

The Social Dilemma Discussion Questions

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Before the Film

1. How much time do you **think** you spend on your phone daily?
2. How much time do you **spend** on your phone daily? (1m Screen Time feature if active)
3. Would you like to spend more, less, or about the same amount of time on social media?
4. Do you think you are addicted?
5. Are there any rules at home about social media/phone usage?
6. From where do you typically get your news? Do you think it's trustworthy?

During the Film

7. Do you think there is a problem with social media, if so, what is the problem? (0:40)
8. What are social media companies willing? (15:00)
9. What do you think about the amount of data social media companies collect? (3:00)
10. What kinds of emotional responses do you have to notifications and the content in your feed? (12:00)
11. What impact do you think social media has on mental health? (40:00)
12. What kind of ads, pages, groups does the algorithm show you? (46:00)
13. Google "Donald Trump is" and "Joe Biden is." What words are auto-filled? Are they different from the person beside you? (46:00)
14. How does our own individualized news feed impact our political beliefs and polarizations? (1:13:10)

After the Film

15. What moments in the film resonated with you?
16. What control do you think Ben had over his own actions during the film?
17. Has your view of social media changed after watching the film?
18. Do you think the problem is so dire and alarming as the film portrays it to be?
19. Should social media companies act more responsibly? What can they do to act more responsibly?
20. Do you think you should change your behaviors in regards to social media? What can you do to change your behaviors?

The social dilemma discussion questions provide a crucial framework for exploring the multifaceted issues presented in the documentary "The Social Dilemma." This film sheds light on the pervasive influence of social media on our lives, prompting viewers to consider the ethical consequences of technology and its impact on mental health, society, and democracy. By engaging in thoughtful discussions, we can better understand the implications of social media and its role in shaping our daily experiences. This article will delve into key discussion questions that arise from the film, encouraging a deeper examination of these pressing issues.

Understanding "The Social Dilemma"

"The Social Dilemma" is a documentary that features insights from former employees of major tech companies, including Facebook, Google, and Twitter. The film explores how these platforms manipulate user behavior through algorithms designed to maximize engagement. As a result, users often find themselves trapped in a cycle of addiction, leading to serious consequences for mental health and social interactions.

Key Themes in "The Social Dilemma"

Before diving into discussion questions, it's essential to understand the key themes presented in the documentary:

- **Manipulation of User Behavior:** The film illustrates how social media platforms are engineered to keep users engaged for as long as possible.
- **Consequences of Addiction:** It highlights the psychological effects of social media addiction, including anxiety, depression, and decreased attention spans.
- **Impact on Society:** The documentary discusses the polarization of society due to algorithm-driven content, leading to the spread of misinformation.
- **Ethical Responsibility:** It raises questions about the ethical obligations of tech companies in managing user data and the consequences of their algorithms.

Discussion Questions to Consider

Engaging with "The Social Dilemma" through discussion questions can lead to meaningful conversations about technology's role in our lives. Here are some thought-provoking questions to consider:

1. How do social media platforms manipulate user behavior?

- Discuss the various techniques these platforms use to keep users engaged.
- How do notifications, likes, and other interactive elements contribute to user addiction?
- Can you identify specific instances in your own social media usage where you felt manipulated or compelled to engage?

2. What are the psychological effects of social media addiction?

- Reflect on your experiences with social media and how it affects your mood and mental health.
- Are there particular patterns in your behavior that align with the film's portrayal of addiction?
- Discuss the potential long-term implications of social media addiction on mental health, particularly among younger users.

3. How does social media contribute to the polarization of society?

- Examine the role of algorithms in creating echo chambers and reinforcing existing beliefs.
- Have you noticed changes in your social circle due to differing opinions on social media?
- What steps can individuals take to counteract the effects of polarization in their online interactions?

4. What ethical responsibilities do tech companies have?

- Discuss the moral implications of prioritizing profit over user well-being in the design of social media platforms.
- How should tech companies balance user engagement with ethical considerations regarding data privacy and mental health?
- What accountability measures should be in place to ensure that tech companies act responsibly?

5. How can individuals cultivate a healthier relationship with social media?

- Explore strategies for reducing social media usage, such as setting time limits or taking periodic breaks.
- What alternative activities can you engage in to replace time spent on social media?
- Discuss the importance of mindfulness and intentionality in social media consumption.

The Importance of Critical Thinking

The discussion questions stemming from "The Social Dilemma" are not just academic; they encourage critical thinking about the tools we use every day. By engaging in these discussions, individuals can develop a more nuanced understanding of their relationship with technology. Here are some ways to foster critical thinking:

- **Encourage Open Dialogue:** Create an environment where differing opinions can be shared without judgment.
- **Stay Informed:** Regularly educate yourself about the latest developments in technology and social media.
- **Reflect on Personal Experiences:** Encourage participants to share their personal stories and how social media has affected their lives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the **social dilemma discussion questions** serve as a vital tool for dissecting the complex issues surrounding social media and its impact on our lives. Engaging in these discussions not only increases awareness but also empowers individuals to make informed choices about their technology use. By fostering critical thinking and encouraging ethical considerations, we can work toward a healthier relationship with social media and inspire change within the tech industry. As we navigate this digital landscape, it is essential to remain vigilant about the influence of technology on our society, mental health, and democratic processes.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the main themes presented in 'The Social Dilemma'?

The main themes include the impact of social media on mental health, the manipulation of user behavior through algorithms, and the ethical implications of technology companies prioritizing profit over user well-being.

How does 'The Social Dilemma' suggest social media affects mental health?

The film suggests that social media can lead to increased feelings of anxiety, depression, and loneliness, particularly among younger users, due to constant comparison, cyberbullying, and addiction to screen time.

What role do algorithms play in shaping our online experiences according to the documentary?

Algorithms are designed to predict and influence user behavior by curating content that keeps users engaged, often leading to echo chambers and the spread of misinformation.

What solutions does 'The Social Dilemma' propose to mitigate the negative effects of social media?

The documentary suggests several solutions, including increased regulation of tech companies, promoting digital literacy, encouraging users to limit their social media usage, and fostering more ethical design practices in technology.

Why is the documentary's perspective on the tech industry considered significant?

It features insights from former tech executives and engineers who discuss the internal practices of major companies, providing a behind-the-scenes look at how decisions are made that prioritize engagement over user health.

How does 'The Social Dilemma' address the issue of misinformation?

The film highlights how algorithms can amplify misinformation by prioritizing sensational content over factual information, which can lead to polarized views and societal division.

In what ways does 'The Social Dilemma' encourage personal responsibility among users?

The documentary urges users to be more mindful of their social media consumption, to critically evaluate the content they engage with, and to take breaks or set boundaries to protect their mental health.

What impact has 'The Social Dilemma' had on public discourse about social media?

The documentary has sparked widespread conversations about the ethical responsibilities of social media platforms, the need for regulation, and the importance of understanding the psychological effects of technology on society.

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Explore thought-provoking 'The Social Dilemma' discussion questions to spark meaningful conversations. Learn more about the impact of social media today!

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