

Future Trends Report

Based on Analysis of the Team's Chosen Community / Organisation in Mid-Term and Final Evaluation

Community / Organisation Studied: Teenagers

STEP 1. Identify Challenges

Read the Future Scene carefully and generate ideas for challenges, concerns, and possible related problems. Choose the 5 most important challenges and write them in the space provided. Include applicable research with appropriate in-text citations.

Challenge 1: Teenagers are experiencing emotional changes due to the content they see online

A majority of teens believe that social media has had a positive impact on various aspects of their lives. Teens have said that social media has connected them to what is going on in their friends' lives and more in touch with them as well. They feel that they also have people who are willing to support them through tough times. However, teens have also indicated their negative experiences on social media. Teens have felt overwhelmed by the online drama in social media and the everlasting pressure to present themselves in a certain way that makes them look good to others, and garner a lot of attention. Others believe that social media has had ill effects on their self esteem. According to Pew Research Center, 26% of teens state that these social media sites make them feel worse about their own lives. This is so as social media cookies analyse the keywords of certain topics and link them to users. Social media's algorithm will bring many users to view posts in relation to the current trends and popular topics. Such occurrences often cause emotional changes to teenagers. For example, a product that is currently in the trend will most likely be recommended to users on the platform, usually causing users to grow the desire to obtain the product. According to StrategyOnline, 60% of millennial consumers said they make a reactive purchase after experiencing FOMO, most often within 24 hours. In addition, consumers often make purchasing decisions after observing a positive experience by others who have purchased a product. A survey by the PR firm Citizens Relations found the purchase intent of parents is often linked to FOMO when they see a positive impact of the product on other families. This is called bandwagon consumption. If the teenagers are unable to obtain the desired product, they will feel to some extent jealous and feel that they are not in the trend and being left out.

Challenge 2: Teenagers feel the constant urge to stay online

Teenagers spend a great amount of time surfing the internet and browsing social media. This could potentially allow companies to obtain their personal information and data more easily. More cookies would be tagged onto the devices of these teenagers, tracking their every movement across the internet and stealing their data, preferences and interests. According to a research done by Pew Research Centre, 45% of teenagers now say they are online on a near-constant basis. This is a high percentage and shows that teenagers are spending too much time online as well as sounding a red flag that something has to be done urgently. The personal information of teenagers are being stolen with such ease but yet they are unaware or ignore this fact. This would allow companies to continue stealing their personal information and pose a huge threat to the privacy of the teenagers. Teenagers therefore have to reduce the amount of time that they spend online in order to protect themselves and allow themselves to continue to have free will.

Challenge 3: Social media companies are profiling users based on their collected data, and recommending personalized content with it.

Personalized marketing is a marketing strategy where businesses, such as social media companies, use audience analysis and data to deliver more personalized and relevant content to the target audience. Simply, this means that companies and businesses collect and process information on their audience's interests, demographics, and online behaviour to create more relevant content that provides more value and is more personalized based on the user's profile. With personalized content, users are more likely to interact with it. eMarketer's research revealed that 56% of CMOs experienced higher response and engagement rates on personalized content, while 47% declared the interactions they gained were more timely and relevant. A high volume of interactions is critical to surfacing in the news feed organically, such as Facebook.

Challenge 4: Social media users, especially teenagers, feel insecure about their data being collected and used.

Since the arrival of social networking sites in the early 2000s, online social networking sites have expanded exponentially. The massive influx of personal information that has become available online and stored in cloud servers has put user privacy at the forefront of discussion on whether or not databases and cloud servers are able to safely store such personal information. According to research conducted by the Boston Consulting Group, privacy of personal data is a top issue for 76% of global consumers. In the survey we conducted, 65.3% of respondents were not comfortable with the idea that our data was being collected and used for other purposes. It is apparent that people are aware of this practice, but may disregard risks due to the trust in privacy and protection offered on social networking sites.

Challenge 5: Teenagers experience FOMO(Fear Of Missing Out) when using social media.

FOMO, the initialism for fear of missing out, is the feeling of anxiety that a person experiences when they think they're missing out on something. Generally, these feelings are caused by seeing posts by friends or peers on social media. However, it can be triggered in online shopping as well. Social media platforms can change the social life of an individual both interpersonally and online. People can broadcast important events in their lives or their everyday activities with incredible ease. On platforms like Facebook, sharing is extremely simple as it can be done within the click of a button. Inevitably, Facebook has around a billion users, with it being the place that provokes the most FOMO, at 72%. Instagram is also heavily used by users to follow brands and influencers, along with ads that can be commonly seen promoting big discounts on certain products for a limited period of time. Teenagers experience the brunt of this anxiety, as they have numerous friends and are more than willing to try out new things as well. Peer pressure ties in with how FOMO can be invoked in teens and the last thing a teen would want to do is miss out on the latest trend.

STEP 2. Craft the Underlying Problem

Using the challenges listed in Step 1, identify a problem of major importance to the chosen community / organization in the future. Write your Underlying Problem making sure your question clearly explains the action that will be taken and the desired results/goal of that action.

Incorporating Challenge(s) # _____

Underlying Problem:

Given the fact that large companies limiting our free will may be a potential problem which may affect the way society functions in 2040 and beyond. How might we alleviate the problem of curation on the internet so the concept of free will is enhanced in society?

STEP 3. Produce Solution Ideas

Generate solution ideas to the Underlying Problem in Step 2. Choose the 5 most effective solutions and write the elaborated ideas in the space provided. Include applicable research with appropriate in-text citations.

Solution 1: Non-tracking browsers

Non-tracking browsers are search engines without collecting and using data from users. Popular search engines like Google and Bing use data from users and give recommendations based on their interest. Typical search engines often track and collect our data by default with tracking cookies, requiring us to actively disable cookies or clear them to prevent the collection of our data. DuckDuckGo is an internet search engine that emphasizes protecting searchers' privacy and avoiding the filter bubble of personalized search results. DuckDuckGo distinguishes itself from other search engines, by not profiling its users and by showing all users the same search results for a given search term. DuckDuckGo is one of the first of such non-tracking browsers. Another such example is the Firefox Quantum. It is a browser which can ensure security and safety for users. It can automatically filter out trackers of websites the user is on, including big companies like Facebook and even keep passwords filled in by users safe, without keeping track of it. These can all prevent data being collected by big companies and used to give personalised recommendations. The Firefox Quantum has similar features as DuckDuckGo, but provides more convenience to users by having a built in ad-blocking feature and private browsing by default. Through the use of non-tracking browsers, we can effectively stop the collection of our data, allowing us to retain free will without curated advertisements influencing what we choose to see and purchase online.

Solution 2: Changing the algorithm

Social media controls what we see based on our online behaviour. The app often displays what we see according to what the algorithm deems most relevant through analysing likes and dislikes, preferences and popularity of topics using the data collected from both the user himself, and other users of the platform. There have been some documented instances where Facebook's algorithm made it such that some marketers were more prominent as compared to other users, based on the current trend of interest and popularity of certain topics at the point of time. Marketers essentially control 2 components out of the 3 that determines the priority of posts recommended to viewers. By changing the algorithm of such apps, curated advertisements and content can be avoided and so the users are more unlikely to be guided into seeing content arranged by the algorithm and so, users have more chance to see things outside of their zone of interests and still have free will over their browsing experience.

Solution 3: Public education

Students spend a large amount of time in school and it is only reasonable for schools to teach them how to protect themselves and their will on the internet. Through this solution, schools will teach students how to resist peer pressure and be themselves, expressing their creativity. Eventually, students will learn to break social norms and not care about others' views of them. One study conducted by UCLA's Ahmanson-Lovelace Brain Mapping Centre showed that teenagers would be more likely to "like" a post if it has a huge number of "likes" which meant that they react differently to information when it is endorsed by friends and strangers compared to when it is not. This further proves that teenagers are losing more and more of their free will.

Solution 4: Limiting the use of social media

By limiting our use of social media, we can minimise our exposure to data collection and thus, prevent large companies from creating profiles for us. A study conducted by the Journal of Social And Clinical Psychology showed us that by limiting the usage of social media, it significantly reduces loneliness and depression, preventing our actions being controlled by the Fear Of Missing Out as well, which large companies seem to actively utilise in order to influence what we do. Therefore by limiting our use of social media we can not only decrease the amount of our data that is collected by companies but we can also improve our mental health.

Solution 5: Discouraging the use of advertisements on websites

If we can stop placement of advertisements on websites, we can quite effectively stop ourselves from being targeted by curated advertisements. What we choose to buy would also not be influenced by advertisements, giving us more control and free will over our lives. However, there is an issue with this solution. For many websites, their primary source of income comes from advertisements. In 2016, Internet advertising revenues in the United States surpassed those of cable television and broadcast television. In 2017, Internet advertising revenues in the United States totaled \$83.0 billion, a 14% increase over the \$72.50 billion in revenues in 2016. This is a huge amount of money, meaning that there is a need to discourage the use of advertisements on websites urgently. If there are no advertisements on websites, then many who manage websites may lose money keeping websites online, and thus shut down the website.

STEP 4a. Select Criteria

Generate criteria to determine which solution idea does the best job of solving your Underlying Problem and/or addressing the Future Scene situation. Select the 5 most important criteria for measuring solution ideas and write them in the spaces provided.

Criterion 1: Short-term effectiveness

This means how effective we believe a certain solution to be over a short period of time, and how quickly we will be able to see reform.

Criterion 2: Long-term effectiveness

This means how effective a solution will be in the long run, with certain solutions taking more time to implement but having greater effectiveness.

Criterion 3: Accessibility

Accessibility represents the rate at which we think a solution can be implemented, with some solutions being much faster to implement such as non-tracking browsers, only necessitating a simple switch of browsing software.

Criterion 4: Demographic willingness

Targeted demographics may not be so willing to participate in implementing certain solutions, such as public education

Criterion 5: Applicability to target demographic

This ranks solutions according to how relevant and applicable the solutions will be to our target demographic.

STEP 4b. Apply Criteria

List the solution ideas from Step 3 on the grid. Use each criterion to rank the solutions on a scale from 1 (poorest) to 5 (best). The weighting for one important criterion may be doubled if necessary.

Step 3 Sol'n #	Solution Idea	Criteria					Total
		1	2	3	4	5	
#1	Non-tracking browsers	3	5	4	3	5	20
#2	Changing the algorithm	5	1	1	4	4	15
#3	Public education	2	3	3	2	3	13
#4	Limiting the use of social media	2	4	5	1	1	13
#5	Discouraging the use of advertisements on websites	4	2	2	2	2	12

STEP 5. Develop an Action Plan and Evaluate its Feasibility

Develop your top-scoring solution idea into an Action Plan. Thoroughly explain how the Underlying Problem is solved, how the plan will be implemented, and how the community / organisation will be affected. Explain how this Action Plan is feasible with secondary research consulted, preferably also with primary research (feedback from chosen community / organization)

(Action Plan Continued)

We will advertise a software similar to Firefox Quantum to the public and advise the public to switch to our platform. However, we will make it easy for the public to switch to our new platform by simply downloading it on their digital devices. By making our software simple and accessible, many people would not mind quickly making the switch as it saves much hassle. Many people have been using other browsers for a long time and are hesitant for switching to non-tracking browsers. We eliminate the hassle, and thus everyone would be willing to switch to our new browser. We can work with Mitrais as well as the MCI to roll out this software. By first approaching Mitrais, we will gain the influence and weight needed to get assistance from MCI, allowing us to quickly develop our non-tracking browser software.

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Cite the resources you consulted using the APA format.

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