

### **Ep.1- Algorithms and Platforms**

What media do you use, what do you watch on tv/apps do you visit, what do your algorithms look like?

**Script:** 

Introduction

[Duration: 00:06] Ambience: Intro Music

[Duration: 00:55] Introduction to podcast, topic & team

Welcome to the MediaVerse Podcast! This podcast is a conversation not just about media and technology. but rather how various generations interact with media and how that in turn shapes their experiences & interactions with others. We seek to explore how stereotypes or assumptions of media usage play into the reality of our lives as media consumers.

My name is Grace Quinlivan. I am joined by 3 of my fellow grad students from the Strategic Communication program at SUNY Oswego. Ashley and I are Generation Z which is defined by the PEW Research Center as individuals born between 1997-2012. Whereas Meredith and Chris are in Generation X which the PEW RC describes as those born between 1965-80. We each bring a unique perspective to the conversation because of our own generational and personal experience. Thanks for listening, let's get started.

### Segment 1

[Duration: 00:06] Ambience: Intro Music

[Duration: 02.35] Discussion about individual media usage and preferences

Grace: What type of media do you guys consume? There's so much media today from traditional to digital and I'm curious, what are your media preferences? One media I enjoy is reading..

Grace: I love to read. Obsessed with my phone.. Tiktok is my most used platform by far. Youtube while I eat.. Text my friends non stop. Watch TV - modern family, the office, gossip girl, the

vampire diaries are a few faves. I don't read newspapers and I never listen to the radio I stream instead and don't play any games.

Chris: I have 0 social media accounts, but I do have a Linkedin account/profile but I am not active on the platform. I also use Reddit to locate print media in digital format for articles related to Supreme Court decisions, breaking down poll numbers, and other obscure reporting on current issues that take on a more holistic perspective and are not generated from a political viewpoint. I travel a lot and have quite the list of streaming shows, and I have way too many streaming subscriptions. A few of my favorites - Billions, Bosch, Lincoln Lawyer, The Crown, Ozark, Ted Lasso, and Night Agent. Currently watching Griselda, Masters of the Air, and Tokoyo Vice. I'm a big fan of Seinfeld, The Office, and Modern Family also. I read newspaper articles in digital format, not a gamer, and use Spotify almost exclusively - so no radio for me.

Ashley: I hate to admit it, but I am addicted to my phone. I am constantly texting and scrolling through apps, mainly TikTok. As far as TV, I watch mainly all of my content through streaming besides when the Yankees are playing. I'm into all types of TV shows, anything from reality TV such as The Bachelor to dramas such as Breaking Bad and Game of Thrones. My most recent favorite watch has to be Succession on HBO. I watch a lot of movies as well, my boyfriend and I share a movie journal where we debrief and rate each watch. I enjoy video games, my favorite is the Last of Us. I also stream music all day.

Meredith: I have an Instagram account but do not post anything, I do "like" things but mainly it is to support a cause or a restaurant/shop that I support - my "like" probably does not get very far since I am not that active. The only other social media account I have is LinkedIn and again I rarely post anything, I mainly update it for networking purposes etc. I have subscriptions to the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times for the news, NY Times Cooking & Cooks Illustrated, Apple Music and I bounce around with streaming services to watch based upon what is being shown - I have no loyalty to streaming platforms or television shows. I did get my Mom to cut the cord on cable a few years back - it was quite a production but she has adjusted to the local TV offerings and the streaming options available at the moment.. I am a big fan of the library and check out most books digitally although I prefer to check out the paper format for cookbooks. I flipped to ebooks years ago when I traveled quite a bit for business and did not want to lug books around. Apple sucked me into their ecosystem years ago and I am not willing to break up with them - I probably spend more time on an iPad than iPhone but that is because I use it to read and shop. The phone I really only use for conversations and scrolling through Instagram - although I do all my banking on the phone.

### Research mentioned

CNBC International. (2019, September 18). *Why physical books still outsell e-books* | CNBC Reports [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Em-U9onvGI

# [Duration:07.48] Discussion about TV habits; streaming vs live, phone habits, social media

## Segment 2

# [Duration:13.10] Discussion about algorithms and accuracy

Grace: My algorithms give me book content of the series I like, funny and emotional videos, influencers or celebrity content. Depending on the platform, I use some media for mindless scrolling and others to get news or keep up with political occurrences.

Chris: Reddit algorithms give me feeds of the types of news articles that I described above, and I subscribe to a Washington Capitals (hockey) and a King Charles Cavalier Spaniel subreddits, so lots of dogs and hockey! I'm very left leaning in my political views, so I tend to receive news and suggestions from that perspective.

Ashley: My algorithms, similar to Grace, show me mainly funny and emotional videos along with celebrity content. A lot of the celebrity content I see relates to music artists I like such as Taylor Swift or Lana Del Rey. Believe it or not, my Tiktok shows me a lot of "edits" of people or shows that I like. I also tend to see a lot of political content, mostly in-line with my own opinions and beliefs. I think it also depends on the day and my previous activity. For example, if I go down a true crime rabbit hole one night, I'm likely to see a lot more true crime content on my TikTok for-you page the following day. I'm a huge animal lover and am constantly getting animal content as well!

Meredith: The algorithms mainly reference back to products I have purchased, local restaurants and both the WSJ and NYT have a feed for "stories for you" although I am not convinced this is true since most of the time it is articles I have already scanned through. The NYT's is a bit more all over the place than the WSJ and I wonder at times if that is because I bounce around their articles and opinions. Advertisements for most sites are for stores that I have shopped at, products I have looked up or local restaurants and events.

### Closing

### [Duration:02.13] Discussion about what was learned, themes, call to action

Grace: Great discussion guys. I think it was really interesting to see how we all have our own experiences with media and how our generations have impacted that.

## Research mentioned:

https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/

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https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2024/01/31/americans-social-media-use/

### **Ep. 2- Early Influences:**

How the media we grew up with influences us.

**Script:** 

Introduction

[Duration: 00:05] Ambience: Intro Music

[Duration: 01.08] Introduction to podcast, topic & team

Meredith: Hello and welcome. I'm your host, Meredith Page, and you are listening to THE MEDIAVERSE PODCAST. A conversation not just about media and technology in general but about how different generations embrace and use different types of media and technology. We are glad you are joining us in our second episode as we discuss how the media and pop culture we grow up with impacts our lives. Today, we're taking a look at how changes in media and media habits affect different generations and how pop culture influences our perspective of the media.

I'm joined by Grace Quinlivan (hello), Chris Stephenson (hello) and Ashley Spencer (hello)

# [Duration: 00.35] Definitions

Meredith: Before we get started, let's begin by clarifying some definitions.

Media refers to communication content that can take the shape of print (newspapers and magazines), broadcast (television, radio, film), and internet (social media and podcasts) and by pop culture we mean the the cultural products of media that have mass access and appeal in the US culture at a given time period.

## **Segment 1**

[**Duration**: 00.55]

Ambience: popular theme music

[Duration: 12.21] Conversation about the broadcast media (television, radio, movies) media

we grew up with

Meredith: Welcome back wow— that brings back some memories for me – how about everyone else?

Meredith: Chris, as a fellow Gen Xer, would you like to kick things off for us

• Tell us about the type of television, radio, and movies you grew up with?

Chris' response: This is really broad for me because I grew up in a very rural area of Texas, and we did not have conventional cable until I was somewhere between 10 & 12 years old. As far as television up until that age, what I had access to was limited, and it is true, if the President was on television my night was ruined! But, I do remember Barney Miller, Magnum PI, MASH, Night Rider, Taxi, to name a few. Then post cable - A Different World, Cheers, Cosby Show, Family Matters, Full House, SNL was great in the late 80s and early 90s. The one memory that

stands out about radio is my mom listening to Paul Harvey at noon and then around 5pm Movies - Star Wars & Top Gun!!

Meredith: Let's hear about the experiences of our Gen Z'ers

Ashley:I loved all things Disney, Nickelodeon, and Noggin (if anyone remembers what that is). Those are where all my favorite shows lived as a kid including iCarly, Hannah Montana, and Oswald. As I got older I loved Friends, The Vampire Diaries, Impractical Jokers, and the office. I was always listening to whatever rock song my dad played, or whichever 90s hip-hop song my mom was playing on the radio. My favorite Disney movies were High School Musical and The Little Mermaid. My favorites were constantly changing though! There were always plenty of things to watch!

Grace response: Interesting bc I grew up with cable my whole life and there was always a video range of shows available. Disney channel! CDs were huge for my music. I also listened to the radio in the car and on the radio I had in my room. Movie wise, the Hannah Montana movie was huge. Disney movies in the theater, incredibles, tangled etc. The twilight series hit the theaters. Netflix in the mail! No shortage of movies, tv or radio always a lot of media around.

House phone? Cool to see how generation to generation the media we had growing up shaped our experience?

References for clips from television and movies at end of document.

Meredith: transition to the next segment

## **Segment 2**

### [Duration:09.54] Conversation about print media and local news

Meredith: Today, more than 80% of US citizens get their news from a smartphone, computer, or tablet. Newspapers and printed magazines in the United States continue to decrease at a rapid rate affecting local news significantly.

- Did you grow up reading the newspaper in any format (printed or digital)?
- Does anyone else remember having the paper delivered to your house?

Ashley: I didn't read any news growing up, but when I got older I did, and still do, get all my news online/digitally.

Chris: Printed newspapers were a religion in my home. As a kid the paper was delivered every afternoon and that changed eventually to a morning paper. At some point it seems there was twice a day service for newspapers (morning & afternoon).

Grace: My dad reads the newspaper but to my knowledge very few of my generation do. I still get the paper delivered to my house everyday. I do personally read it tho. I get my news from social media and apple news updates. Growing up there were news channels and newspapers. Now do you think it's less or more reliable?

Meredith: Polls show that a significant number of Americans place greater trust in local news compared to other sources. Sinclair Broadcasting, the dominant owner of local stations nationwide, continues to acquire smaller local market media companies.

• Is anyone concerned about this happening? If so, what are your concerns?

Ashley: I do tend to trust local news more however, as I said before, I stick more to online news rather than TV or print.

Chris: I watch almost zero news. I might catch a local morning news broadcast for a brief segment on the weekend, and normally it's only to see the weather forecast. Even though I watch local news infrequently, I believe any time an organization has a majority stake in any market, it is concerning. It narrows the field and lessens the chances of broader viewpoints.

Grace: I also don't watch news which is interesting given our generational difference. I think this has something to do with distrust in corporations and an authentic feel of local news sources. One thing I want to bring up is how the media that we had changed our experience growing up. When I was younger watching the news for snow days. Now they get a text or internet notification.

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Scripps News. (2023, January 23). US newspapers continue to die at a rapid rate [Video].

YouTube. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFmSfSSd3BY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFmSfSSd3BY</a>

Meredith: Transition to next segment

# **Closing**

# [Duration:00.56] Closing and stay tuned for our next episode [Duration:00.33] exit music

You make a great point, Chris, and I think this is a great spot to wrap things up. I want to thank everyone for being here today and a special thanks to our audience for tuning in. There were some obvious differences this week in our experiences with media, and certainly, pop culture influences us – but we also learned that certain influences can stretch across the generations. I think Grace nailed it on the head for all of us when she noted that we are shaped more by those around us than the media that is offered – the generations have more in common than people think. Tune in next time as we discuss limitations on media, if they are effective in shaping and impacting our media use, and what's the deal with this AI phenomenon?

### Ep. 3- Do limitations work and influence our media use?

How did early limitations shape our viewpoints, and what's with this AI thing?

# **Script:**

### Introduction

[Duration: 00:06] Ambience: Intro Music

[Duration: 01.20] Introduction to podcast, topic & team

Hi there and welcome back. This is episode 3 of The Mediaverse, a look at all things media across generations X and Z. I am joined by the usual cast, our little band of misfits who buck what society says about our generations' viewpoint and perspective of media use and interpretation. Ashley, Grace, and Meredith - great to see you [intros/hello].

So, a quick recap of episodes 1 & 2, and then an introduction to this episode and kind of where we're headed for the rest of the season. We had a wide conversation in episode 1, and it ended with a conversation about algorithms and how those algorithms, specifically social media type, have been harmful. Episode 2 was fun, and we learned as a group that we can dig really deep into how media we grew up has been impactful with how we use media as adults. For this episode - limitations to media, did we experience limitations or not, and then how that is shaping our opinions about AI. We will continue the AI conversation in episode 4, and then we want to move into how all of this is shaping and driving capitalism and the economy.

Let's get started!

## **Segment 1**

### [Duration:00.06] ambience:

# [Duration:12.31] Conversation about limitations experienced with the internet (parental controls, economic, location)

Chris: The Pew Research Center reveals that Only around one-in-five teens think their parents are highly worried about their use of social media. Some 22% of teens think their parents are extremely or very worried about them using social media. But a larger share of teens (41%) think their parents are either not at all (16%) or a little worried (25%) about them using social media. About a quarter of teens (27%) fall more in the middle, saying they think their parents are somewhat worried. I think this a great statistic that leads into a conversation about limitations, parental controls, even self imposed limitations as adults:

- Did anyone experience limitations to their use of media growing up?
- Did your parents place restrictions on what you could watch on television, the movies you could see, things you could search online, apps you could download, etc.
- Or did economic factors or where you live(d) influence what you were exposed to?
- Do you have self-imposed limitations now?

Ashley: I had parental controls on all of my media devices, including gaming consoles. I wasn't allowed to have access to online communication or messaging applications therefore, I really only had access to the games I was playing. I consider myself lucky as far as what I was able to have, Santa Claus was always really good to our home, despite any financial hardships he was going through! I got my first cellphone when I was 11 years old, and that was mainly because my parents were divorced and it was a way for my dad and I to communicate. I had parental controls on it until I was about 12 because it wasn't "cool". After that, I had unlimited access to the internet and social media. If I had more restrictions past that point, I actually believe it would've been better for me. Looking back, there is a lot of negativity that comes with having access to the internet and social media that young and I feel I was exposed to too much too early on. If I were to have children in the future, I would definitely be keeping that in mind.

Meredith: My parents were strict when it came to watching television and movies - we did not have the internet when I was young so that did not play into my experiences. We had limits on both the amount of time we were allowed to watch television and the types of programs we were allowed to watch. My father enjoyed the movies and exposed us to alot of movies that were well before our time - The Maltese Falcon, Casablanca, The Last Hurrah, Inherit the Wind, The Lion in Winter and the list goes on. One thing that my parents were pretty strict about was not allowing us (any of including my brother) to watch programs they considered degrading or demeaning to women. We never watched what was referred to as the "Jiggle" television - I don't think I saw Charlie's Angels or Wonder Woman until I was in college.

Grace: I was never restricted by my parents with any devices. I was always allowed to watch TV and go on my phone or ipod when I pleased. One thing I will say that speaks to my generation is the issue I had in school growing up. My classmates and I were so dependent on our technology and media that it was a huge issue with students being on their phones in class. We even had to leave them at the front in order to be able to focus. That's one thing that I dont think is necessarily talked about for my generation. We were so dependent on our devices since they were new when we were growing up. They controlled us.. At Least from my experience.

Chris: I grew up in a very conservative/religious home and portion of the United States. So, I was very restricted in what I was allowed to read and watch on television (Newsweek story example). I also believe being in a rural area limited my exposure to society and culture. But you all have interesting and unique experiences with this. **Grace** - knowing what you know now, do you wish there were limitations imposed on you by your parents, and will you parent any differently? **Ashley** - what negative exposures did you experience?

## Research mentioned:

https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/04/24/teens-and-social-media-key-findings-from-pew-research-center-surveys/sr 2023-04-24 social 10/

## Segment 2

## [Duration:00.06] ambience:

[Duration:08.30]

Good conversation about limitations, and great lead-in to a conversation about AI. Limitations create a pause which allows for us to analyze what it is we're doing, reading, interpreting, and so on. I think with limitations lacking in our society with the use of technology and media, we are in a difficult spot when it comes to AI and understanding it. A couple of things that I have read recently concern me. The first is an article written for Pew Research that quotes Barry Chudakov who is the founder and principal of Sertain Research. Chudakov states in an interview with Wired, "[of AI] Taking and evolving simulation and virtual representation from the gaming world, digital spaces will morph from apps and social media platforms into mirror worlds – 'the metaverse' and the third platform, which will digitize the rest of the world ... all things and places will be machine-readable, subject to the power of algorithms." And the second item I read, being a presidential election year, was from AJC Politics [Georgia based]. The premise of the article was about an AI algorithm that probes so deeply into personal information it can detect when someone makes a social media post from a location other than home, assume they've moved, and subsequently remove them from being a registered voter. All concerning considering the lack of limitations we have in place. If the framework to prevent these types of events from occurring does not begin now, according to Chudakov we are in trouble as a society. But, enough from me, I want to hear from my colleagues.

Meredith: As with anything new I think there are valid concerns concerning AI. I read the article you referred to from Pew Research and I could not help but think about what we already know - we know about the damage that has been done by media platforms through social media creating addictive algorithms to suck the consumer in and we see the rise in suicide rates and depression being linked to this. What concerns me most about the article is when the author says "By 2035, digital spaces will become so immersive that we will have a problem. It will be extremely difficult to get people to disengage with those digital spaces. We will all become video gamers, hooked on the mirror world of the world."

To me this sounds like we have not learned anything or are ignoring the problems associated with technology. This is where I get concerned about the influence of AI - and I have to wonder if society has a responsibility to protect the vulnerable from technology that is proven to be harmful? I would say yes we do - just as when conversations were being had about the role of media (social responsibility theory) back in the 1940's.

Ashley: I think that there definitely is a cause for concern when discussing AI, as we previously talked about in episode 2, algorithms, although intended to be good, can be harmful in a lot of ways. We are exposed to a lot of things on the internet through AI that we otherwise would have

most likely avoided. This can include graphic content, emotional and sad content, or even triggering content unique to each individual. I don't think that AI will take over the world like all the movies say, however, I think that there should be an economic concern related to a possible loss of jobs due to AI and a security concern related to location tracking and information holding. I feel that even AI chat generators can be harmful to young teenagers and children online due to the unpredictability of the AI response and lack of actual human interaction and understanding.

Grace: We know that algorithms can be harmful. We talked about this in a previous episode w the way that algorithms suggest problematic material that can impact our mental health. Yet, they are also harmful in the way that those programming the algorithms could transfer bias. In a course Meredith and I were in last semester we looked at AI from a closer lens. An article from Wired discussed how since humans are the ones who input the data into the algorithms that control most AI technologies, the programmers would either knowingly or unknowingly transfer any prejudices or biases they hold to those algorithms. From that understanding, AI and algorithms inherently contain biases. That is the biggest issue that worries me with AI technologies. Especially since big companies as the article explains have been made aware of these issues and yet, tech industries are not doing enough to correct this problem. How do you feel about this issue?

### Research mentioned:

https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/11/22/work-is-needed-now-to-prepare-for-a-mind-bending-future/

https://www.ajc.com/politics/georgia-company-eagleai-pitches-private-voter-cancellation-software/TBUCPK5GWZCKBDOJPZQPANOXCY/

https://www.wired.com/story/the-real-reason-tech-struggles-with-algorithmic-bias/

### Closing

## **Duration** [00:35]

Chris: I look forward to diving deeper into the aspects of AI in episode 4 which Ashley will be our facilitator. There are positives to parents placing limitations on their children when it comes to media, and I believe there is carryover into adulthood from those limitations. To the AI conversation - the "we don't know what we don't know" is a little concerning. What are the unintended consequences of shifting to a reliance on AI and automation - think about it, we'll discuss in our next episode. To my colleagues - great episode and great discussion, thank you for the perspectives and sharing! We hope you will join us for our next episode, and spread the word about the Mediaverse. Thanks for listening.



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