

## **Workshop – Information overload**

We live in a technologically advanced world that has made life complicated and stressful.

Information overload is becoming a problem in people's everyday lives. When you're dealing with too much information, it impacts your ability to make decisions and remain productive, but with a constant barrage of emails, communication, social media and more, it's difficult to avoid.

Information overload has become an increasingly popular area of study, especially since the invention of the internet and World Wide Web. Quantity of information is rapidly increasing and the means of accessing it are more varied and easier to use.

What is meant by the phrase "information overload?"

A momentary reaction to breaking news on television or social media

When our brains try to process more details than we can handle.

Having access to various forms of traditional and digital media.

Hearing something that we don't like the sounds of.

The term, information overload, was first coined back in the 1960s by Political Science Professor Bertram Gross. He described it in the following way:

"Information overload occurs when the amount of input to a system exceeds its processing capacity. Decision makers have fairly limited cognitive processing capacity. Consequently, when information overload occurs, it is likely that a reduction in decision quality will occur."

In other words, our decision-making ability suffers, because we have access to more information than we need, which makes a subject more confusing, rather than less so. That definition has since been expanded and today, we also use information overload to describe when (1) we don't have enough time to process the information at hand or (2) there's a lot of irrelevant or redundant information—more than we can process efficiently.

### **Types of information overload**

- Personal information overload
- Societal information overload
- Information overload in business

## **Causes of information overload**

### **Modern journalism**

Gone are the days when a news reporter used to read news headlines in the evening on radio and gone are the days when people waited for a daily newspaper to read the news while sipping their hot tea in the morning.

Nowadays, because of the internet news are being produced every single second of the day and made viral so that it can reach more and more people in a short period.

The same news is being shared millions of times, and this is done to get a competitive edge in the news reporting. Hence, modern journalism is one of the main causes of information overload.

### **Different platforms to share information**

Modern Journalism is not only responsible for share the same information over and over on the internet. However, there are other platforms such as television, radio, RSS feeds, mobile phones, emails, social media, etc. which are also responsible for causing information overload.

For example, when you will enter cancer in Google search engine, you will get hundreds of webpage results on cancer and the information from that webpages will make you believe that you might have cancer too. Excessive information from Google has made it difficult for the doctor to cure their patients, as every other person has become a doctor by reading information online.

### **Lack of methodologies to evaluate the authenticity of the information**

The sad reality of modern times is that we have hundreds of platform to get the information, but there is no method or platform to validate the authenticity of the information.

The problem of information overload can be tackled up to some extent if people can validate what they are reading before retaining it and sharing it with others.

### **The abundance of historical information**

On one hand, we can consider ourselves fortune that we can access information which is hundreds of years old by just entering the keywords in the search engine or just by getting the book from the library and on the other hand, the same thing has become curse for us as the abundance of this information is stressing us and causing us a lot of problems.

### **Easiness to share the information**

This problem has become prevalent in the past a few decades with the introduction of social media and high-speed internet. In the old times, only the authorized and professional news reporters were responsible for sharing the information with the public.

But in the present time, with the high-quality phone cameras and the accessibility to high-speed internet has made every third person on the street a news reporter.

This not only created information overload but also created an abundance of inaccurate and baseless information and the same information is copied and share over and over again in a different form without checking the validity of the platform.

### **How to avoid information overload?**

#1 Limit the platforms to receive information: Choose platforms that you can rely on, and that will provide you authentic and accurate information.

#2 Adopt Old-fashioned methods: opting old -fashioned methods might help you to get rid of information overload.

#3 Learn to avoid unnecessary information: Ask yourself whether this information is helpful for you in any way or can it help you to take immediate actions.

#4 Unplug yourself once in a while: it becomes necessary to take a break once in a while and empty your mind so that it can get recharge to consume useful and important information and can retain it for a long time.

#5 Be aware of over-dosing: Learn the information which is important and necessary for you to reach your goal and all other information that you will consume after the Minimum Effective Dose limit is of no use for you

#6 Seek quality of information rather than the quantity of information: The phrase “less is more” is quite true when it comes to information. Rather than getting attracted to huge information, learn to seek quality information.

#7. Learn to delete data: unread emails, documents etc If they were important, you would gone through them, at least once a month. Otherwise, press 'delete'.

### **What happens when we are confronted with information overload?**

- We withdraw and stop searching for data.
- We only process information facts.
- Our brains become fatigued and unfocused.
- Our brains speed up and process faster.