Facebook’s Cutting-Edge Hatred

MINHA KHAN  
Cannon Editor

Trigger Warning: Strong references to and mention of rape, murder, arson

Facebook. What comes to your mind when you hear that 8-letter word? The 700 billion dollar worth social media platform is ubiquitous worldwide, and now, hatred on Facebook is too. With over 2.7 billion active consumers on Facebook —⅓ of the entire global population — Facebook’s global influence is undeniable. The platform hosts memes, college groups, and our entire social networks, but it also harvests misinformation, propaganda, and hostility. The coexistence of good and bad is like that of any other society; the difference though is that the leader of this virtual nation, Mark Zuckerburg, acts independent of any governing legislature and is paid the salary of the fifth richest person in the world.

Does this matter? Is Facebook actually causing any real human damage through “fake news”?

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The Apple Car?

TAMIM HASAN  
Cannon Writer

Since its inception in 1976, Apple has been a driving force in the realm of technology and has had an increasing impact on our day-to-day lives. Over the years, the two trillion-dollar company has added a multitude of new products and services to its predominantly smartphone-oriented catalogue, such as their tech-savvy Apple Watch and Airpod products, along with their Apple Music and AppleTV+ streaming services. As one of the world’s most renowned companies continues to grow its ecosystem of goods and services, a common question is: “What’s next?” Rumours over the past few years have suggested that Apple plans on entering other tech-markets, in particular the electric car and overall automotive industry.

The idea of developing an Apple vehicle dates back to 2014 when a group of 1000+ Apple employees began development of “Project Titan,” an initiative that would allow Apple to build their very own self-driving electric vehicle. Project Titan saw very little progress in its early years as many of the employees and leaders involved in the project were replaced and laid off. However, the buzz encompassing an Apple vehicle has begun to resurface and looks to be a logical possibility.

Now more than ever, companies around the world strive to shift their attention towards sustainable energy. Most major automotive companies seek to build electric cars as they become the new norm. At the forefront of the electric car revolution is Tesla, a company that has massively increased the drive and popularity of electric vehicles and is now seen as one of the most valuable companies in America. The increasing value of Tesla has even made its CEO, Elon Musk, the wealthiest person in the world. So, as the electric vehicle market continues to expand and prosper, it seems logical for a tech company as humongous as Apple to push their way into the competition.

In an attempt to refocus Project Titan, Apple has hired Tesla’s former Senior Vice President of Engineering, Doug Field, and many other ex-Tesla employees since late 2017. Apple has even invested in technology relevant to a self-driving vehicle such as processors, batteries, and cameras.

There are several rumours as to Apple’s exact plans on how to execute the production of electric cars as they become the new norm. At the forefront of the electric car revolution is Tesla, a company that has massively increased the drive and popularity of electric vehicles and is now seen as one of the most valuable companies in America. The increasing value of Tesla has even made its CEO, Elon Musk, the wealthiest person in the world. So, as the electric vehicle market continues to expand and prosper, it seems logical for a tech company as humongous as Apple to push their way into the competition.

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Apple continued on page 4
Hello Zoomers,

A happy new year to you all! I hope this semester has started off well and that you are staying “à la maison” as we have been told. I recently realized I’m already halfway through my PEY term and that the pandemic pretty much started a whole year ago. Time has flown by both slowly and quickly. It is tiring though to wait things out and always hoping for things to settle. Hopefully our efforts will pay off.

I genuinely can’t wait to see friends again and give out hugs (something I quite honestly took for granted). But, despite things being virtual, social interactions have proven to still be possible after so many months.

And, that being said, this Cannon Edition encompasses the spirit of possibilities. The possibilities of space exploration, of new cars, of what to do with an engineering degree, of what it’s like to be a SpiritHead virtually, and more.

Last letter, I talked about acknowledging your own worth and taking care of yourself. This time, I hope to emphasise that along with helping find possibilities within your own current routines. Maybe the possibility to read a new book, to go on a walk, to learn a new skill. Things may seem incredibly limited, but we can still just try our best.

As usual, my inbox is always open and I’d like to remind you all to follow our socials since this edition marks the start of the Engineering Discipline Brackets. Take care and stay safe!

Writefully yours,

Alyson Allen

(HERE’S MY DOG INSTEAD OF ME)
A Peep Into the Lives of Your Skulemates

VAMA DAVE
Cannon Writer

University is one of the most enthralling experiences in a person's life, and the people you meet during its course, end up transforming your life. The University of Toronto community encompasses numerous students, belonging to a diverse range of nationalities, genders, religions, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, all connected by the common goal of evolving into stronger and well-rounded individuals. The University of Toronto Engineering Society, better known as “Skule™”, comprises over 5000 students. It is next to impossible to become well acquainted with every single Skule™ member. Yet, here we are trying to make contributions to global betterment and give back to the society. The University of Toronto Engineering Society encompasses numerous students, belonging to a diverse range of nationalities, genders, religions, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, all connected by the common goal of evolving into stronger and well-rounded individuals. The University of Toronto is one of the University is one of the best universities in the world and it is well known for its engineering programs.

Kyla - EngSci 2T4

Let’s begin with one of UofT’s brightest freshmen, Kyla Tan. Some of you know her as the newest addition to our group of Ultimate Frosh’s. For those of you who don’t know, she’s a great hopper. In case you need proof, you can ask her to display her skills yourself, she definitely won’t deny. When she’s not jumping up and down, you can find her indulging in one of her manifold hobbies, all of which seem to be poles apart. When in high school, Kyla played for Rugby Ontario, and now you can find her playing the Ukulele, strumming songs she composed herself.

Three out of four of her grandparents were engineers, which she believed was already a big enough number of engineers for one household. So up until the twelfth grade, she was all set to become a doctor, until she realized that it was a bit too much of schooling and it would not be able to provide her with the same versatility that engineering would. More than that, she was greatly averse to being caught up in a rat race and discovering years later that she was unhappy by her choice of profession. She knew a student who graduated out of UofT EngSci and ended up making yogurt and even worked at a diaper company at one point. With engineering, you can take your degree to any corner of the world or the most eccentric of careers, and still be able to have a great deal of fun, and this caused her to delve into the comprehensive world of engineering.

Ajeya - Mech 2T3

Your next Skulemate’s name might be the longest one you’ve heard to date. Ajeya Madhava Rao Vijayakumar is a complete people-person who, for better or for worse, has nothing short of the perfect joke to crack at any given circumstance. He is extremely passionate about running, but he also has never run a single marathon in the entirety of his life. He recently started working on web development, and Skule™’s sponsorship website has been designed by him. He is currently on a strict diet and spends a lot of his time either working out or in the kitchen, trying to create delectable protein-rich dishes inspired by one of his favourite animes, “Food Wars”.

As a young boy, he had always been fascinated with cars, especially their sleek exteriors and their capacity to blow past him with colossal speed while he was walking down the sidewalk. As he grew older, his obsession with car exteriors disappeared as he realized that almost every day, cars come with a new facelift. Instead, the inner workings of cars caught his attention. Right from pressing the gas barrel to the exhaust, the entire functioning of a car is what he is in awe of. Moreover, upcoming technology has completely revolutionized the mechanics of automobiles, which keeps him engaged. He also firmly believes that the feeling of satisfaction achieved after solving even the tiniest of life problems is truly unmatched. And hence he decided to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering, which he believes is one of the most beautiful ways to fulfil his urge for learning more about the inner mechanisms of cars alongside tackling real-world problems.

Michela - ECE2T0 + PEY

Only 10% of the world’s population is left-handed, and one such southpaw is our very own Michela Trozzo. Many of you may recognize her as the Director of Hi-Skule, but very few of you know that she worked as a mentor, outreach director, and vice director, all throughout her initial years at UofT. She also served as VP Student Life of the Engineering Society. Over the summer, she ran synchronous sessions for the UofT Engineering Academy, which had initiated a new program for incoming first year engineering students to bridge the gap in academics created by the abrupt shift of in-person online classes during the last crucial months of high school.

In May 2020, she completed her PEY working for the Toronto Transit Committee (TTC). Before getting the job there, she was offered another one at Bruce Power as well. When not involved in numerous Skule™ activities or in academia, you can find Michela tap dancing to her favourite tunes. By the time she was in high school, she had her entire career plan figured out mainly based on her
Skulemates continued from page 3

aspiration to become a high-school teacher. According to her plan, she took math and science in high school, either one of which she planned to major in. After Grade 11 however, her father, who had always been allured by the field of engineering, encouraged her to pursue it as a career path. Near the end of eleventh grade, the WISE (Women in Science Engineering) chapter from UofT came to do a presentation on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) at her high school, and they left her motivated to take up engineering. The interesting part is that she still plans to become a teacher, and has already applied for a Bachelor of Education degree after graduating from the University of Toronto.

Ardian - MSEE2T0 + PEY

Our next Skulemate, Ardian Lagman, saw a Cirque Du Soleil show many years ago and felt instantly intrigued by a section with a guy doing a pole dancing performance. He was impressed with the level of fitness the guy must have achieved in order to be practicing this art form with such ease. Coincidentally, he had a conversation revolving around pole dancing with a few of his friends at university. They motivated him to take a shot at pole dancing and there has been no looking back since then. His journey to learning pole dancing gave him days where he would walk out with bruises, but ultimately all the hard work and pain paid off by giving him immense strength and the feeling of contentment. The same person who started out being nervous as he was the only male in a class full of females, has now transformed into a self-assured and phenomenal pole dancer, who would do nothing less than stealing the show if you were to ever watch him perform.

When Ardian was in high school, he was working as a valet in a car dealership. His job description included preparing the cars for the technicians of the service centre. Over the course of working there, he got to park a few electric cars and was so mesmerized by them that he decided that he wanted to become an engineer and build electric cars. Fast forward to today, after doing his PEY at ArcelorMittal Dofasco, where he had the chance to do water modelling, prepare samples for technological investigations, and help set up experiments. He also happened to be exposed to data science. After doing a few projects on his own and taking two courses in that avenue, he realized that his real passion lies in the world of data science and artificial intelligence. Moving forward, he will be doing an M.Eng in MIE to pivot his career towards his newfound love for the same.

Ria - ECE 2T2

Our last and final Skulemate, Ria Malhotra, is someone who enjoys playing tiny pranks on people around her. She once made a friend believe that she was related to the Queen! Under normal circumstances, you would find her hanging out in the Pit. She believes that at its peak hours, it serves as a reminder of the Skule™ spirit, but even in the evenings, during its quiet hours, the Pit has the power to give any engineer the warm feeling of a blanket. If you ever need to reinstate your interest in the field of engineering she would be your go-to person. She strongly believes in the power of engineering and using technology to change the world for the better. She absolutely loves being involved with Skule™ design teams for the simple reason that it makes her believe time and time again that the power of several great minds working together is unmatchable.

When asked about why she wanted to become an engineer, she simply said that engineers rule the world and becoming an engineer is the first step to global domination. When she initially heard that UofT is a tough university to get into and has a competitive environment making it difficult for students to stand out, she immediately decided that she wanted to surround herself with people who are smarter, more talented and more hardworking so that she could learn from them and their experiences in order to grow and expand her potential.

Not just in the field of engineering, but everywhere else in life too, you get to meet new people and hear their life stories. The people you meet help you in the process of discovering yourself. You learn about new things that you are passionate about, things that you fear and you build memories whose stories you will retell for years to come. I hope reading this helped you to know your peers a little better, and maybe someone else’s story helped inspire your own.

Apple continued from page 1

of the Apple Car. One rumour claims that Apple has been communicating with numerous car companies and is allegedly looking to collaborate with Hyundai in manufacturing their own car. The idea is that Apple would produce next generation battery technology and provide the software while Hyundai would help build the rest of the car. Another possibility is that Apple will seek components for the vehicle from multiple suppliers and have a partner like Hyundai to assemble the final vehicle. This type of collaboration would be similar to the Apple-Foxconn relationship, where Foxconn, a Taiwanese multinational electronics contract manufacturer, assembles the vast majority of Apple’s iPhones.

However, other rumours suggest that Apple forming a partnership for their vehicle is out of the picture. Much of Apple’s success over the years has come as a result of setting their own standards, from the aesthetics involved in their products to the careful decisions that set and influence trends in the smartphone industry. The Apple Car can also be a great opportunity to encourage users to engage with other Apple services such as Apple Maps and Apple Music, adding to the connectivity of the Apple ecosystem. Overall, it would be hard to imagine that Apple would abandon their methods of vertical integration and instead seek partners for a self-driving electric vehicle product.

Furthermore, there is a substantial opportunity for profit that Apple may not want to risk with partners. By controlling the manufacturing and distribution of their car, Apple would be able to take advantage of the thin margins of the automotive industry. According to AppleInsider, Wall Street Analyst Katy Huberta claims that Apple has the potential to achieve major profits due to the large size of the automotive industry, estimating that Apple would only need to achieve a 2% share of the market to match their share of the smartphone market!

Rumours hint that we may see a first glimpse of the Apple Car as early as 2024 but like the rest of the information present it is all just speculation. How Apple will bring the Apple Car to life and whether it will even see the light of day is up for question, but it will definitely be interesting to see where Apple’s vision takes them next. If done right, the Apple Car could be Apple’s next iPhone…
I was misdiagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) less than 6 months ago. I wish I hadn’t taken that long to get tested, and I wish someone out there would update the symptoms of ADHD to be more than just common stereotypes like never having attention or jumping off walls. I decided to share my experiences with you in case anyone might be going through something similar or just want to take a look into what goes through the mind of a quiet, seems-like-I-have-life-together person like myself. So let’s dive into my story, shall we?

I lose my phone around 5am and would definitely never do anything out of the norm. I was the “that one perfect kid” who didn’t struggle. I was always yelled at anyway by parents that I never properly built my foundations in high school. I got high grades, did my homework, was heavily involved in extracurricular activities, had a job, and had my passions. I was literally the definition of “that one perfect kid” who never did anything out of line and would definitely bring the school some sort of reputation after I moved on. And I hated it.

I didn’t struggle academically only because I could predict any test question or way a teacher would grade an assignment. I didn’t really “learn,” I just simply found the tricks that would guarantee the highest mark. I spent classes doing the homework for the things that were being taught only because I would fall asleep or want to speak to the person next to me instead. I did plenty of extracurriculars, yes because I loved them, but mostly to fill up my schedule. I’d have to let everything pile to a point of nearly falling asleep. I failed many, many times. And… nothing helped.

In fact, I was told there wasn’t really a problem. I was told that I’m lazy. Addicted to my phone. Not trying hard enough. Trying too hard. Overreacting. Doing just fine. Setting expectations for myself too high (well that’s a little true).

No one really believed me because I didn’t seem to “struggle” when I was in elementary or high school. I got high grades, did my homework, was heavily involved in extracurricular activities, had a job, and had my passions. I was definitely not normal or healthy and not knowing what to do about it.

Up until PEY, I tackled university in a way that allowed me to just “get by,” despite my best efforts. I accepted this was the reality of my life, that I would just have to wait for the random, infrequent bursts of inspiration and motivation to get me through a final project or studying for a midterm. I’d have to let everything pile to a point of nearly breaking me in order to hash through them all. I was tired, annoyed, and quite honestly, not sure how I was still in uni.

In class, it was evident that I never properly built my foundations in high school. I still couldn’t pay attention in lectures. I got overstimulated at the cry of a TA letting us know there were just five more minutes remaining. I failed many, many times.

Honestly, the only reason I passed was because of the mental paralysis I have. Doing just fine. Setting expectations for myself too high (well that’s a little true). Trying hard enough. Trying too hard. Overreacting. Doing just fine. Setting expectations for myself too high (well that’s a little true).

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Honestly, the only reason I passed was because of ADHD.

**Getting Diagnosed with ADHD at 21**

**ALYSON ALLEN**

Cannon Editor-in-Chief

Despite this, it took me years of asking if this was normal to spark any doctor’s attention. I was misdiagnosed with depression. I tried counselling, which led to increasing my stress by pressuring me to track every thought, feeling, and thing in my life. I tried becoming a healthier version of myself by exercising, getting adequate sleep, and eating well. And… nothing helped.

In fact, I was told there wasn’t really a problem. I was told that I’m lazy. Addicted to my phone. Not trying hard enough. Trying too hard. Overreacting. Doing just fine. Setting expectations for myself too high (well that’s a little true).

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**continued on page 5**
ADHD
continued from page 3

the assignments, projects, and my friends. Words cannot describe how thankful I am for the many times my friends literally explained topics from scratch, showing me how they related to assignment questions, and being so patient, especially since I gave up with attending class half the time.

The same discouragement even started happening with my Skule™ involvement. I wanted all my extracurriculars to be things I was interested in. But, my interests change so quickly that I’d get stuck in roles I no longer wanted to do even if there weren’t any problems with it. I also liked having responsibilities since they kept my brain engaged… until suddenly the work would pile up and I’d struggle to get anything started. I somehow got through them though, oftentimes destroying my mental health in the process, only to get the little bit of dopamine at the end that would tell me “I got through it.”

Considering this on top of having all my personal responsibilities, it makes sense why I got burnt out a lot. The timespan between burnouts would even decrease each time. I was simultaneously over and under stimulated.

In the second half of second year and in third year, I tried some new approaches. I stopped attending any class that didn’t suit my learning style and learned my own way. I started actually trying to learn the material for tests, even if it meant I didn’t get good marks. I rode the waves of inspiration and productivity when they came and when they didn’t, I tried accepting it.

Did this work? A little bit. I understood content a lot more and found it way more interesting.

Professors noticed that I understood, yet still couldn’t do well on tests. I still took on too much, struggled to do so little, etc. At its core, it was the same struggles in a different font.

At the same time, I was in the (excruciatingly long) process of getting accessibility accommodations for anxiety, which ended up being broad enough to help me a bit more with my untitled struggles. In this process, my new doctor on campus and I met up a few times until they hinted at me getting ADHD testing. I looked into ADHD, finding a lot of descriptions that I didn’t fit into: hyper-active, loud, always moving, disturbing others, etc. Yet, I took the shot and was put on a waitlist for an incredibly expensive test I wasn’t sure how I’d pay for (thankfully there are OSAP grants for that, I later found out).

Weeks went by. I talked with friends who were diagnosed who shared incredibly similar struggles.

Months went by. I learned a lot of common descriptions for ADHD were outdated, based on stereotypes, and focused on symptoms found in children, especially young boys.

The pandemic hit. Suddenly I was introduced to the wonderful concept of speeding through lectures, at double speed with closed captioning, whenever I wanted to. I did significantly better taking open-book and 24 hour exams where I could actually properly apply my knowledge. I realized that I wasn’t stupid. The previous education system wasn’t working for my brain.

More months went by. I started my PEY. I couldn’t really use accommodations there. I didn’t really know how to explain getting distracted if anyone would pass by my desk and found me not “working”. Or how to explain why I always needed to ask people to repeat things, made small mistakes I didn’t catch, and missed things in meeting notes, without sounding like I was lazy.

Then finally, in August of 2020, I was able to go through my ADHD testing. Except, the testing concerned me a lot when I started it. I was asked so many questions that just weren’t relevant to any of my experiences at all and were literally targeted for children instead. I thought I was losing hope for finally having some sort of answer for why my brain functions this way. I thankfully talked to the doctor one on one afterwards for hours.

I was told that women in my scenario tend to notice ADHD struggles after high school, the moment when rigid structure gets thrown out the window. Since it’s not the stereotypical, outdated definition found in kids, adults with undiagnosed ADHD tend to get dismissed when they share their problems. My experiences weren’t uncommon. University wasn’t meant to cater properly to people like myself. After almost four years at school, I realized I wasn’t “stupid” or incapable of anything, it was that…. I just had undiagnosed inattentive-type ADHD.

Now, I’m not going through all the details for what it means because it’s genuinely different for everyone. And well, getting a question answered obviously didn’t solve my problem at all, but it sure did give me a huge relief. That doctor shared different paths I could start taking to actually help myself out.

I started by telling my managers at my PEY, who were incredibly supportive and helped me find ways that would help my day to day, such as more frequent check ins. I worked with my therapist on figuring out what my mind is going through and recognizing what does and doesn’t benefit me. I started medication, which has helped me get over the hurdle of starting simple things like sending emails or doing an assignment, finishing chores without taking a million detours, and surprisingly, taking breaks for myself.

It isn’t all perfect. There is no solution, especially in a world built for neurotypical people. But I’m learning a lot each day. And I’m learning that it’s okay to just exist and be how I am.
The SpaceX Journey - Part One:
The Beginning

JOEL MAJANO  
Cannon Writer

Space Exploration Technologies Corp. or SpaceX for short, is a name that you may or may not have heard recently as they accelerate their launch cadence, and strive for higher and higher goals. However, the current success that SpaceX is enjoying was earned after many trials and it definitely was not an easy path. So the real questions are: what is SpaceX and how did they become successful? Through a few articles that I will be writing for The Cannon, I will explore this company in detail, and while it is not directly correlated to us here at Skule™, I believe that there is something to learn from breaking the mold.

The engineering prowess that SpaceX brings to aerospace engineering, and more generally the engineering field, really does deserve more than one quick and sparse article that might gloss over many interesting bits.

We begin at the very roots of how SpaceX started: as one man’s dream to reach Mars and build a “Mars Oasis”.

This man’s name is Elon Musk, which is probably a name that you have heard of many times before. While he will be mentioned in passing, he will not be the focus of this closer look at SpaceX. After a failed attempt to purchase Russian ICBMs at a reasonable price, as they wanted US$21 million for each rocket, Musk decided instead to found SpaceX in El Segundo, California in May 2002.

Musk invested US$100 million of his own money into the company, and hired Tom Mueller, an American rocket scientist, that same month. Also in 2002, Gwynne Shotwell was hired as SpaceX’s VP of Business development. With this team, the SpaceX journey had finally begun.

The SpaceX story is not without many failures, and as we will see, they suffered so many of them that they were at the brink of bankruptcy. After a series of failed launch attempts of its Falcon 1 rocket due to various reasons, the second one causing millions of dollars in damages due to the loss of 3 satellites on board, it looked like Falcon 1 was never going to be successful. After 3 failed launches in 3 attempts, SpaceX had run out of money leaving them facing a harsh reality. Succeed, or else the entire project was done for. On September 20, 2008, their luck would change. Falcon 1 Flight 4 with a mass simulator on board, became the first privately funded, liquid-fueled rocket to reach orbit. In December 2008, after their first successful launch, NASA awarded SpaceX with a US$1.6 billion dollar “Commercial Resupply Services” contract where SpaceX would deliver cargo to the International Space Station on a fixed schedule. Following this announcement, the first ever Falcon 9 rocket was integrated, which would become the platform that was developed further and is still in use presently.

The story continues with one more successful Falcon 1 launch, and further development of the Falcon 9 platform. SpaceX worked on their Merlin engines, and in 2010, multiple tests and static fires were performed in preparation for their Dragon Spacecraft demo mission. These Merlin engines use RP-1, a kerosene based rocket fuel and liquid oxygen as propellants which is required to achieve reusable rockets. A quick fun fact is Elon Musk had a cameo in Marvel’s Iron Man 2 where Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.) congratulated Elon’s Merlin engines. On December 8th 2010, SpaceX became the first privately funded company to successfully launch, orbit, and recover a spacecraft during a NASA-contracted mission named “Commercial Orbital Transportation Services (COTS) Demo Flight 1”.

There were a few more launches after this, as well as the announcement of the Grasshopper program, which aimed to develop reusable rockets that would land back on Earth after launch. In 2013, SpaceX completed the final flight of the Grasshopper program, after showcasing the possibility of rockets landing back on Earth by “hopping” to various altitudes, and landing back on land in a controlled fashion. This is where things begin to get interesting, and where I will end this background article on SpaceX’s 2002-2013 timeline.

The next articles will contain some really interesting content ranging from rockets that launch and land back on a floating ship in the middle of the ocean, ships that launch like a rocket, fall like a glider, and land vertically, and lots more.
The Contestants

ECE: Likes: transistors, Dislikes: showers

MIN: Likes: getting a job, Dislikes: rocks

MECH: Likes: gears, Dislikes: standing still

MSE: Likes: cubes, Dislikes: explaining MSE

CIV: Likes: trusses, Dislikes: moving

INDY: Likes: matlab, Dislikes: engineering

ENG SCI: Likes: bragging, Dislikes: explaining praxis

CHEM: Likes: chemical reactions, Dislikes: chemical reactions

This year we decided the Engineering faculty needed a bit of friendly competition. That’s why we’re introducing the 2021 Engineering Bracket, pitting all of our lovely disciplines against each other. Check out each of the contestant profiles and decide who should win the bracket this year!
2021 ENGINEERING BRACKET

ECE

MECH

CIV

ENGSCI

MIN

MSE

INDY

CHEM

Cast your votes on our Facebook page! @cannon.news
An Interview with the SpiritHeads

DINA CASTELLETTO
Cannon Writer

I had the absolute pleasure of interviewing the new Skule SpiritHeads for this year. The interview was a blast and I learned so many cool things about this year’s Mr.Blue and Gold (Kushagra), Lady Godiva (Kate), and the two Ultimate Frosh (Kyla and Emily).

Dina: So let’s begin. First question, what year and program are you in?

Kyla: I’m Kyla, I was an EngSci but now I’m a T1 and a 2T4.
Emily: Hi, I’m Emily. I’m EngSci 2T4.
KG: I’m 2T3 and I’m in ECE, switched from Mech.
Kate: I am EngSci 2T3, about to be ECE specialization.

Dina: And following that, what is something really cool or interesting about you?

Kyla: I used to play rugby for Ontario.
Emily: That’s pretty cool. I used this in the Ultimate Frosh competition, but I don’t like pigeons. “laughs” That’s my catchphrase.
KG: So, I participated in a lot of hack-a-thons, and I’ve won about five or six in the last year.
Emily: Woah!
Kate: Dang.

Dina: What is something you have been doing during quarantine to stay active and occupied?

Kyla: I’ve learned how to play the ukulele, or well, I’m learning.
Kate: I’m in Newfoundland, we don’t have a lot of Covid right now, so I’ve been going back to my old dance studio for class to stay active and get out of the house! I’m doing mainly ballet, modern, and jazz, but I’ve done other things in the past.
Emily: I’ve been using lots of art mediums and trying new things, and I just recently started crocheting again which is fun.
Kate: That’s nice!
KG: My entire summer I went to NEST. I participated in the NEST program at the entrepreneurship Hatchery, but more recently, I learned more about web development, and as for active, uh, didn’t really happen.
Kyla: I’ve tried to do ten push-ups every day.
Emily: I’m just active from jumping up and down... oh... Kate: You said it!
Emily and Kyla: “Jump up and down”

Dina: And favourite hobby?

KG: I play the piano, so that.
Kyla: I really like trying new restaurants, but before the pandemic.
Emily: I like to play badminton or volleyball, but I’ve gotten really into spikeball though.
Kate: I said dance already, but besides that, I like board games or party games.

Dina: Rapid-fire question, favourite Timbit?

Kate: Chocolate!
Kyla: The powdered jelly!
Kate: What?
Emily: The chocolate is good! Old fashion for me, maybe...
KG: I’ve had a Timbit once, and it was chocolate, so I’ll just go with that.

Dina: What is your go-to icebreaker? It can also be a fun fact.

KG: Ok I need a volunteer.
Kate: Ok go.
KG: Kate, how heavy are polar bears?
Kate: Like a ton?
KG: Yeah, that’s heavy enough to break the ice, hi I’m Kushagra!
Emily: That’s good!
Kate: It’s a fact, for an icebreaker, but, there are more Elvis Presley songs in Lilo and Stitch than there are in any Elvis movie.

SpiritHeads continued on page 11
of endangerment, left to Empire in 1784. Today, the taken over by the Burmese was then the Kingdom of They first arrived in western state of Rakhine, Most of them live in the majority Myanmar. group from Buddhist-primarily Muslim ethnic makes those answers clear: Zuckerburg is only a makes me laugh: “Buddhist mobs, ” “Clearance operations, ” and 80 ARSA militants. casualties were 12 officers military treatment. The police posts in protest of launched an attack on defining episode beginning after September, despite violence, and restrictions been facing systematic and gang raped women 11% being children below 700,000 Rohingya to flee The crackdown forced 700,000 Rohingya to flee and live in refugee camps, risking their lives in the process. The conflict in Myanmar has been ongoing, but the turn of events in 2017 were unlike any before. How do you reach such a pressurized point, and why is the majority of Myanmar’s Buddhist population indifferent to the cries of the Rohingya? Experts point to Facebook as the farm where the seeds of genocide were planted, a slow-boil of year and making the video. Kate: “clicks her heels” Queen of Clubs! KG: Oh my God, I am so sorry about that “laughs” Kate: It’s all good, I’m committed. Emily: Maybe Havenger Scant. That was the first event that I really interacted with people, with the community. Also participating in Ultimate Frosh and watching Godiva’s Crowd...I’m so sorry! “laughs” Kate: “clicks her heels” Queen of Clubs! Emily: But I couldn’t watch Mr.Blue and Gold, unfortunately. Frosh and watching Godiva’s Crowd...I’m so sorry! “laughs” Kate: “clicks her heels” Queen of Clubs! Emily: But I couldn’t watch Mr.Blue and Gold, unfortunately. Frosh and watching Godiva’s Crowd...I’m so sorry! “laughs” Kate: “clicks her heels” Queen of Clubs! Emily: But I couldn’t watch Mr.Blue and Gold, unfortunately. Frosh and watching Godiva’s Crowd...I’m so sorry! “laughs” Kate: “clicks her heels” Queen of Clubs! Emily: But I couldn’t watch Mr.Blue and Gold, unfortunately.
and pages for Burmese celebrities and famed stars on Facebook, posing as civilians. They then worked to gain large followings and also took over a well-known blog called Opposite Eyes. The military began to funnel fake stories and make stirring posts and comments meant to rise people up against the Rohingya. Posts tried to paint Rohingya as terrorists by making accusations of Rohingya-led slaughter, like a post made with photo evidence of Rohingya persecution of native Rakhines in the 40s. The photos were from the Bangladesh-Pakistan conflict in the 70s. Or, around the time of 9/11 in 2017, when the military used their sham news pages to alert Buddhists through Facebook Messenger about upcoming “jihad attacks.” They also told Muslims that Buddhists were planning to protect them. This undercover campaign had been ongoing for five years and had a team of 700 people dedicated to it, and it was executed entirely covertly. Tools of psychological warfare and tactics learned by military personnel from studying in Russia were deftly applied. Experts say the military’s intent was to create an environment of fear and terror so as to warrant the need for a saviour: the military. Others say the goal was “ethnic cleansing.”

We know that hate speech and misinformation on the platform contributed to what happened to the Rohingya. Yanghee Lee, a UN Myanmar iniquitant, said “We know that the ultra-nationalist Buddhists have their own Facebooks and are really inciting a lot of violence and a lot of hatred against the Rohingya or other ethnic minorities.” Human rights organizations claim the military operation on Facebook caused murder, rape, and forced the Rohingya to flee. The correlation between the hate on Facebook and the violence becomes stark after connecting the story to how Facebook originated in Myanmar.

Back in 2013, Myanmar’s telecommunications market went public and the price for a SIM card dropped from $200 to $2. People could now purchase phones with unprecedented ease and get internet access. The manifestation of this impact is visible through the internet penetration rates in Myanmar: from 0.3% in 2010 to 30% in 2017. Most users flocked to Facebook because it was one of the rare platforms that was compatible with the Burmese language, which not even Google supported. Today, Facebook is considered as the only internet and digital news source in Myanmar by civilians; In 2018, 18 million of Myanmar’s 54 million population were on Facebook. This is troubling given the fact that the rapid spread of Internet use in Myanmar meant that there was little time to build cultural awareness on how to use the Internet and left many unaware of concepts like fake news.

Why Facebook failed to remove anti-Rohingya hate speech was dependent on a number of problems. Software issues meant that a large number of users could not read Facebook guidelines on reporting certain content. A lack of context meant slurs were harder to identify and ban. But the main reason was a gaping lack in Burmese content moderators. The company had a total of one in 2014, and four in 2015.

Facebook has responded with a number of repressive actions since 2017. They created an internal team focused on flagging and removing hate speech on Facebook faster and more effectively. In November 2018, they publicly acknowledged their role: “We weren't doing enough to help prevent our platform from being used to incite division and incite offline violence.” They took down 425 Pages linked to the military, 17 Groups, and 135 accounts in December 2018 and promised to add more Burmese content moderators, having increased the total to 60 in 2018.

Facebook had been aware of what was happening on the platform before they took action in 2017, from an Australian documentarian in 2013, a doctoral student in 2014, and even in 2015, when an entrepreneur visited headquarters and delivered a talk on how Facebook was stirring trouble in Myanmar; they were alerted. A multi-billion dollar company was given many opportunities to act early and preventatively before the crisis of 2017.

Now, the West African nation of Gambia is asking Facebook to provide access to its stored database and information, including military profiles and messaging, which would be instrumental in officially charging Myanmar with genocide in the International Court of Justice. Facebook declined the U.S. federal request. They claim Gambia’s request is a breach of the Stored Communications Act (SCA), a law that regulates external data transfer from social media companies. The grounds on which Facebook are arguing are insubstantial; the SCA is a means of ensuring civilians data privacy, not Facebook’s. Moreover, the SCA need not apply to publicly posted content. The case is ongoing at the moment.

Facebook has a chance to act according to its own guidelines and publicly-touted values. How it responds to Gambia will be a determining moment in how Facebook and other social media companies are to be seen by the public and in history. If Facebook continues to be uncooperative, perhaps it is a sign for a new precedent to be set. One where social media companies are treated as public entities with global impact subject to ongoing examination and legal consequences, like a fine for lack of action leading to genocide. Enforced measures can be bought in such as providing mandatory digital literacy instruction for all new users to Facebook, ongoing regional-level communication and collaboration with civilians, minorities, and rights groups to highlight problems on the platform and tackle them as they arise, and requiring Facebook to invest in finding content moderators immediately as they predict growth in app usage in a particular region. It may be time to force Facebook to spend less resources on algorithmic ad targeting and shift the focus to developing algorithmic hate speech targeting. Of course, Facebook can pursue all these initiatives on their own, just like how it can choose to assist Gambia in its case against Myanmar. As we see Facebook in the courtroom more and more, Facebook may find itself without a choice in the future if it chooses wrong now.

Breaking News Update: On February 1st, 2021, the military staged a coup, assuming power of the nation. De facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other government ministers were detained. The UN fears that the condition of the Rohingya will worsen following this turn of events.
Marquis Wheat: The Crop Built for Canada

ANDREW WUEBBOLT
External: CAFE

The year is 1909. During even the best of winters, Canada’s climate is harsh. Agriculture is an important way of life for early settlers, just as it is in Europe. How can one be successful when the weather is against you? How can it be possible to get bread on the table when wheat harvests are minimal and the produce is of a quality which back home would only be fit for livestock? Perhaps, there is hope: a new strain of wheat designed to be grown in Canada’s climate has just been announced. This wheat promises high yields, great quality, and the ability to harvest before the early frosts. What does this mean for the Dominion of Canada?

With the influx of Europeans moving to Canada, there comes a market for the familiar crops included. Many settlers would take seeds from their home country to the New World in hopes of having something to start from. Naturally, wheat is one of the most popular seeds and is known for being ground into flour to create breads, pastas, pastries, etc. Unfortunately, the climate is harsh and not inherently conducive to agriculture, mainly due to the growing season. The wheat species brought to Canada were varieties such as Golden Drop, which originates in Scotland where summers are long and winters are short. This is in stark contrast to Canada, where the grain has less time to grow and ripen. A whole crop of wheat could be devastated by an early frost. This situation led to a slow adoption of growing wheat by Canadian farmers from the 1600s to mid-1800s.

In 1842, Red Fife, a strand of wheat likely originating in Ukraine, was introduced. Compared to most varieties available at the time, this wheat produced a larger yield and had a higher gluten content, making it ideal for baking. The introduction of this higher quality wheat allowed for further development of wheat farms in Canada and even helped spur the development of the railway system. Despite all these benefits, Red Fife took long to mature and did not fare well in the late fall, when frost is common.

In 1886, the government appointed Dr. William Saunders as head of the Experimental Farms Service. To determine which varieties of wheat were best suited to the Canadian climate, he maintained various experimental farms across Canada where he would plant different strains of wheat. Crossbreeding was new at the time. Dr. William Saunders’ son, Dr. Charles Saunders, decided to crossbreed wheat varieties to determine if better strains could be designed. During this time, Red Fife successfully represented wheat grown in Canada globally, and he hoped further improvement would allow farmers the security of harvesting before the frosts hit. He took Red Fife with its large yield and great gluten content and crossed it with Hard Red Calcutta, a strand from India. Hard Red Calcutta matured about 21 days before Red Fife, and Saunders intended to exploit that.

This crossbreed became the 2 varieties: Markham A and Markham B (later renamed Marquis A and Marquis B). When harvesting these crossbreeds, Charles Saunders wanted to ensure he kept only the highest quality grains. To do this, he would chew a dough ball from a few wheat kernels off a head of wheat. He surmised that the most elastic of these dough balls would be the ones with the highest gluten content. Eventually, after further generations and testing, he had narrowed it down to the highest quality Marquis B seeds, which ultimately became Marquis wheat.

This superb variety retained the good baking qualities of Red Fife but was able to mature 7-10 days before. This may not seem like a large difference, but it could have been the difference between a mature harvest and the first frost. Marquis also had an incredible yield, about 20% greater than that of Red Fife, which was the gold standard at the time.

Unsurprisingly, these qualities made Marquis wheat an amazing crop. By 1918, it dominated over 80% of the total acreage from Northern Saskatchewan to Southern Nebraska. This consistent, high-quality wheat variety allowed Canada to become the dominant wheat exporter in the world. Even today, Canada is in the top 3 global wheat exporters.

To further solidify Marquis’ status, it is the ancestor of innumerable wheat varieties. From well-known and well-harvested varieties, to ones only used in experiments, almost every wheat strand produced in Canada over the last century can be traced back to Marquis. Marquis wheat was even instrumental in the war effort, feeding not only Canadians and their soldiers, but also the soldiers of allied countries during the food shortage of 1917-18.

It is easy to see that Marquis wheat has had a lasting impact on Canada, but it has also left its mark on the world. Marquis (and its parent, Red Fife) made the Canadian Hard Red Spring (CHRS) class of wheat famous for its high quality and gluten content. This legacy lasts even today; this class of wheat is the highest priced class on the world market. Throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, Canada has been at the forefront of wheat production and exportation. Canada increased its export of wheat from 8 to 75 million bushels between the years 1896 and 1911, a difference of just 15 years! More recently, Canada produced 32.3 million tons of wheat (about 1.19 billion bushels of wheat) and exported approximately $5.4 billion USD worth of wheat in 2019 alone. All these Canadian feats would not have been possible if not for Marquis wheat.

Looking back to 1907, newly immigrated Canadians would likely have been daunted looking at their new lives, but there were many reasons to be excited. There was difficulty moving and adjusting to the New World with short growing seasons and harsh climates. However, Canada was at the forefront of an agricultural phenomenon that would one day place it on the world stage. A simple seed brought over from Europe mixed with some Canadian ingenuity created a plant incredible enough to share with the world yet unique enough to stay our own.
QAnon is the Game Our Parents Warned Us Not to Play

RUKNOON DINDER
Cannon Editor

Content warning: the following article contains strong references to violence, death, sexual assault, human trafficking, terrorism and misinformation

A few months ago, I was finishing up my yearly binge of The Boys (the show, not my close male friends. Also, spoiler alert) and a particular scene really struck a chord in me. The episode in question begins with a cameo appearance from Charles Koontz, or potentially better known as “fat Neil” from Community. Charles plays the role of an ordinary man living by himself in a world populated by superhumans. He maintains a pleasant association with the owner of the corner shop where he buys snacks when the seemingly normal character is easily manipulated by the propaganda and fear-mongering of anti-superhero television and social media into viewing them as a threat to society. Finally, this short sequence ends in horror when he ultimately murders the shopkeeper simply because he suspects him to be a superhero in disguise.

On the surface, this might feel like another flavour of your run of the mill “anything that doesn't look like us is the enemy” trope that Hollywood has historically directed towards cultures privileged North Americans know nothing about. Some of you may know that one of my hobbies is using fictional profiles to gain access to places I am usually unwelcome in. I have also been sucked into these groups, you know how easy it is to fool the players while making them extremely confident in their answers. It is called Guided Apophenia or “forcefully creating the tendency to perceive a connection or meaningful pattern between unrelated or random things (such as objects or ideas).”

Let's start with what QAnon is: a theory that has simultaneously managed to convince every conspiracy theorist and deceive every “normal/ rational” user of the internet. I say deceive because even though many people have a surface level understanding of what QAnon is: the story is using fictional profiles to gain access to places I am usually unwelcome in. Some of you may know that one of my hobbies is using fictional profiles to gain access to places I am usually unwelcome in. Some of you may know that one of my hobbies is using fictional profiles to gain access to places I am usually unwelcome in. Some of you may know that one of my hobbies is using fictional profiles to gain access to places I am usually unwelcome in. Some of you may know that one of my hobbies is using fictional profiles to gain access to places I am usually unwelcome in. Some of you may know that one of my hobbies is using fictional profiles to gain access to places I am usually unwelcome in. Some of you may know that one of my hobbies is using fictional profiles to gain access to places I am usually unwelcome in.

On the surface, this might feel like another flavour of your run of the mill “anything that doesn't look like us is the enemy” trope that Hollywood has historically directed towards cultures privileged North Americans know nothing about. Some of you may know that one of my hobbies is using fictional profiles to gain access to places I am usually unwelcome in. And as I browsed through the posts within 4chan, QAnon sites and Parler, a sinister similarity began to surface between Charles of a 4chan user named Q pretending to be a top government official with information that implicates all the big politicians and officials of satanic rituals and infanticide. People also think that all Q/Make America Great Again/ Where We Go 1 We Go All people are brainwashed to burn the world and hate everyone which is a fairly understandable misconception. But the hilarious truth is that QAnon is a game. A fairly simple play in human psychology. One we have all played at some point. It is an inverted puzzle game. Like charades or Pictionary. The object is defined for you, the pieces are created, you just have to see the pattern to get the answer. And if you have played these games, you know how easy it is to fool the players while making them extremely confident in their answers. It is called Guided Apophenia or “forcefully creating the tendency to perceive a connection or meaningful pattern between unrelated or random things (such as objects or ideas).”

Let's now look at how Apophenia works. Say you were doing an escape room, figuring out the clues. Without meaning to, your eyes venture to three of the pieces of tape that make the shape of a perfect arrow pointing right at a blank wall. You believe it has to be a clue. You get determined to figure out what the clue means and the whole game gets derailed. Funnily enough, it is not a clue. But since you are adamant that is and since there obviously is no clue there, you keep hunting for more clues that fit your conclusion and not the other way around. You are not even at fault because it all fits so well. It was better and more obvious than the actual clue that was hidden. It was all a random chance but made sense and your actions are all completely logical. And remember you are a rational, democratic, sane, good person.

In a puzzle game, it is easy to fall off the track because there is a track. Game masters want you to find the answer in a fixed way and not following that way player lost by pointing out unrelated random events and creating a meaning for them that fits the propaganda message Q is delivering.

The ideas of QAnon are presented as knowledge, but they are in fact beliefs. That is the major difference between QAnon and an actual game: that Q is almost pure propaganda. That is the sole purpose of this. It's not advertising a product, it's not for fun, and it's not an art project. There is no doubt about the political nature of the propaganda either. From ancient tropes about Jewish people and Democrats eating babies (blood-libel re-booted) to anti-science hysteria to Donald Trump being Jesus’ son who has returned to dismantle the Anti-Christ union, this is all the solid “reliable” stuff of authoritarianism. A belief in purging what (they wrongfully think) is evil. And while I will not deny that a great deal of bigotry, racism, sexism, xenophobia was already previously present within these groups, we must not also forget that a number of very rational folks have also been sucked into this propaganda. With a healthy sprinkle of debatable truths (Trudeau essentially condemning the economy by leaving the budget to balance itself) with total lies (Bill Gates implanting people with microchips so he can supply child trafficking victims to Trudeau), it always maintains the feeling of you getting close to the truth, it just being a throwing distance away. When players arrive at the “correct” answers they are showered with adoration, respect, and social credit. Like a role player in Witcher 3, the “happy ending” is the...
one that the group strives for and makes the story the most enjoyable. The idea that bolsters the theory, the “correct” answer is the one that provides the poster with the most credit. It’s like a survival of the fittest but for stories. The plausible ones remain but somehow still bolster their false beliefs. It’s truly fantastic. It’s like a snow removal truck in a forest. It will never realise if it goes off the path, because it is creating the path whatever direction it goes in.

I sure hope that I’m wrong, but QAnon feels like it’s a terrorist group in its infancy that has the potential to inspire many lone wolf attacks in North America, especially now that Biden and Trudeau are firmly in power. They’ve been led by themselves into thinking that just about every Hollywood celebrity or politician with liberal leanings are out there drinking the blood of children killed in Satanic blood rituals (I wish I was making this up…). All Q had to do was appear as an enigma and say there was an answer to their frustrations against the status quo. He certainly does not exist and these people certainly have no way to prove their claims. But this won’t stop them. If these “patriots” truly believe, and that they will liberate the world with an assault rifle and Call of Duty level plot armour, then violence seems almost inevitable. Remember, they literally thought they could invade Congress without repercussion.

It’s called “stochastic terrorism”, and this is where far right conservatism comes in to nurture Q’s crazy beliefs instead of quashing them as liberalism usually does. It’s been a centrepiece of the right-wing playbook for quite a while now. It’s substantially less disrupting than a traditional terror cell; all you really have to do is never stop broadcasting the propaganda that you were probably gonna be broadcasting for other purposes, anyway. If you think of it as if it were economics, it requires much fewer resources to radicalize new inductees into your thoughtsphere if you just cast a broad enough net. Create a system where the inductees themselves find out more targets to radicalise, and it becomes a self-sustaining worm. Also, they’re sort of similar to independent contractors, in that they aren’t actually connected to you in any concrete way and it’s nearly impossible to cogently argue that you’re culpable for what they do. You lose all control over when and how these acts play out, but these acts happening at all are going to tend to serve the desired purposes. Flood the news cycle with more drama to make it easier to slip more falsehood through the firehose, and being an ad hoc advertisement for the whole thought movement, to find more future radicals who may be inclined to dedicate their lives to the same purpose. I keep drawing from this single example since it pertains to North America, but I sincerely think a large swath of the Republicans had nothing to do with the attack at the US Capitol. Yet it would also be foolish to think that they did not tend to the flames and add fuel to the fire until it became an uncontrollable inferno. How many of you know about the butcher from Manitoba who attacked 24 Sussex Dr. with an assault rifle in an aim to kill Trudeau? How many links do you think he had to terrorist groups? None. He was completely and utterly radicalised by a social media account.

That is why I do not agree with the term “lone wolf”. That might have been true before the internet age, but now? No. I think the idea of a person who consumes a lot of an idea on the internet, is not self-radicalizing. They’re being radicalized by other members speaking to one another in posts through the internet. It’s no different than a person being pulled into a neo-Nazi group through a series of face-to-face meetings in that respect. And the actions at the Capitol certainly show that these people are not acting on their own. This groupthink further emboldens them in their belief of being right and their insistence on you “doing your own research”, because they are certain that once you truly study the cases, you will see how right they are and join them. It would have been a beautiful example of people being encouraged to research a topic before discussion if not for the fact that said topic is grounded entirely in delusion.

If you haven’t figured it by now, QAnon does not simply publish propaganda, they manufacture it. Going back now, Charles’ character was so engrossed in seeing any clue of a superhuman inside the innocent shopkeeper, he ignored the fact that he was just another ordinary human-like Charles, and still killed him because he could not bring himself to unsee the fake clue. The rhetoric here is that QAnon and related groups create actual terrorists by giving them fictional terrorists to fight. This amoral, uncaring, empathy and humanity-free style of modern conservatism should have no foothold in a modern world. But it does because its audience is being guided into a projection of evil. The real irony is that western radicals love pointing fingers at like-minded, identical radicals in the middle east: people who have become indoctrinated by extremism under the pretext of fighting for their religion, while searching for a sign of the Anti-Christ in everything they disagree with and attempting to establish a theocracy themselves.

This is one of the most fascinating forms of indoctrination I have ever witnessed and one that makes me question how deserving we are of free speech on the internet. Should we, in our quest to ensure liberty, equality and fraternity, allow questionable agencies to covertly undermine them? Should we allow an unrestricted supply of lies and delusion by the media to people? And should social media allow echo chambers of conspiracy theories to exist? Are we hoping that one day these very delusional people see the light? Because the pessimist in me does not have high hopes for that.

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The Do’s and Don’ts of Working in a Team

KIRTANA DEVARAJ  
Cannon Writer

Teamwork is something we have been familiar with since childhood. From sports to academics, teamwork is omnipresent. Despite this, it is unfortunate that most of us have had some unpleasant experiences while working in a team. A few weeks ago, during a lecture, we were asked to share an experience from working in a team, be it good or bad. Unsurprisingly, the negative experiences overpowered the positive ones. I believe there are certain do’s and don’ts of working in a team which people often tend to ignore. Considering how important collaboration is during our time at U of T Engineering and beyond, I believe it is essential to be aware of these “rules”.

**Do: Communicate with your team**

Communication and collaboration go hand in hand. For a team to work, all members need to be aware of what is happening. Since classes are now online, this has become more important than ever. A good way to do this is to make a group chat on a platform that is convenient for all the members.

**Don't: Ignore team messages**

I have seen this happening many times during this period of virtual learning. Not only does this place stress upon other team members but it also may lead to negative consequences for you in terms of grades. One of the things my team is doing this semester is setting a time limit for responding to messages. We have set a time limit of 5 hours to respond to messages and in case a member doesn’t respond by then, an alternate platform of communication will be used to contact that team member and check up on them. Ensure that you check the group chat regularly and let your team know if you missed their messages because of genuine reasons.

**Do: Set goals for your project**

It is absolutely essential to set goals for your project before starting to work on it. Goals will ensure that the team is focused and all members know what the ideal final result is. While most engineering team work projects have an in-built goal setting assignment, the team should set goals even if this is not the case. The team should also revisit the goals periodically to gain a sense of what is going well and what needs to be improved.

**Don't: Dismiss anyone's ideas or opinions**

One of the greatest advantages of working in a team is the vast pool of perspectives. Your team members may have very diverse ideas as compared to yours and while this may lead to a clash of opinion at times, it is important to actively listen to everyone's ideas which will also help to produce higher quality work. It is understandable that sometimes, you may not fully comprehend an idea that a team member pitches. A phrase I use in these situations is "I can see that you have some great ideas, but I am not sure if I fully understand them yet. Could you elaborate on them and help me out?" A phrase like this will allow you to politely listen to and understand others’ ideas.

**Do: Be engaged**

A team can only be successful if all team members are engaged and are actively participating. Ensure that you are engaged not only while completing assignments, but also during team discussions and team building activities. This will give you a chance to present your ideas which is beneficial both for you and the team.

**Don't: Have excessive team meetings**

Excessive meetings have happened frequently in the teams I have worked with in the past. While team meetings are undeniably important to complete assignments, excessive team meetings means that the work is being dragged on for longer than necessary. Rather, it may be useful to set an agenda at the beginning of each meeting and abide by it to ensure that the team’s time is used efficiently without compromising on the quality of work produced.

**Do: Encourage all team members**

A team has members with various personalities and some may be a little more introverted than others. It is integral to actively encourage all team members to share their ideas, participate in discussions and complete assignments. It is essential that team members build an environment which all team members are comfortable in. In the past I worked with a team which had people of diverse age groups and skill sets. As one of the younger members of the team, I felt like my voice was not being heard. To rectify this, I had a conversation with the other members about letting everyone express their opinions and made an effort to put forward my ideas. The conversation helped and the environment was more positive. In case you ever face a situation like this, ensure that you speak to your team and set team goals about creating an inclusive environment.

**Don't: Overload certain team members**

Often, certain team members end up doing more work than others which is not the ideal situation. One way to combat this would be to have a team meeting before each assignment and equally divide up the work between all members.

**Do: Be open and honest with your team**

Again, the various types of people in a team can lead to disagreements due to differing opinions. It is important to be honest with your team to ensure that disagreements don’t affect your team dynamic. A way to go about this would be to organize a meeting with all team members and have an open conversation about any issues and how to rectify them. The TELS (Team-effectiveness Learning System by ILEAD) feedback is also a good way to give feedback to team members.

**Don't: Blame each other for a low grade**

As much as we all love getting high grades, a low grade on an assignment is inevitable. Sometimes, it leads to members blaming each other for the low grade. It is important to remember that the team worked on the assignment together, hence, all members are equally accountable. A way to avoid this is to have a team discussion about the things that went wrong in the assignment and how they can be improved in future assignments.

This is going to sound extremely clichéd but ultimately, there is no ‘I’ in a team. The way you conduct yourself in a team plays a key role in creating a successful team. Working in a team can be a wonderful or a painful experience and it all depends on you. Collaboration is a life-long skill which is essential in all walks of life. I hope that following the tips above helps you have a wonderful experience in a team!