

Coping With the Overload

With all of the social networks, apps, and other media sources out there, news is right at the millennials' fingertips. The question is: Are they equipped to handle it?

Due to rapid advances in technology, print journalism is on the decline and the millennials live in a society where the ideas and ways of news are constantly evolving.

Philadelphia Inquirer social media columnist Dan Rubin explained that he once made his mom a shirt that said, "My son, the media." According to Rubin, while it was a joke, it was also serious because both he and his mom are indeed the media.

"We are all media these days, and that is new, and that is creating great opportunities and great stresses," said Rubin.

With the proliferation of 24/7 news cycles and the many other platforms by which we consume news or are entertained, many of today's young people have become desensitized due to a case of information overload.

In a survey taken of 25 students at Souderton Area High School, about half said they catch up on the news once a day, while another 20 percent said they either never catch up on the news or just wait and hear about it whenever they happen to come across it. The rest said they catch up on the news once or a few times within the week.

As for the source of where these students receive their news, only one participant of the survey said it was the newspaper. The majority said they got their news from the television, news websites, or social networks. With this information, one can conclude that the millennials tend to rely on the media for news rather than a newspaper. This brings into question what the younger generation perceives as "news" and how so much exposure to the news is affecting them.

According to millennial Renay Landis, a participant in the survey above, she relies on the media for her information because it's quick and to the point, as well as more accessible than a newspaper.

Landis said that such heavy exposure to the news opens our eyes to what's really going on in the world and helps us to be less sheltered.

According to global studies teacher Marlena Musselman, after hearing a story so many times, a person becomes "numb" to it.

However, when it comes to different sources putting out the same story, Musselman said, "Everyone wants to put their twist on the story. Everybody comes at it in a different angle."

According to Philadelphia Inquirer features writer John Timpane, entertainment matters more to a younger person than “hard policy,” and “the walls between what is news and what is entertainment have fallen.”

“What you might think about doing is always keeping your mind in distinction between the stuff that matters and the stuff that’s just fun,” said Timpane.

According to Journalism teacher Stacey Aronow, it’s not that the younger generation relies too much on the media for their news, but that they are willing to accept information from sources that may be uninformed or inaccurate.

“The millennial generation hasn’t yet learned how to navigate effectively through what is objective, what is opinion, and how to critically recognize what are legitimate sources and what are incredible sources,” said Aronow.

Timpane explained that at a time there were only 3 television channels. Going back to the survey of the students at Souderton, over fifty percent replied that they got their information from the television.

That said, if the country was once informed enough to make sense of the world with only three television channels, is it essential for the millennials to grow up with the plethora of sources they have now at only the click of a button?