is essential to comprehending the negative impact of mindless browsing on the well-being of today's youth.

Are we really 'addicted'?

In the book 'Indistractable'^[8], Eyal talks about how one must deal with these uncomfortable internal triggers, else people will continue to engage in self-defeating distractions. It is easy to build poor device usage habits that provide temporary comfort with dopamine hits as humans are hardwired to take the route with least effort therefore we continue to engage in the overuse of pleasurable technologies. Not all positive experiences support wellbeing in the long run. Products tap into the attention economy and continue to employ these persuasive

patterns to hook their users leaving them with a sense of low autonomy and competence to manage use. A study, Phil and Stoney in 2017^[9] concluded that 'life satisfaction itself is inversely related with both Internet addiction and social media addiction' that is, people will indulge in using the Internet more to avoid these negative feelings. Therefore, exploring more ways to help users take control of their screen-time is a relevant and growing space.

Labelling the increase in device use as 'addiction' can introduce feelings of guilt, frustration and shame. 'Smartphone Addiction' is a term commonly used. The addiction narrative could influence wellbeing, sense of self, and sense-making around smartphone use and therefore the increased use of smartphones needs to dig deeper into questions of 'Why do people spend a considerable amount of time on their smartphones?'.

Problematic usage

Smartphone overuse may better be called a 'Habit' rather than a behavioural addiction which is defined as mental and behavioural disorders that do not include the ingestion of psychoactive substances. Additionally behavioural addictions cannot be addressed the same way as substance (smoking, drinking etc) addictions as they have different behavioural and psychological roots^[10]. While habits may be unhealthy, they do

not possess the same core components of behavioural addictions: salience, mood modification, tolerance, withdrawal, conflict, and relapse. Following an abstinence model, similar to drug or alcohol addiction, is an unrealistic model and therefore we may consider improving self-control, break or build healthy habits and help in enabling users to reflect on usage patterns that become problematic. The way such habits build is due to the over-stimulation of dopamine cells that build a learnt association with the sound of our phone vibrate or a notification light or using the app itself^[10]. This hyperactive reward system is reinforced by constant repetition that causes a lack of motivation to exercise self-control.

DEFINING MINDLESS SCROLLING

Doom Scrolling is not just endless scrolling of information, but more of falling into deep, morbid rabbit holes of content, oftentimes agitating ourselves to the point of physical discomfort, erasing any hope of a good night's sleep or a peaceful day ahead.

Mindless scrolling is when someone gets on social media – whether it be Twitter , Instagram or Facebook and starts scrolling through their feeds without even thinking about why they are doing it.

An excerpt from a blog^[11] had a very interesting point to make “The act of doom scrolling is an act of slouching toward quietus. Taken biblically, it has a Revelation tone. Each swipe through the timeline marks the end of a day of reckoning—for the state of the world at large and for the person attached to each appendage doing the scrolling. Simultaneously, each person watches the demise of so much, while also slowly destroying themselves.”

SECONDARY RESEARCH

FILMS/ BOOKS/ PODCASTS

Documentary - The Social Dilemma (2020)^[12]

This documentary sheds light on the alarming consequences of social networking as experts from Silicon Valley raise awareness about its dangerous impact. It exposes how Big Tech utilises social media to manipulate and influence individuals. Through this film, I gained a deeper understanding of the negative effects of social media, particularly in terms of addiction, polarisation, and the erosion of democratic values. It emphasises the role of AI and machine learning in exacerbating these problems and advocates for a more ethical and responsible approach to the design and use of technology. What struck me the most was the realisation that the documentary is narrated by individuals who were once instrumental in creating these platforms, and they now deeply regret their contributions.

Anthology Series - Black Mirror (2011)^[13]

A science-fiction anthology series that explores the possible impacts of technology on society and the individual. The series is known for its dark, satirical take on contemporary technology and its implications, with each episode presenting a standalone story that imagines a dystopian future. The series is particularly relevant to this project as it touches on themes of addiction,

polarisation, and the erosion of privacy and autonomy in the digital age.

Book - "Digital Minimalism" by Cal Newport (2019)^[144]

Browsing through the book made me realise that by reducing the time spent on digital devices, individuals can improve their overall well-being and cultivate deeper, more meaningful connections with others. The author argues for a more intentional and mindful approach to technology use, specifically advocating for taking breaks from social media and other digital distractions.

Book - "Small is Beautiful" by E.F. Schumacher (1973)^[145]

As recommended by Prof. Alka Hingorani, this book is a classic work of economics that argues for a more sustainable and human-scale approach to economic development. The author challenges the prevailing wisdom of the time, which championed large-scale industrialization and growth, and instead advocates for a more localised and human-centred approach that prioritises the well-being of individuals and communities. The book is relevant to this project as it encourages a more critical and reflective approach to technology use that prioritises the well-being and autonomy of individuals over the pursuit of ever-greater efficiency and growth.

Podcast - Your Undivided Attention^[146]

The podcast explores similar themes related to the impact of technology on our attention spans and mental health. Here they explore the incredible power that technology has over our lives and how we can use it to catalyse a humane future. The quote "We are in a time where we've sort of accepted the unrestricted, unregulated mining of the human consciousness, the harvesting of human attention. We are the resource and I think it takes its toll"^[147] highlights a crucial aspect of the project, which is the sense of "giving in" amongst many if not all the users. User's understand the idea that social media platforms are designed to capture and monetize our attention, however, they often disregard that this is happening at the expense of our well-being.

PAPERS/ NEWS/ JOURNAL ARTICLES

Articles - Pew Research Center^[148]

The Pew Research Center has conducted numerous surveys and studies on social media use and its impacts. Technology can have both positive and negative effects on human well-being, depending on how it is designed and used. The report^[149] notes that technology can enhance social connections, increase access to information, and improve health outcomes, but it can also contribute to social isolation, mental health problems, and a sense of disconnection from the physical world.

According to one article^[20], 69% of adults in the United States use social media, with the most popular platforms being YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. The article also notes that social media use is highest among young adults, with 84% of 18- to 29-year-olds reporting that they use social media.

A report^[21] also notes that many users are concerned about the spread of fake news and misinformation online, with 64% of adults saying that it has a major impact on their confidence in the information they get from social media. Also social media use can contribute to stress and burnout^[22], particularly among those who feel pressure to constantly monitor and respond to social media notifications and updates. The same article suggests that taking breaks from social media and practising self-care can help mitigate these negative effects.

These findings are relevant to the project as they provide a broader context for the individual experiences and perspectives captured in the interviews and illustrations. They speak to the broader ethical and societal implications of social media use and highlight the importance of responsible and accountable technology design. They also highlight the importance of taking breaks and practising self-care in the digital age.

Non-profit organisation - Centre for Humane Technology^[23]

The website helped me a lot in forming out the direction of this project as it is dedicated to reimagining the technology industry

and promoting the development of more ethical and humane technology. Few quotes and elements from their blog articles that are relevant to the project are mentioned below:

"Our minds and our emotions are being hijacked by technology" by Tristan Harris, co-founder of the Center for Humane Technology, in a TED talk^[24]. This quote speaks to the central theme of the project. By highlighting how technology can "hijack" our minds and emotions, Harris emphasises the need for more ethical and responsible technology design. The point of "Weaponizing fear and anxiety" in the article "How Social Media Hacks Our Brains"^[25] explains how social media platforms use fear-related stimuli to capture our attention, and how this can lead to a negative cycle of engagement with content that generates fear, anger, and disgust. It underscores the ways in which social media platforms manipulate our emotions in order to keep us engaged with their content.

Digital well-being apps in Market^[26]

I reviewed a few of the most popular applications and features for digital well being in the market. First one is Digital-Wellbeing, a feature built into Google's Android operating system that allows users to monitor and control their phone usage. Apple's Screen Time feature provides similar functionality to Digital Wellbeing, but is built into the iOS operating system. It allows users to set app limits, monitor

usage, and even set up "Downtime" where certain apps or the entire phone can be locked out during a specified time period. Freedom, a third-party app that allows users to block distracting websites and apps on their computer, phone, or tablet. Forest, a gamified app that encourages users to stay off their phone by "growing" a virtual tree. When the user opens a distracting app, the tree dies. Offtime, an app that allows users to customise their digital detox experience. Moment, a screen time tracker app that provides users with a detailed analysis of their daily phone usage. Flipd, an app that allows users to "flip off" their phone and stay focused on other activities. RescueTime, a productivity tool that tracks how much time users spend on various apps and websites. Users can set up goals, track their progress, and even receive detailed reports on their productivity.

PREVIOUS WORKS

“Social Media” - Burnt Toast^[27]

This is a series of animated GIFs and illustrations created by an artist to evoke the feeling of being trapped and addicted to social media.

“TIA” - Mauro Polondak^[28]

TIA is a series of tactile and analog objects that encourage activity. This project responds to problems and potentials noticed when using social networks. The series consists of

three products of which everyone comments and criticises social networks in a different way. Connected, organised and calm are three different toys which help kids to live in the real life world with less digital distractions.

“DOPAMINE BRICK” - HARSHAL D^[29]

We spend most of our leisure time on our phones, often doing nothing important—scrolling endlessly, switching apps, engaging in pointless content, and whatnot. Dopamine Brick is a typographic response read out through standard interfaces we end up seeing and using on our mobile devices— from notification pop-ups to Instagram stories to WhatsApp scrolls and everything in between—video prototypes in progress.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

The methodology for this project involved collecting quantitative data for 20 users to get a broader idea of their screen time, most used applications and usage patterns. Later the research moved on to conducting unstructured interviews with the same group of individuals, who were asked to share their experiences and perceptions of social media. The interviews were analysed to identify common themes and patterns, which were then used to create the satirical illustrations. An informal approach was taken throughout the project as the use of satire in the final outcome was intended to convey the emotions and experiences of the interviewees in a creative and engaging way.

QUANTITATIVE DATA (20 USERS)

Screen time statistics were collected from the phones of 20 participants to gather data on their total digital screen time, number of phone pickups per day, most used phone application, and social media usage patterns. Daily Schedule of the participants was noted as per their self-described routine which includes their sleep, work and recreation - both online and offline. The participants represented diverse demographic backgrounds, professions, and age groups. Among them, 4 participants were aged 19 or below, 4 participants were aged 40 or above, and the remaining 12 participants fell within the

age group of 20-40. Out of the 20 participants, 7 were students, 3 were full-time social media creators, 6 were young working professionals, and 4 were retired adults with other occupations.

The average screen time per day varied across different age groups, ranging from 2 hours and 30 minutes to 13 hours and 50 minutes. The most commonly used social media apps were Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp. On average, participants spent 3 hours and 53 minutes per day on social media apps, with a range of 1 hour 3 minutes to 11 hours and 30 minutes. The number of times participants picked up their phones throughout the day ranged from 23 to 356 times.

ANALYSIS OF QUANTITATIVE DATA^[30]

I mapped the quantitative user data collected, to effectively visualise the findings for easy correlation, and the process revealed the following insights:

Screen Time: The average daily screen time varied across age groups, with younger participants (aged 19 and below) showing higher screen time compared to older participants (aged 20 and above). This suggests that older individuals may have more controlled usage of digital devices.

Popular Applications: Among the participants, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp emerged as the most frequently used

apps. This indicates the widespread popularity of these platforms across different age groups and professions. Facebook was only found to be popular among users aged 40 above.

Mindless Scrolling: The observed screen time on social media apps for recreational purposes exhibited a significant range. However, in almost all cases, the participants reported that social media scrolling extended into their working hours and resting time by a substantial margin.

Phone Dependency: The frequency of participants picking up their phones throughout the day varied widely, ranging from 112 to 356 times. This wide variability suggests varying levels of phone dependency and highlights the habitual nature of checking smartphones for many individuals. It indicates a constant sense of anxiety or compulsion to stay connected to their phones.

Impact on Restful Periods: The usage of phones during self-described sleep or resting periods suggests disruptions in their restful periods. This potentially impacts the overall quality of rest experienced by the participants.

Overall, the data suggests that there is a diverse range of digital screen time and usage patterns among the participants, influenced by factors such as age, profession, and personal habits. These findings underscore the need for individuals to be mindful of their digital device usage and consider adopting healthy screen time practices.

QUALITATIVE DATA - USER INTERVIEWS (14 USERS)

Out of the 20 participants whose data was collected, I spent time with 14 participants, to understand in-depth about their emotions and feelings about their social media usage. I then Categorised those users based on their screen time. It is a subjective process, as what is considered "low" or "addictive" can vary depending on individual circumstances and personal perceptions. However, for this project I have categorised social media users based on their screen time:

1. Low screen time (3) - Minimalist, balanced, moderate:
These users spend relatively little time on social media platforms, usually less than 2 hours a day.
2. Moderate screen time (4) - Occasional, casual, conscious:
These users spend a moderate amount of time on social media platforms, usually between 2 to 5 hours a day.
3. High screen time (5) - Heavy, addicted, compulsive:
These users spend a significant amount of time on social media platforms, usually between 5 to 9 hours a day.
4. Extremely high screen time (2) - Obsessive, excessive, extreme): These users spend an excessive amount of time on social media platforms, usually more than 9 hours a day.

These names aim to capture the different levels of social media use while avoiding stigmatising or overly negative labels for those who may use social media frequently. It's important to note that these categories are not definitive and may overlap or vary depending on individual circumstances. Additionally, social media usage can be influenced by various factors such as age, profession, and personal preferences, so it's important to take a nuanced approach when categorising users based on their screen time.

Out of the 14 interviews, 8 conversations were shortlisted for illustration and the final outcome for the publication.

Prompts/ Areas for discussion - Low screen time

- What inspired you to limit your screen time?
- How has reducing your screen time affected your daily routine and overall well-being?
- Have you noticed any benefits to your mental health since reducing your screen time?
- Do you feel like you're missing out on anything by limiting your screen time?
- How do you stay connected with friends and family without relying on social media?

Prompts/ Areas for discussion - Moderate Screen time

- How do you feel your phone has impacted your life?

- What emotions or behaviours do you experience related to your screen time?
- How do you balance your screen time with other aspects of your life, such as work or hobbies?
- Have you noticed any changes in your behaviour or mental state when you are working or socialising with friends?

Prompts/ Areas for discussion - High Screen Time

- Why do you open your phone and scroll? And when do you stop? How do you feel when you stop?
- How do you feel about the quality of your time spent?
- Have you ever experienced negative consequences related to your screen time, such as sleep issues or anxiety?
- How do you prioritise your responsibilities or activities?
- What are the apps or platforms that you feel particularly drawn to or addicted to? And why?
- Have you ever tried to limit your screen time, and if so, what was your experience like?
- How do you think your life would be different if you spent less time on screens?
- How does social media influence your spendings, behaviour and thought process?

ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

Current Usage patterns

- Users perceive their devices as essential tools for productivity, staying connected, staying informed, and enjoying leisure activities online. Therefore, a restrictive approach hampers the smartphone experience, and any solution should aim for a balanced approach that aligns with users' routines.
- Individuals aged below 19 years and above 50 years appear unaffected or ignorant by the negative effects of social media. The older age group exhibits non-addictive usage and takes pride in their limited engagement. Meanwhile, the younger generation, who have grown up with digital devices, view social media as an integral part of their lives, perceiving no issue with its usage.
- Individuals aged 20-45 demonstrate the highest concern about digital media's impact on their physical well-being, likely due to experiencing the transition. They want to be connected to the non-digital and natural world while also experiencing the advancement of technology.
- Notifications were identified as a major source of distractions. To minimise interruptions, users disabled notifications for distracting apps like Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, while keeping notifications

enabled for productivity-focused apps like Whatsapp or Telegram.

- Users frequently switched off their phones or put their phone in Focus mode to seek digital detox periods due to digital fatigue from online work. Working professionals used laptops minimally, while students increased their usage.
- Extended periods of scrolling led to physical fatigue, along with neck, eye, and back problems associated with current education and working setups. Many of them face disrupted sleep patterns. Users were aware of these issues.
- Users expressed guilt about spending too much time online but felt compelled to engage with online media when alone or bored.
- Switching to another device was considered a "break," leading to increased screen time.
- Increased device usage was driven by loneliness due to spending extended periods alone at home. Users sought constant engagement while eating or taking breaks to avoid idleness or procrastination.
- Boredom and the need for constant distraction motivated users to engage with their smartphones for long periods, leading to post-use regret, as it was the easiest option available.

Losing the sense of time

- Users experienced a distorted sense of time when engaging in non-primary tasks or being distracted on their phones.
- Their phone usage can be categorised into frequent short bursts driven by compulsive checking for notifications and replies, as well as longer periods of engagement with news, social media browsing, and video watching.
- Users tend to prioritise short-term gratification over their long-term goals, such as building skills, reading, or working on projects that would benefit their productivity and personal interests. The ease and accessibility of instant gratification through their phones often lead them away from their goals, causing feelings of guilt.

Distractions

- Distractions were primarily internal, as users intentionally kept notifications turned off to minimise external interruptions. However, the compulsion to check their phones persisted due to the fear of missing out and Phantom Vibration Syndrome.^[31]
- Users relied on their smartphones to cope with overwhelming tasks, leading to repeated cycles of procrastination driven by their own internal motivations.

- Users tend to check their phones while they are working to take breaks or and while they are about to rest to wear themselves out.

Looking for Alternatives

- Users frequently resorted to uninstalling, deactivating accounts, or logging out from apps they perceived as addictive and causing excessive usage. However, they often returned to using or downloading the app within a short period of 1 day to 1 month, driven by the value of interactions or increased availability of time.
- Users also use different modes such as “Focus mode” or “Sleep mode” to receive less distractions.
- Some chose to implement strict rules for themselves, such as limiting their social media use to a certain number of minutes per day by using app blockers.
- New apps which convert your phone’s interface to a minimal theme with no visuals are also popular. The idea is to make the interface difficult enough for the individual so that it is comparatively difficult for the user to access those apps.
- Users reported feeling a lack of control while using apps like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, and news-related apps. Therefore, it is crucial to assist users in cultivating behaviours that encourage mindful usage of these platforms.

Self Control

- Users displayed a higher resistance to distractions when facing deadlines.
- The majority of users who attempted a detox and adopted new hobbies or activities struggled to sustain them for an extended period, leading to feelings of low self-efficacy.
- Users predominantly held themselves accountable for reducing the time spent on their phones, attributing it to enhanced self-discipline rather than external factors influencing their behaviour.
- There are a set of people who refuse to use Social media. They have ethical concerns about the way these companies handle user data, the spread of misinformation, or the negative impact these platforms have on mental health and well-being.
- These individuals feel a sense of empowerment by taking a stand against what they see as problematic behaviours by these companies. They may seek alternative ways of staying connected with others, such as using more privacy-focused platforms or engaging in more face-to-face interactions.

Social Aspects

- There was a strong sense of guilt for lacking in socialising aspects amongst many individuals. They feel

isolated and often find refuge in their favourite content instead of putting effort to meet people and socialise.

- Users reported a diminished attention span and decreased interest in classes and meetings during remote work, highlighting the absence of social cues that typically set a standard of behaviour.
- Users noted that in social gatherings where physical presence of others was involved, they exhibited better self-regulation in their phone usage.
- Collaborating with a partner or having someone join in activities such as exercising, maintaining a diet, or studying proved beneficial in sustaining motivation for users. However, many expressed difficulties in finding people with like minded interests.

Awareness

- There was a strong discontent for the virtual world presenting an idyllic and alluring representation of life, showcasing only the best aspects of an individual's experiences and concealing any undesirable aspects.
- Despite being aware of the addictive nature of social media and its potential social, physical, and mental consequences, many individuals fail to acknowledge it as a serious concern, which is alarming.
- Many are still in denial about the negative impacts of technology and social media addiction. They often downplay the issue and insist that it's just a harmless

way to stay connected with friends and family.

Argument is that technology has made our lives easier and more efficient, and that social media is just a fun way to share updates, photos and some quick laughs.

- Some users have accepted the problems associated with social media. They know that their excessive screen time has caused them issues such as concentration problems, low focus, health concerns, fatigue, and even addiction, and yet they continue to do so to keep their mind distracted from the problems at hand.
- Few have come to realise that social media and technology are an inherent part of their lives and they cannot really do anything about it.

What Worked?

In all cases, people are struggling to find time for hobbies such as reading, exercising, self-care, exploring new things/places or spending time with friends and family in person. However, what has worked according to them are as mentioned below:

- Social Detox or complete boycott
- Conscious decision to scroll mindfully
- No visual themes for OS^[32]
- Using web version of the apps
- Turning-off notifications

FINALISING THE DIRECTION

Brainstorming Ideas

Even though the data collected was for a very small number of individuals, it gave a fair idea about the scale of the problem because every person I was speaking to was dealing with the issues related to mindless scrolling in one way or the other. Post analysis, I brainstormed on the possible outcomes of the defined problem space:

Digital solutions:

1. Designing an app or website that incorporates infinite scrolling but also includes features to reduce mindless scrolling, such as reminders to take breaks and information about the impact of extended screen time.
2. Creating an interactive website or exhibition that showcases the history and evolution of scrolling, highlighting its impact on society and mental health.
3. Creating a website or app that gamifies the act of limiting screen time, rewarding users for taking breaks and engaging in other activities.
4. Developing a short film or animation that humorously illustrates the dangers of excessive scrolling and provides tips for healthy technology habits.

5. Designing a social media challenge that encourages people to take a break from their screens and participate in real-world activities.

Non-Digital solutions:

6. Developing a series of infographics or illustrations to educate people on the dangers of mindless scrolling and how to avoid it.
7. Creating a digital campaign to raise awareness of the negative effects of excessive scrolling and encourage healthy technology habits.
8. Designing a print or digital publication that explores the relationship between scrolling and the human condition, featuring articles, interviews, and illustrations.

Post brain-storming on all the above mentioned ideas, I decided to go ahead with a completely non-digital approach.

Why a Publication?

Our lives today have become nothing if not a marathon; trying to sprint to the end of one's feed will only cause burnout and a decline in mental health among the people whose level-headedness is needed most. That means our youth. Amidst all of the pain, isolation, and pressure to cope up with the world, it's not worth it to add on to the strain with two hours of excess screen time every night. Therefore, in order to not be

a part of the endless explore feed, I decided to make a publication which informs the readers and also provides a healthy break in their fast paced lives.

Approach

To explore new creative avenues, I embarked on a project aimed at evoking the same emotions experienced while scrolling through social media applications. My objective was to design a collection of tactile and analog objects that would replicate the dopamine rush, surprises, and a mix of simplified yet captivating content that is often unrelated. As a unifying thread, an overarching narrative would gradually manipulate the reader's perception. This will be mixed with a gush of colours, and elements all fighting for attention.

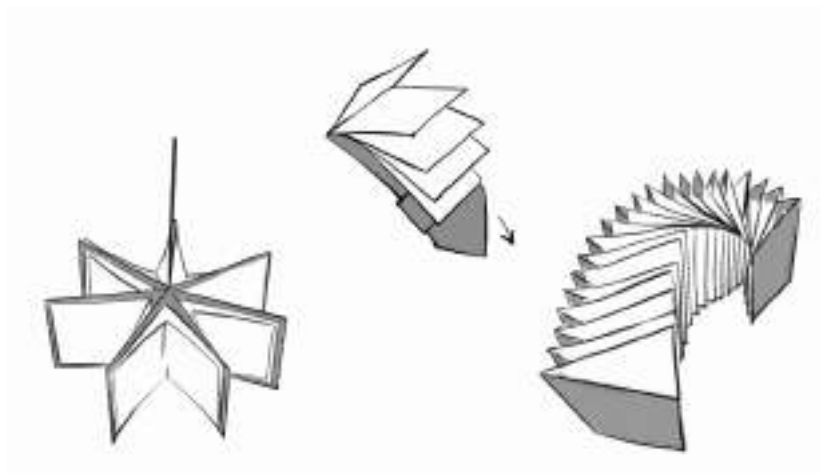
I embarked on this ambitious project after noticing both the problems and opportunities that come with using social networks. My goal was to make people aware of how mindlessly scrolling through these platforms can greatly affect their thinking and cognitive abilities. Although it was a challenging task, I saw it as an exciting opportunity to delve into the world of publishing for the first time.

For this project I wanted to try different paper textures, binding techniques, mediums like thread, wires, fabric to reflect my thoughts. Along with that experimenting with print, typography, illustration and mixed media techniques.

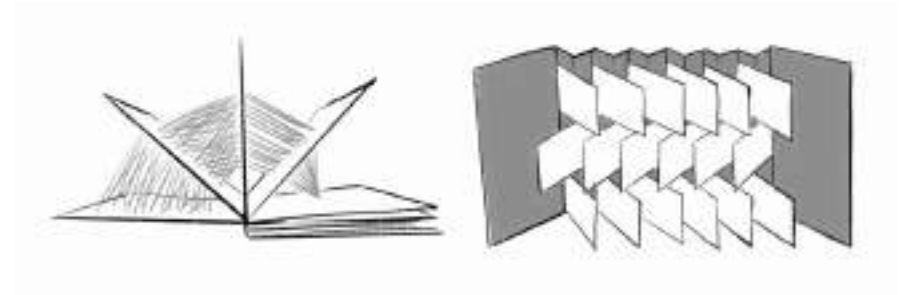
INITIAL DIRECTION

Initial idea was to explore the relationship between scrolling and the human condition through a Hand-made publication with a mixed-media approach. The idea was to create bite-sized content, presented in a form of surprises like pop-ups, collages, illustrations and layers. The idea was to get readers to come out of the infinite loop, and provoke them to try out some non-digital experiences themselves. The idea was abstract and novel as I was unable to find anything created already in this direction. For this approach I tried a few book binding and flipping techniques which might be intriguing for the readers.

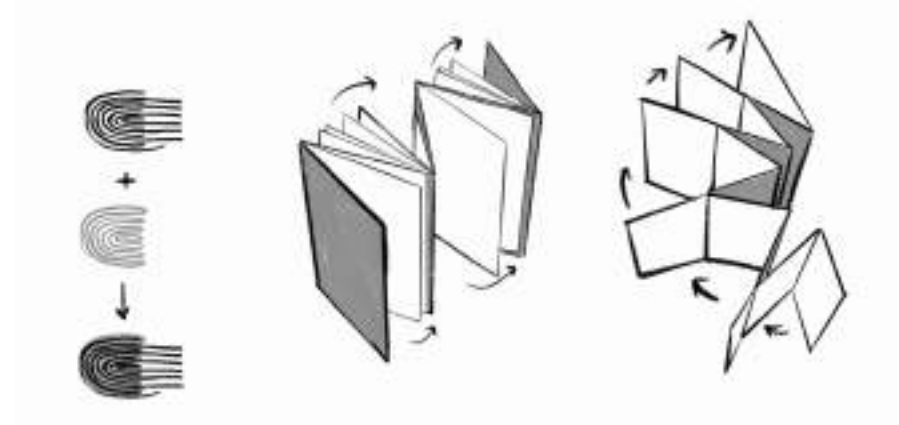
1. For ease of use:



2. For Hook nuggets/ surprise elements:



3. For Binding:



Key-Takeaways from previous approach:

1. A non-digital approach to the problem should be kept because of the need to get away from digital platforms.
2. Since the topic is nuanced and there are always both sides of the argument, I decided to focus on the real stories of people and how they actually feel.
3. From the feedback received by my peers and faculty, I understood that the tactile aspect of the book was not coming out that well and wasn't expressing the emotions that clearly.
4. Illustrations are a powerful medium to express emotions. Therefore, I decided to keep them as the central element of the publication and add elements for support as needed.

FINAL APPROACH

Finally I decided to embrace the medium of social conversations to explore the mindset of individuals and their relationship with social media. Through a series of powerful illustrations which narrate a story, I present those chaotic emotions in the form of a satirical visual tapestry.

Why Illustrations?

The effects of social browsing also vary depending on who's on the receiving end. During the course of interviews I spoke to many individuals. Few didn't participate in doom scrolling

simply because they said, "I can't see myself feeling inadequate over and over again in this tiny square on my phone." While doom scrolling for many people works in the inverse, they're actually trying to look for something separate and apart from bad things. For some, it is an incredibly enriching time, and scrolling for them is a deep dive into the things maybe they weren't educated well about in the first place or maybe did have an inkling about but were ignoring.

However, in every case there is always a side of scroll which when you read across the light, shows them a different world. A world with a distorted sense of reality which promotes unrealistic beauty standards, material possessions and experiences as key to happiness and success.

To illustrate such differences and different stories the interviewees presented to me, I could think of no better medium than illustrations which can be a really powerful way to express the emotions, provoke the readers to take a pause, self-introspect and bring a change for social good.

Through these sets of illustrations, I also hope the readers will find themselves or someone they know in each and every spread.

PROCESS

The concept for this project originated from a conversation with a friend about his social media usage. While talking to him on the phone, I found myself scribbling down some of the interesting ways he copes with social media fatigue. One of the things he mentioned was that after consuming a lot of data, he feels exhausted and eats chips as a way to take a break.

This gave me the idea to create an illustration of a man drowning in papers, looking up and eating chips from a top-down perspective.



As I continued to explore this concept, I realised that there were many interesting emotions and mindsets associated with social media usage that I could capture in a satirical way through illustrations.



I conducted a series of unstructured interviews with people of different ages and backgrounds to get a better understanding of their relationship with social media and how it affects them. During these interviews, I listened carefully to their stories, taking note of the unique ways they interact with social media. I then translated these stories into a series of satirical illustrations that highlight the negative effects of social media and the importance of taking breaks from screens.

PUBLICATION TITLE

Choosing a title for a project was a challenging task, and it's important to consider several factors before finalising one. In the case of this project, the title selection process involved brainstorming several ideas and evaluating them based on various criteria such as relevance, clarity, and memorability. The initial list of potential titles included options such as "Scrolling and Society," "They Scrolled," and "Scrolling Future." After careful consideration, these titles were discarded because they either didn't accurately convey the scope of the project or didn't sound catchy enough to capture readers' attention.

Eventually, the title **"Society on a Scroll"** was chosen because it succinctly encapsulates the main theme of the project - exploring the relationship between society and social media.

PARTICIPANTS

Selecting participants for unstructured qualitative interviews involved identifying individuals who are likely to have relevant insights and experiences related to the topic of the project. In the case of this project, which focuses on the mindset of people and their relationship with social media, potential participants

could include individuals who use social media frequently in the age group 16 to 35 years. It was important to consider diversifying factors such as age, gender, and socio-economic background to ensure a range of perspectives are represented in the interviews. Recruitment method was mostly through personal networks.



The interviews were then analysed to identify common themes and patterns, which were then used to inform the satirical illustrations. An informal approach was taken throughout the project as the use of satire in the final outcome was intended to convey the emotions and experiences of the interviewees in a creative and engaging way.

VISUAL STYLE

Selecting the visual style for an illustrated book involves identifying a style that complements the project's theme and enhances the overall reading experience. In the case of this project, which explores the mindset of people and their relationship with social media, the visual style should be engaging, thought-provoking, and convey complex ideas in a simple and accessible manner.

Version 1 - Typographic:

For typography exploration, the focus was on the use of text to convey ideas in a visually appealing manner. This style involved the use of different fonts, sizes, colours, and placements to create an engaging and readable layout.



Version 2 - Dynamic:

Here, the focus was on the use of photographs and text to create a visually rich and dynamic experience for readers. This style involved the use of dynamic elements, overlays, and other elements to add depth and a sense of chaos to the visuals. The poster is meant to be intriguing and intimidating.



Image Credits: <https://unsplash.com/>

Version 3 - Illustrated:

Here the focus is on using hand-drawn digital illustrations to convey complex ideas and emotions in a simple and easy manner. This style involves the usage of different techniques, such as line art, textures, bright colours, to create a visually cohesive and engaging experience for readers.



After considering various visual styles, I decided to go with a comic-style approach that is satirical, fun, and quirky. This visual style works best for the project as it allows me to convey complex ideas in a humorous and accessible way, while also engaging the readers with colourful and engaging visuals. The use of satire and comedy also allows me to explore difficult or sensitive topics related to social media and its impact on people's mindset in a light-hearted manner.

Font:

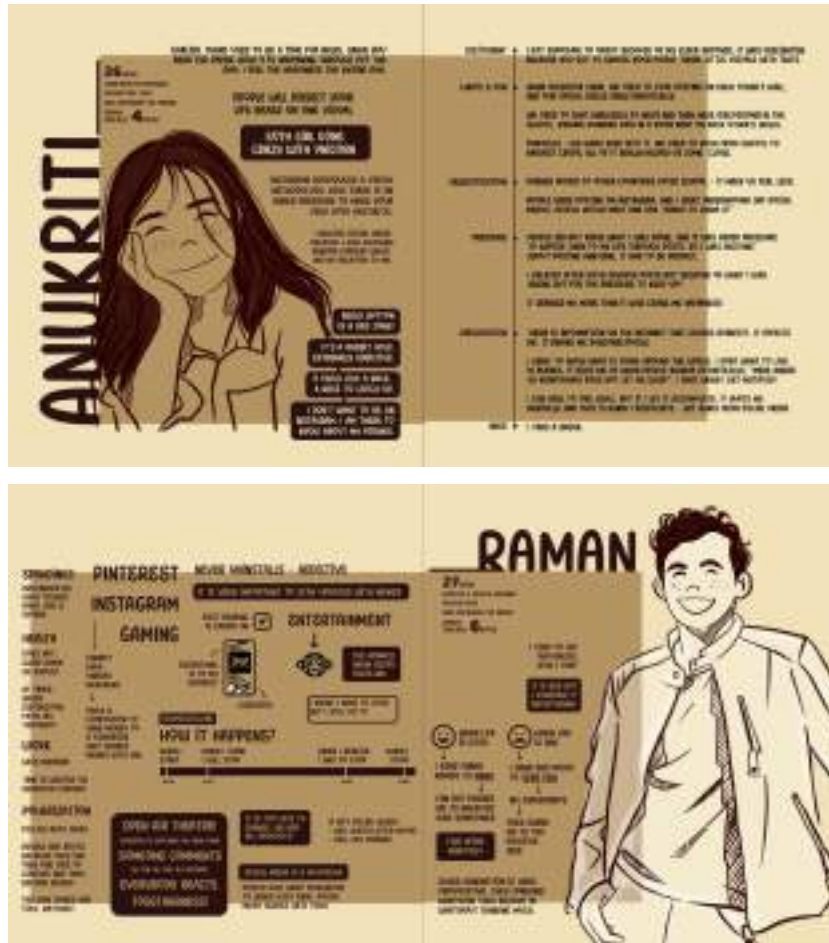
For the illustrated publication, I have chosen following fonts:

Helvetica's clean and modern style allows for easy readability and comprehension of the information presented. This font is used for body copy and as Title text on the cover page.

Amatic SC adds a unique hand-written and friendly character to the spreads while also maintaining readability and legibility. This font is used as headings on the introduction pages.



History Sheeter's playful and quirky nature adds personality and flair to the illustrations, making the book more engaging and memorable for readers. This font is used on the spreads to describe the personalities of each individual.



Colour Palette:

The colour palette chosen has a variety of bright and bold colours, including shades of orange, green and yellow. This colour scheme has a fun and playful tone that aligns with the comical and lighthearted nature of the project. The use of bold, saturated colours also helps to make the illustrations stand out and draws the reader's attention, adding to the overall visual impact of the book.



Additionally, the combination of warm and cool colours in this palette creates a balanced and harmonious feel, with the warm yellow and oranges balancing the cool blues and green. This creates a sense of unity and coherence in the illustrations.

Illustration style:

A quirky illustration style that uses satirical representations of a particular behaviour or emotion of the person is presented. This approach creates a playful and engaging tone, and the use of bright colours, thick strokes, textures, shadows, and overlays adds to the overall visual impact of the illustrations.

In the initial exploration phase, the illustrations were very direct, but through the development process, they were converted into intriguing and metaphorical representations that evoke a sense of questioning. The use of animals as symbols adds a layer of depth and nuance to the illustrations, allowing readers to explore different interpretations and meanings.



CONTENT STRUCTURE

The book's content structure delves into the multifaceted aspects of social media addiction and its consequential impact on mental health. Divided into distinct sections, each component addresses a unique facet of social media's influence. Each section draws inspiration from my extensive conversations with individuals throughout the course of this project.

The sections themselves comprise of three integral parts:

- The Title page, which features a tagline associated with a particular emotion. Following the tagline is a satirical remark from myself, accompanied by a direct quote from the conversation.
- The Persona page, which consists of all the points and opinions voiced by the participant during our conversation. This spread provides a comprehensive understanding of the individual's thoughts and emotions concerning social media.
- The final illustration spread, which showcases a complete visual representation of my interpretation of the entire conversation.



PERSONA 1



MINAL

Female, 24 Years

Mathematics Student

Total screen time: 12-13 hours

Scroll time: 10-11 hours

Title: The Time Sucking Trap

Topic Covered: Procrastination and Productivity

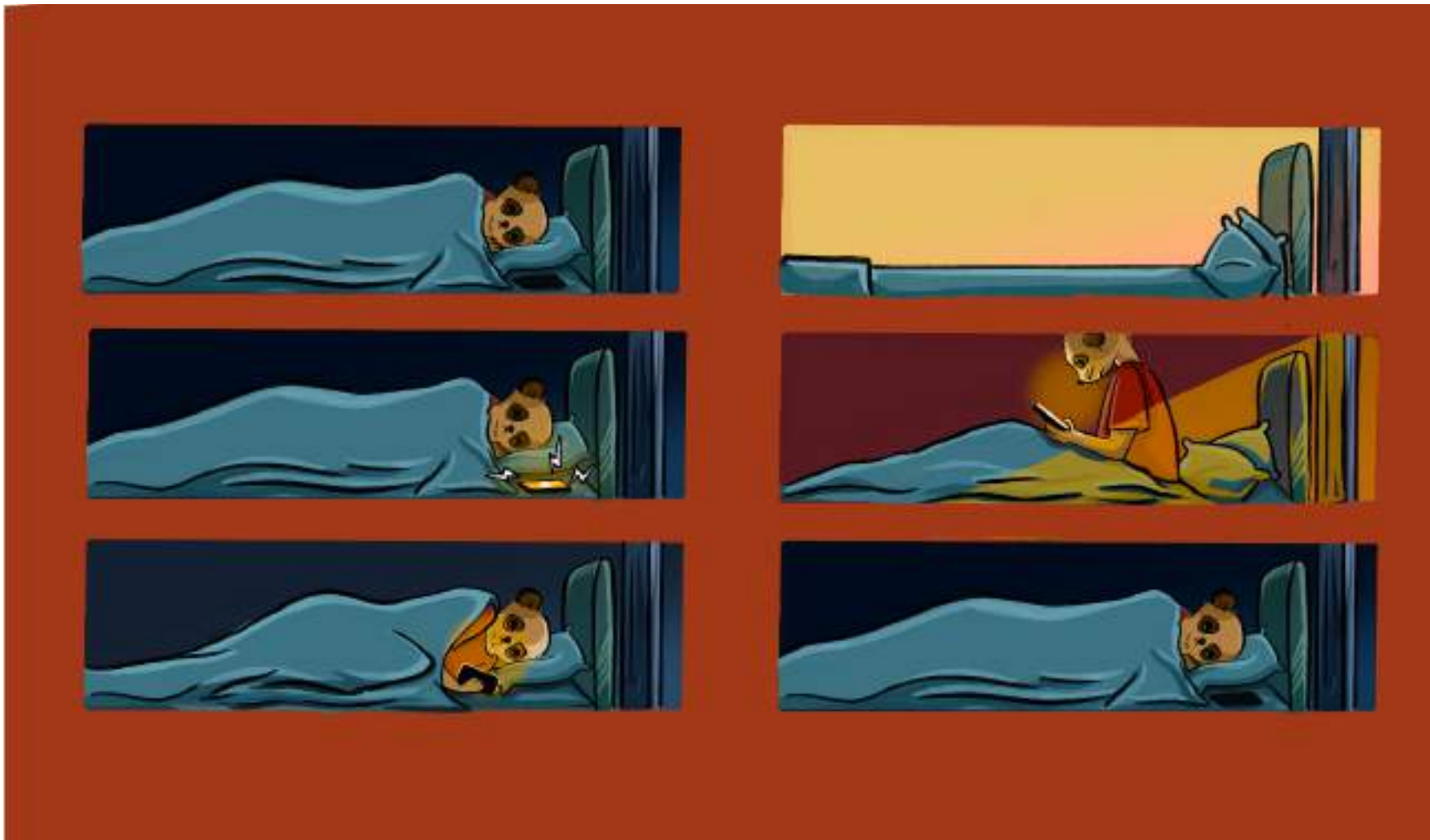
Observation:

While talking to Minal, I understood that her world is saturated with constant noise and digital distractions, due to lack of social aspects in her life, she falls into patterns of isolation and escapism. Her reliance on headphones and the preference for solitude become shields against the discomfort of interaction. She spends most of her time reading fiction books which is unlike any other person I spoke to and yet, amidst the sea of books and imagination, a longing for genuine connection and motivation persisted.

Body text: In a world of social media, time slips through our fingers like sand. What starts as a break from work or study soon becomes a perilous pitfall. Carefully curated content beckons us into a virtual realm of endless possibilities. Click by click, we lose ourselves in the lives of others, neglecting real-world connections. Days fade away, unnoticed, as we cocoon ourselves in beds, entranced by the allure of a digital existence.

Illustration Prompts: A social animal which is spending most of its time, inside the room, scrolling through their phone procrastinating about wo

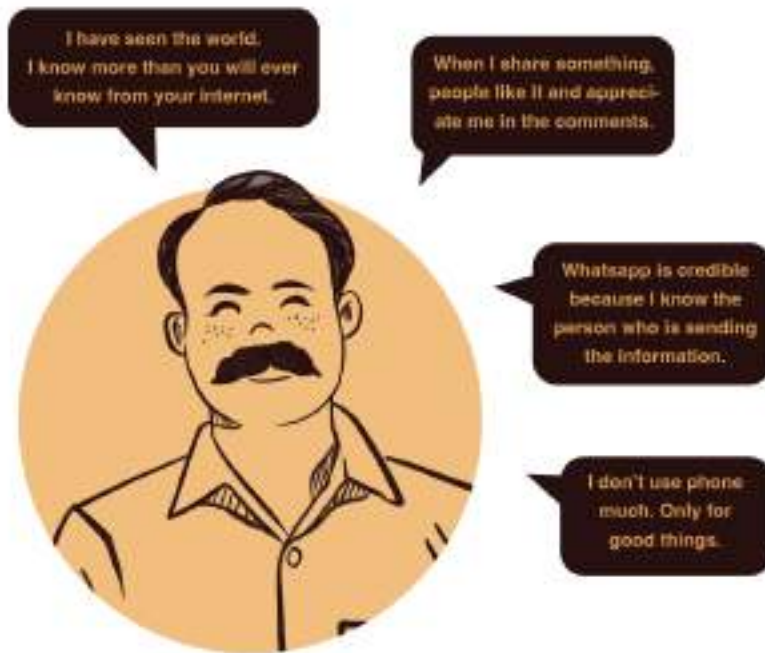
Spread 1: Expectations



Spread 1 (Flap opens): Reality



PERSONA 2



AJEETH

Male, 52 Years

Retd. Defence Personnel, Bihar

Total screen time: 3-4 hours

Scroll time: 2-3 hours

Title: The Echo Chamber

Topic Covered: Inflated Egos and the Influence

Observation: When people have time on their hands, they navigate through online platforms, exchanging content and taking pride in their shared wisdom. The exclusive reliance on internet sources and the dismissal of other sources contributes to the formation of an echo chamber, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives. This can inadvertently create a sense of bombardment for those who may feel overwhelmed by the influx of information.

Body text: Within the screen, self-proclaimed experts bask in their own brilliance. They gather a following of nodding heads, reinforcing their inflated egos. The algorithm helps us put on blinders, shutting out the world and embracing narrow-mindedness. Why listen to others when we can surround ourselves with like-minded individuals who confirm our beliefs? In this echo chamber, we lose the opportunity for growth, empathy, and genuine understanding.

Illustration Prompts: A frightened man, who is full of himself, wearing the badges which are acclaimed by his fellow followers and friends. In a world where he surrounds himself with people who only agree with him and have similar mindsets.

Spread 2: The Echo Chamber



PERSONA 3



JIVESH

Male, 32 Years

Kashmir, IT Consultant

Total screen time: 11-12 hours

Scroll time: 2-3 hours

Title: I am not a robot. Or am I?

Topic Covered: Inflated Egos and the Influence

Observation: A lifestyle heavily relying on digital devices for entertainment and recreation with limited social interactions raises questions about the long-term consequences on physical health and overall fulfilment. The isolation experienced is now a common phenomenon where you don't find people to socialise with. It serves as a reminder on the importance of finding a healthy balance between the digital world and real-life experiences, fostering real relationships, and prioritising mental well-being.

Body text: Surrounded by screens, we grapple with our identity and confront an existential crisis. Our devices become windows reflecting superficial happiness of others that masks our deeper insecurities. The monotony of daily routines and a sense of boredom haunt us as we question the purpose of our existence. We feel detached from ourselves, lost in a world of pixels and self-doubt. We yearn for true fulfilment and meaningful experiences beyond the glowing screens.

Illustration Prompts: A depressed man surrounded by screens and high tech gadgets, struggling to make sense of life. Similar to how the error is shown when a website link is broken, the person is missing/ or broken.

Spread 3: Existential Crisis



PERSONA 4



RAMAN

Male, 26 Years

Masters Student, Aurangabad

Total screen time: 8-10 hours

Scroll time: 4-5 hours

Title: Meme-ification of Mental Health

Topic Covered: Acceptance of Addiction

Observation: There is an acceptance that our attention, focus and time is being used for business benefits of selected few. And even then, we consciously choose to spend more and more time watching the same things we forget as soon as we scroll down. Despite recognizing the need for change, we remain trapped in the addictive cycle of seeking and sharing memes. This emphasises the powerful hold that social media and meme culture has on individuals.

Body text: Ah, memes, those little nuggets of comedic gold that unite us all. To feel included, we all join this strange meme cult, where we all laugh at the same things and use the same catchphrases. Amidst the laughter, we rarely recognize its fleeting nature. Our presence shouldn't be reduced to constantly searching and sharing the next hit joke. Finding solace solely in memes obscures deeper issues of looking for distractions and validation at the same time.

Illustration Prompts: A socially active person, drowning in memes, sharing it relentlessly with all their contacts who in turn send reactions, comments and memes. The spiral continues and becomes a complex maze entangling their own thoughts and personality.

Spread 4: The Meme Cult



PERSONA 5



MITALI

Female, 24 Years

Design Student, Kolkata

Total screen time: 7-8 hours

Scroll time: 3-4 hours

Title: Be who you are, said the influencer.

Topic Covered: Body Dysmorphia and the Social Circus

Observation: There is an evident discomfort with the homogeneity of body types and poses displayed on platforms like Instagram. The creation of perceived flaws, feeds on insecurities. The pressure to conform to aesthetic trends makes us lose our personal style. Behavioural changes, both online and offline, influenced by the constant need for validation and competition is real.

Body text: Between memes, social media is packed with carefully curated personas asking everyone to be themselves. With perfect lighting and strategic filters, we craft an idealised image to broadcast to the world. As we chase this image of perfection, we neglect the toll it takes on young minds. Body dysmorphia arises amongst youngsters striving to fit into societal standards. The quest for authenticity becomes overshadowed by the pressure to conform. We yearn for acceptance, but find ourselves trapped in a cycle of comparison and self-doubt.

Illustration Prompts: An innocent girl, trying to focus on things she likes but is circled by a monster of unrealistic body representation online by everyone. The consumerism and the competition aspect of social media is something that she is evidently very very scared about.

Spread 5: World of information



PERSONA 6



ANUKRITI

Female, 26 Years

Masters Student, Nashik

Total screen time: 8-10 hours

Scroll time: 4-5 hour

Title: My Proof of Existence

Topic Covered: Cutting off and seeking validation

Observation: Constant exposure to others' curated lives leads to disregarding one's own efforts and struggles and sacrificing deeper connections with oneself. The entire experience drains you. At times it is required to dissociate from social media to protect our mental well-being. Also it is important to redefine one's worth beyond superficial validation and taking breaks when needed to maintain a healthy relationship with technology.

Body text: When you constantly watch people talking about their work, travel destinations and their dog turning 2, you fiddle around your own lives to find something that will fit into that rack of bullshit. We disregard our efforts, our struggles and almost all our important moments because they don't fit the mold. Seeking validation from strangers or even so-called friends in this quest for recognition is a struggle. When we cannot keep up, we sacrifice deeper connections with ourselves. It's time to redefine our worth beyond those selected few shots.

Illustration Prompts: A girl looking for something in her life that matches the current trend and trying to fit in with the social world, completely disregarding all the important things and moments that hold much more value in the process.

Spread 6: Finding the trendy



Spread 6 (Flap): Showing off to the world



PERSONA 7



HAPPY

Male, 19 Years

Social Media Influencer, Punjab

Screen time: 11-12 hours

Scroll time: 4-5 hours

Title: Keep up, or shut up.

Topic Covered: Cut-throat competition

Observation: Balancing authenticity with the pressure to be liked by followers also becomes a struggle. If not done right, there comes a fair dose of bullying and you need a thick skin to handle it. The role of algorithms and engagement is important for Instagram success, even if it means occasionally tricking people for promotions.

Body text: We make one post, we get recognized, and then start a relentless race for attention that engulfs us. Now there is a pressure to keep up with trends, gram-worthy lifestyles, and picture-perfect moments that suffocate our authenticity. Every post becomes a calculated move, meticulously crafted to outshine others. But in this dog-eat-dog world, the line between self-expression and performance blurs. We forget to care about the world beyond our screens and the thoughts of those we create for. The competition never ends, and the fear of losing relevance looms over us like a dark cloud.

Illustration Prompts: A guy struggling to engage on social media, pretending to be caring, concerned and an activist. While on the other had ignored the chaos and pleaded for help from the immediate surroundings.

Spread 7: Chaos and Competition



PERSONA 8



SIDHARTH

Male, 30 Years

Chandigarh, Freelancer

Total screen time: 9-10 hours

Scroll time: 5-6 hours

Title: Only Five more minutes.

Topic Covered: Giving in and the guilt trap

Observation: The user's observations reveal a cycle of deleting and succumbing to the lure of online engagement, driven by the addictive dopamine hit. They note the constant fear of missing out and the need to play catch-up. He has tried a number of applications which make the apps less accessible and yet he finds himself finding the way out, everytime. This highlights the challenge of balancing digital connection with real-life experiences.

Body text: Deleting everything but then succumbing to the sweet lure for maybe 5 more minutes. The sweet, sweet dopamine hit that we all can't seem to live without. It's like a bag of chips - you tell yourself you'll just have one, but before you know it, you've spent hours. We now have an unprecedented ability to see what everyone else is doing at any given moment. And so we also have an unprecedented ability to feel like we're missing out on all the fun. But don't worry, you can always spend the night playing catch up.

Illustration Prompts: In a desperate need to find the sweet dopamine hit, a man returns to the same filth where they had previously discarded their unwanted apps. He snorted all the information and lay there relaxed for several hours.

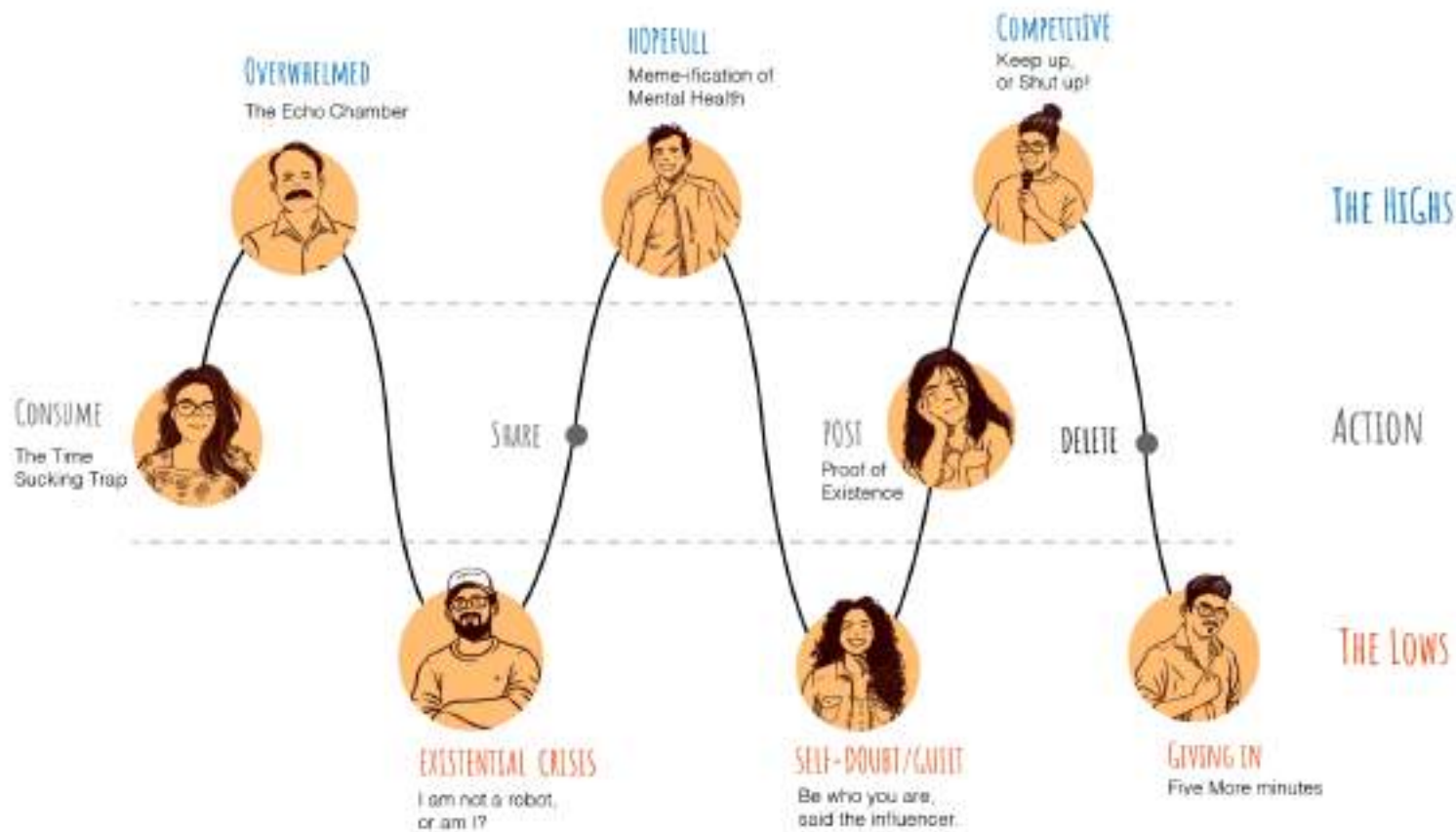
Spread 8: Five more minutes



OVERARCHING NARRATIVE

The book strategically constructs personas to weave together an overarching narrative. It delves into the typical user journey, mapping out their actions and emotions on social media. By categorising and examining these behaviours, a comprehensive

understanding of the user experience is formed, allowing for insightful observations and reflections on the impact of social media. The journey follows the highs and lows of emotions the user experiences while scrolling.



The journey begins as the user delves into a vast sea of online content, gradually losing track of time and experiencing a decline in productivity. This pivotal moment marks the introduction of our first chapter, **"The Time Sucking Trap."**

Subsequently, the user becomes overwhelmed by the immense volume of digital content, leading to a sense of inflated pride and a deceptive belief in their all-knowingness. With the accumulation of followers who consistently support their every action, an echo chamber emerges, paving the way for our second chapter, **"The Echo Chamber."**

As the user finds themselves trapped in the world of devices and online information, feelings of loneliness arise. They suddenly realise the artificiality of the synthetic relationships formed online, plunging them into an existential crisis. In this chapter, titled **"I am not a Robot. Or am I?"**, they embark on a journey to find meaning and discover their self-worth.

Filled with self-doubt, the user continues to scroll until they stumble upon something humorous on the internet. This brief distraction offers temporary respite from their emotions, providing instant happiness. By sharing this content with their online friends, they reconnect and experience a sense of relief and acceptance. This phase unfolds in our fourth chapter, **"Meme-ification of Mental Health."**

However, alongside the laughter and banter, an influx of unrealistic beauty standards, glamorous lifestyles, and travel adventures floods their virtual world. This leads to self-doubt and a sense of guilt, as they compare themselves to others and feel inadequate. Despite acknowledging the consumerism and unreality of social media, the user feels trapped and disappointed. This chapter is aptly titled **"Be who you are, said the influencer."**

Struggling to conform to the trends prevailing in the market, the user disregards the beauty of their own unique moments, profound knowledge, and surreal experiences in search of something that fits the mold. They post in an attempt to fit in, showcasing a life that appears to align with societal expectations. This forms the essence of our sixth chapter, **"My Proof of Existence."**

On a single post, people comment, sending both heartfelt expressions of affection and offensive emojis. Some show appreciation, while others express disapproval. The engagement circus of social media ensues as the user seeks validation through likes and engagement, often neglecting their surroundings and engaging in a relentless rat race. This stage is represented by our seventh chapter, **"Keep up or Shut up."**

However, upon taking a pause, they realise the substantial amount of time lost and consider alternatives that allow them

to reclaim their sense of belonging in the real world, where they can spend quality time with family and genuine friends. They explore various strategies such as deleting social media apps, replacing icons with text, and implementing screen locks, achieving varying degrees of success. Yet, the allure of **"Five more minutes"** lingers, tempting them to scroll once again, thereby restarting the cycle from the very beginning.

In a desperate attempt to find solace, they return to the same digital wasteland where they had previously discarded their unwanted apps. They succumb to the allure of dopamine, immersing themselves in the looped journey, only to relive those familiar emotions "one more time".

CONCLUSION

The research project employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data collection and analysis with qualitative user interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of social media usage patterns and their impact on individuals. The quantitative data revealed diverse screen time and usage patterns among the participants, influenced by factors such as age, profession, and personal habits. The qualitative interviews provided deeper insights into users' emotions, behaviours, and perceptions related to their social media usage.

The findings indicated that younger participants tend to have higher screen time compared to older individuals, who exhibit more controlled usage. Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp emerged as the most commonly used social media applications. Participants reported mindless scrolling and phone dependency, with varying levels of phone pickups throughout the day. The impact on restful periods and potential disruptions to overall well-being were also identified.

The sections in this report, inspired by conversations with interviewees, highlight the emotions and experiences that come with social media addiction. The qualitative analysis of the user interviews highlighted several key themes. Users perceived their devices as essential tools but expressed

concerns about the negative effects of excessive social media usage. Distractions, loss of time perception, and difficulties in self-control were commonly reported. Users sought alternatives, such as uninstalling or limiting usage of addictive apps, implementing strict rules, or using minimalist interfaces. The social aspects of social media, including feelings of isolation and guilt, were also explored.

Overall, the research underscores the need for individuals to be mindful of their digital device usage and adopt healthy screen time practices. The insights gained from this study can inform strategies and interventions aimed at promoting balanced and mindful social media usage. By understanding the experiences and emotions of users, it becomes possible to develop solutions that address the challenges associated with social media and improve overall well-being in the digital age.

FEEDBACK

During my final jury, I received valuable feedback that has contributed to the improvement of my project. I was commended for successfully completing the project within the designated time frame, delivering a tangible book of high quality. The illustrations received great appreciation, and the implementation of cut-outs and pop-ups added dynamism and made the book enjoyable to explore. Furthermore, the research aspect of the book was specifically recognized, acknowledging the in-depth research, in-person interviews, and collected data.

Constructive feedback was provided by the external examiner, which I have carefully considered and implemented in the subsequent iteration of my project.

The feedback is summarised as follows:

1. Regarding the colour scheme, it was suggested that since the illustrations were the only coloured elements in the book, they were not creating a strong connection between the persona and the reader. To enhance this connection, the examiner recommended assigning a different colour to each persona that resonates with their individual characteristics. By doing so, the reader would be able to easily associate each persona with their unique user statements and traits, even when flipping through the pages.
2. The external examiner also advised exploring different layouts and typography options for the persona spreads

preceding the illustrations. The aim was to create more dynamic and personalised experiences for the users, enhancing their engagement with the book.

3. It was recommended to incorporate a storytelling element into the narrative. Storytelling has a powerful impact on readers, facilitating a deeper connection and engagement with the content.
4. Additionally, I was encouraged to consider expanding the project further to other mediums considering its immense potential, such as campaigns, to broaden its reach and potential impact on a wider audience.

Taking into account all the feedback received, I have diligently worked on a new iteration of the book, which can be accessed in [Version 2](#) of the book.

SELF-REFLECTION

During this project, I underwent a personal journey of realising my own addiction and taking steps to reduce my screen time. I deleted social media apps, silenced notifications, and successfully reduced my screen time from 9 hours to 3 hours. However, I still experienced guilt, leading me to understand that the issue was not social media itself, but my desire for constant distraction. I found alternative ways to satisfy that desire. On the bright side, taking a break from social media allowed me to focus on activities like reading, watching movies, and taking online courses, providing me a sense of accomplishment.

During this journey, I also recognized that simply deleting social media may leave us feeling excluded from conversations with friends regarding recent stories or trends. To address this, I started using social media on the web interface instead of the mobile application. This approach reduced screen time, as the web interface is less addictive, while still keeping me adequately informed. Many of my friends found this approach helpful as well.

What we need to consider is not how much time we spend on social media, but how it makes us feel. Ultimately, this is what matters the most.

Furthermore, I realised that the future of social media is in our hands. We have the power to use it positively and make a difference in our lives and the lives of others. By acknowledging our addiction and taking steps to address it, we can develop a healthier relationship with social media. Taking control of our screen time and engaging in activities that bring genuine fulfilment and satisfaction is essential.

FUTURE SCOPE

Future avenues

A lot has already been researched and done in this problem space however, it is evidently not enough. The insights gained from this project present several potential future scopes:

1. Conduct further research and analysis: To better understand the psychological and emotional effects of social media usage, conducting in-depth research and analysis can be beneficial. A survey on a larger number of people, understanding their emotions can help us create more humane designs which cater to their needs and not just help business.
2. Develop a comprehensive digital well-being program: Based on the experiences and strategies shared in this project, a digital well-being program can be developed. This program would focus on helping individuals understand and address their addiction to social media and excessive screen time. It can provide practical tips, resources, and guidance on setting healthy boundaries, managing notifications, and finding alternative activities to promote a balanced lifestyle.
3. Establish digital detox programs and initiatives: Building on the personal experiences shared in this project, implementing digital detox programs and initiatives can

be explored. These programs will be helpful to realise the importance of living a balanced life.

4. Encourage influencers, policy makers and leaders to use their authority, influence, and expertise to help spread awareness around the incentives driving harmful technology and direct powerful people to ways that they can help make a difference.

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