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The big Idea

Social media, Generation & connection

I wanted to explore how different generations connect and how a whole new generation is being affected by social media. Compared to 20 years ago life is being seen through a whole new 'lens' (Hjorth & Hinton., 2019) (literally). You can interact with thousands of people every day without even knowing who they are or anything about them, 'The ability for individuals to communicate and produce mediated content on a mass scale has led to opportunities for fame that were not available outside of the established culture industries before' (Baym., 2015) videos can be shared thousands of times within minutes and suddenly you're famous; everything just works a thousand times quicker. Does that mean it is less authentic or are those interactions less meaningful and have less of an impact on people or is it a way for people from completely different backgrounds to connect? Does it make people disposable?

Social media

Social media is a new age where the new generation can spend 'six hours a day with new media' (Twenge, 2017) however there are now so many different aspects to social media and it can be used in thousands of different ways. Different generations see 'social media from different perspectives' (Hjorth & Hinton., 2019) the older (and younger) generations cannot always see the positives in social media and can focus on the negatives which sometimes there can be, depending on how you use social media or how much you need the validation it can have a negative effect as people are so focused on 'the number of comments from other users, the number of likes' (Hjorth & Hinton., 2019) which is not good

to rely on because then you are focused on 'False relationships' (Baym., 2015) and constantly looking for online validation which effects peoples mental health, those relationships can also 'quickly disappear' (Twenge., 2017). However social media can have positive effects because it allows people to connect and view the world differently as 'technologies affect how we see the world, our communities, our relationships, and our selves' (Baym., 2015) we can grow and learn more about cultures that we would not have been able to see without social media it also gives people a voice which allows 'acceptance, equality, and free speech debates' (Twenge., 2017) to be heard and seen.

Social media has allowed 'artist to use social media as a vehicle for publicity' (Hjoth & Hinton., 2019) in order to get wider connections and allows them to have a larger audience that they could never have gained without it. Do the views of a video or likes on a photo equate to 'IRL (in real life)' (Baym., 2015) growth? Simply yes. It is hard to understand how posting a video or photo can make you famous, nevertheless social media has such a large platform, there is so many different platforms and users that it allows artists to share their work and find people that relate to it. It is so easy for people to interact comment, like, share and make 'relationship between media, culture and society' (Hodkinson., 2016) therefore creating links to their work and finding people that have the same interests and taste. Furthermore, it is a way of showing work and sharing it across all walks of life 'from museums determining their cultural engagement through likes or posting shares to shaping what art installations get shown and what types of graffiti are popularized' (Hjoth & Hinton., 2019).

With Covid it has been increasingly more important for artists to have social media as a way of sharing their work as there has been no other option, at the beginning they could have 'Feared losing face-to-face interaction' (Baym., 2015) even so, they have more likely grown a larger audience by sharing their work on social media. As a newer app called 'Tik Tok' has made it easier to interact with young artists and show your support, because each video can be a maximum of 60 seconds long, however quick those interactions are, they are still meaningful and creates 'new attitudes toward work' (Twenge., 2017) as it creates a purpose and support network for younger artist's and an entirely new perspective on design format, it also allows them to explore using different mediums. The artist that goes by lozcity creates art using out of date pills and resin. They built a large following on 'Tik Tok' with

84.4k which they have equated into a business and use Instagram where they have a following of 10.3k to sell their art and create a brand for themselves. Which is so different from how artists used get their work seen, furthermore it creates a 'trend that will shape our culture in years to come' (Twenge., 2017) and a new style of working that gives artists the ability and opportunity to show and exhibit their work in their own way.



Lozcity, 2021, Anxiety, Brooklyn

Generation

Gen Z is the first generation to grow up in a world where they have always had access to the internet, smart phones and many more advancements in technology 'and do not remember a time before the internet' (Twenge., 2017). This means everything has been accessible to Gen Z, they are used to instantly having anything they need with a touch of a button. 'Has this made Gen Z 'more mentally vulnerable' (Twenge., 2017)? By creating a bigger gap

between generations and making it even harder to relate 'Grandparents, parents, and grandchildren have become increasingly segregated and emotionally alienated from each other' (Kornhaber & Woodward., 2019), no one has ever experienced growing up in a world of technology before now, which can make it harder to understand what is going on, as well as making it harder for them to relate to similar interests. Therefore, not having the right attributes to protect the younger generation as they have such a wider access to knowledge. Previous generations were influenced by their friends and family's Gen Z is also influenced by this, but in addition have the pressure of social media, where they can view so much in the world and also be seen by so many. Where it is so easy to access social media, it can make it harder for parents to see what is influencing their children and if it is suitable. Social media also allows younger people to see different opinions 'interpreted and how they resonate with others' (Hjorth & Hinton., 2019), from people their age and gather a greater understanding on topics for example the BLM movement or Women's rights it is a way of educating younger people on serious issues in a way that they will understand and also see how it is effecting the people around them on a personal level which generations before were never able to do.

The Younger generations are so used to doing things instantly for example next day delivery they can have anything with one click, they have never known a time without it. 'They hoped the internet might facilitate new connections, cross-cultural interaction, more social support, and tighter family ties' (Baym., 2015), which it does as you can connect to people from all different walks of life and allows people to be connected with family and friends, it also allows you to speak your mind and tell your opinion which can influence people. People have also made businesses from the internet and used it to grow. However, it can alienate older generations as it is a whole new world they cannot understand or comprehend.

Gen Z could be known, as an instant generation however they are not the only ones using technology to help build a brand/business, everyone wants to stay connected and the idea 'To exist is to be connected' (Kornhaber & Woodward., 2019) this idea can expand how people work, including how people connect through similar interests. Paula Scher is a New York based artist with a 'never-ending well of design knowledge.' (Scher., 2017) who uses typography to create unique artwork, Scher mainly designs theatre posters and tickets for the 'Public Theatre', Scher, (2017) said in an interview that 'the way we made things

changed time' before advancements in technology Scher was creating designs out of type that took so much time and precision Scher, (2017) stated 'It changed the way we used time' they could design and create quicker which they never had before. However, Scher, (2017) also stated that 'people are much more, lax' as it is so easy to correct mistakes now rather than having to use print and do everything by hand as it is so much easier to correct 'So it changes the form of behavior.' (Scher., 2017) within design.



Paula Scher, 1994, Some people, New York Public Theater.

Connections

It is easier and harder to connect today, there are now dating apps to help you find someone, but it is because people are on their phones, laptops, Ipads and much more too often that they cannot connect in the real world. You come across so many different people every day from different walks of life and don't know anything about them, on social media you see thousands of people every day and maybe only for a few seconds does that make those connections and interactions less meaningful because it is just a press of a button and people are now 'taking pictures of a coffee as part of an everyday ritual' (Hjorth & Hinton., 2019) rather than sitting and talking in addition has the art of conversation been lost? Are younger people struggling to make conversation and losing face to face interactions has this created 'the decline in in-person social interaction' (Twenge., 2017)? Especially during covid there has been such a long period where people have not been able to see each other which has made people realise that don't have to be in an office to work, will this continue and almost force people to be more reclusive and less social and loose real, world connections and interactions. Could this lead to a lack of trust and people being able to manipulate people? 'What if the selves enacted through digital media don't line up with those, we present face to face, or if they contradict one another?' (Baym., 2015).

Nevertheless, there are also positive connections being made through the internet as people grow a career through social media, which allows them to travel the world and see different things, allowing them to build connection with people and places that they would never of, been able to do without social media. There are also ways of staying connected at long distances and sharing your life with friends and family that are not there however this can have a negative effect as people only show the positives not the negatives which could confuse younger people or make them think they are doing something wrong this just means those connections are no longer healthy and they shouldn't continue with them.

However, there could be new connections made as new/younger artists can see an in-depth approach to the way their favourite artists work making them feel more connected and 'relating to the future' (Woodman & Wyn., 2014, Pg. 41) of design and a way to share it. During COVID 19 it has been harder to find inspiration and one way of staying inspired has been artists using their platforms to continue to show their work rather than using exhibits

an artist called Golsa Golchini who is Milan based has used different medias and textures to create art and has continued to share her work through her platforms. Which has inspired others, Golchin's work is where the rugged meets elegance and shows how different eras of art can be connected.

April Greiman who is based in California has also been an artist to use 'new technologies usher in new forms of art, which often contested and also change the way the art is made' (Hjoth & Hinton., 2019) creating a new style. Greiman being 'one of the first practitioners to explore the desktop computer's creative potential' Walker, (2015) using technology within her work, created a new branch of design. This inspired a lot of artist to take advantage of the new art tool which was a computer. Connected people through a new style and also connected art to technology. These two artists are an example of connection because they are from two completely different places in the world, they are also in different design eras but have the same passion to create and design that connects them in one field.



Golsa Golchini, 2021, There's a Paradise within, Milan



April Greiman, 1987, Pacific Wave, California

From looking into the three key words there is defiantly similarities that link the three. From this view point a lot of the statements link back to social media and how those interactions create connections this links to generation in a completely different way as it is talking about the growth of technology and 'new media' (Twenge., 2017) which millennials and Gen Z have completely adopted and turned into their own by creating jobs out of social media and using their platforms as a way to promote themselves and create a brand/business. On the other hand, older generations could see the decline in face-to-face social interaction which could create a rift between the two. The final question should link to quick connections on social media and if they are meaningful, there are lots of questions that could be asked: Can a coffee just be a coffee? Is 60 seconds meaningful? When I thought of these questions the idea of 60 seconds really resonated because it is such a small amount of

time yet can have an effect even if it just makes someone smile, laugh or maybe even cry it has to connect to them somehow through there humour, emotions and hobbies. The quickness of the videos has made a connection and relates to Gen Z as they are more impatient because the average Gen Z wouldn't spend 20 mins reading a newspaper but would watch short videos as its instant and there would be an instant reaction. The question I would like to look further into is Can you connect to someone in 60 seconds? I would explore the impact it can have on people and how it could make someone feel and also look into how 60 seconds could connect to different generations through different mediums.

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