TOPIC OF THE WEEK
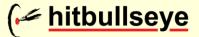## DECEMBER'19 (26Dec to 01 Jan)

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Biggest challenge- Cutting through the cutter

A Newsweek article a few years back talked about information overload (don't follow this right now, finish reading this first). There's a great quote from it, "Trying to drink from a firehouse of information has harmful cognitive effects." Information can be clutter. When we get too much info, we shut down. Because getting information can be addictive, we can be overwhelmed by the info and still keep seeking more info. Even when it's hurting us. It can be hard to step away from this endless flow of information even when it has a negative impact because it's part of our culture. Info addiction can seem okay when so many other people are doing the same activity. Clutter isn't just on our shelves, in our closets, and on our calendars. In this thriving digital age, information is one of the most pervasive forms of clutter we deal with on a daily basis. From email from good intentioned friends and family about a video you "have to watch" to our social media feeds, breaking news, and everything in between, our brains are overloaded with data and information. A sure sign of information overload is when you notice yourself skimming and scanning for key take away instead of enjoying a good read, or at the

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end of reading something, you don't remember what you read. Because more info is always a click away, we are constantly compromising the importance of being bored, curious, quiet, and thoughtful with …

- ➢ more entertainment
- ➢ more knowledge
- ➢ more inspiration
- ➢ more information

Information isn't bad, but too much becomes clutter instead of the inspiration, education, or entertainment it's meant to be. Instead, the constant stream of information just turns into noise.

Now, let's go back in time a few hundred years. In 1758, Samuel Johnson wrote one of the first articles about advertising. He too was lamenting over the ad clutter, noting that advertisements "are now so numerous that they are very negligently perused, and it has, therefore, become necessary to gain attention by magnificence of promises and by eloquence." Of course, since then, the clutter has increased exponentially. But Johnson's words still resonate.

In 2011, neuroscience researchers using FMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) and other physiological measurements found clearing clutter from the home and work environment resulted in a better ability to focus and process information, as well as increased productivity. Clutter might also have implications for our relationships with those around us. A 2016 US study, for instance, found background clutter resulted in participants being less able to correctly interpret the emotional expressions on the faces of characters in a movie. And surprisingly, it doesn't go away when we finally get to bed. People who sleep in cluttered rooms are more likely to have sleep problems, including difficulty falling asleep and being disturbed during the night.

When it comes to physical things, merely touching an item can cause you to become more emotionally attached to it. In this study, researchers gave participants coffee mugs to touch and examine prior to participating in an auction. The researchers varied the amount of time the participants were able to handle the mugs to see if this would have an effect on the amount of money participants would be willing to spend on the mugs during the auction. Apple is familiar with the effect

of touch on your psychology and has brilliantly designed its retail stores to help you build an emotional attachment to their products. Author Carmine Gallo is writing a book about the ins and outs of the Apple Store. Gallo explains that everything in the Apple Store is designed for you to touch and play with, to make you feel like it's your own. Gallo states:

"The main reason notebook computers screens are slightly angled is to encourage customers to adjust the screen to their ideal viewing angle…The ownership experience is more important than a sale."

In the same way, Files on your computer, notifications from your Twitter and Facebook accounts, and anything that goes "ping" in the night competes for your attention. This creates a digital form of clutter that erodes your ability to focus and perform creative tasks. So, what we can do? The first step in breaking the information overload is noticing the toll it's taking. Notice the exhaustion, and how much energy it uses up, and how unsatisfied you feel afterwards. Any kind of stillness and peaceful moments can seem odd, even wrong. The thing is, we need some quiet and reflective time to feel deeply okay. We also need person-to-person in person connection. No amount of information will satisfy the

thirst for these basic things. It is also a way to stop wasting of energy(without any significant output). It is in our hand to use energy wisely and to leave securely for the future generation as well.

For reference:-

- http://www.leadersinbusinessanalysis.com/blog/information-clutter-takes-a-mental-toll-on-us-and-our-corporations

- https://www.forbes.com/sites/nomanazish/2017/11/19/how-to-declutter-your-mind-10-practical-tips-youll-actually-want-to-try/#499e11b924f1

- https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2017/07/14/using-content-strategy-to-cut-through-the-information-clutter/#7cabe3161359

Additional Readings:-

- https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/jharkhand-signals-on-assembly-election-results/article30383067.ece

- https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-editorials/what-should-be-focus-of-next-budget/

- https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/et-editorials/sound-decision-to-not-raise-gst-rates/

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➢ https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/22/the-guardian-view-on-taylor-swifts-fight-for-her-rights-empowering-a-new-generation-of-artists

➢ https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/18/the-guardian-view-on-ozil-arsenal-and-liverpool-football-with-a-conscience

Suggested Refresher Book:-

The Future of the Environment: Ecological Economics and technological change

Book by Faye Duchin and Glenn-Marie Lange (Author)