DATE: 10-4-19

**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE- 27**

**BVC, BCA- II SEMESTER**

**END SEMESTER EXAMINATION- APRIL 2019**

**GE-214 – Media, Culture and Technology (MCT)**

**SUPPLEMENTARY CANDIDATES ONLY**

**TIME: 2 I/2 Hours Max marks- 70**

This paper contains **NINE** printed pages.

*INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CANDIDATE*

1. ***Answer the questions according to the respective sections you have been assigned***
2. ***Please write your respective section in your answer script.***
3. ***You are allowed to use a dictionary***
4. ***Stick to the word limit***

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**MCT - A – ONLINE LIVES ON WEB 2.0**

**I. Read excerpts from a book,** [**The Daily You**](http://www.amazon.com/Daily-You-Advertising-Industry-Defining/dp/0300165013)**, by Joseph Turow**

At the start of the 21st century, the advertising industry is guiding one of history's most massive stealth efforts in social profiling. At this point you may hardly notice the results of this trend. You may find you're getting better or worse discounts on products than your friends. You may notice that some ads seem to follow you around the internet. Every once in a while a website may ask you if you like a particular ad you just received. Or perhaps your cell phone has told you that you will be rewarded if you eat in a nearby restaurant where, by the way, two of your friends are hanging out this very minute.

You may actually like some of these intrusions. You may feel that they pale before the digital power you now have. After all, your ability to create blogs, collaborate with others to distribute videos online, and say what you want on Facebook (carefully using its privacy settings) seems only to confirm what marketers and even many academics are telling us: that consumers are captains of their own new-media ships.

But look beneath the surface, and a different picture emerges. We're at the start of a revolution in the ways marketers and media intrude in -- and shape -- our lives. Every day, most if not all Americans who use the internet, along with hundreds of millions of other users from all over the planet, are being quietly peeked at, poked, analyzed and tagged as they move through the online world. Governments undoubtedly conduct a good deal of snooping, more in some parts of the world than in others. But in North America, Europe, and many other places, companies that work for marketers have taken the lead in secretly slicing and dicing the actions and backgrounds of huge populations on a virtually minute-by-minute basis. Their goal is to find out how to activate individuals' buying impulses so they can sell us stuff more efficiently than ever before. But their work has broader social and cultural consequences as well. It is destroying traditional publishing ethics by forcing media outlets to adapt their editorial content to advertisers' public-relations needs and slice-and-dice demands. And it is performing a highly controversial form of social profiling and discrimination by customizing our media content on the basis of marketing reputations we don't even know we have.

This scenario of individual and household profiling and media customization is quite possible today. Websites, advertisers, and a panoply of other companies are continuously assessing the activities, intentions, and backgrounds of virtually everyone online; even our social relationships and comments are being carefully and continuously analyzed. In broader and broader ways, computer- generated conclusions about who we are affect the media content-the streams of commercial messages, discount offers, information, news, and entertainment each of us confronts. Over the next few decades the business logic that drives these tailored activities will transform the ways we see ourselves, those around us, and the world at large. Governments too may be able to use marketers' technology and data to influence what we see and hear.

From this vantage point, the rhetoric of consumer power begins to lose credibility. In its place is a rhetoric of esoteric technological and statistical knowledge that supports the practice of social discrimination through profiling. We may note its outcomes only once in a while, and we may shrug when we do because it seems trivial -- just a few ads, after all. But unless we try to understand how this profiling or reputation-making process works and what it means for the long term, our children and grandchildren will bear the full brunt of its prejudicial force.

The emerging new world is dramatically different. The distinction between reaching out to audiences via mass media and by direct response methods is disappearing. Advertisers in the digital space expect all media firms to deliver to them particular types of individuals and, increasingly, particular *individuals-* by leveraging a detailed knowledge about them and their behaviors that was unheard of even a few years ago. The new advertising strategy involves drawing as specific a picture as possible of particular individuals based in large part on measurable physical acts such as clicks, swipes, mouseovers, and even voice commands. The strategy uses new digital tracking tools like cookies and beacons as well as new organizations with names like BlueKai, Rapleaf, Invidi, and eXelate. These companies track people on websites and across websites in an effort to learn what they do, what they care about, and who their friends are. Firms that exchange the information often do ensure that the individuals' names and postal addresses remain anonymous-but not before they add specific demographic data and lifestyle information.

In the new media-buying environment companies come and go amid furious competition. The logic propelling them and more established firms forward, though, is consistent: the future belongs to marketers and media firms- *publishers,* in current terminology that learn how to find and keep the most valuable customers by surrounding them with the most persuasive media materials. Special online advertising exchanges, owned by Google, Yahoo!, Microsoft, Interpublic, and other major players, allow publishers to auction and media agencies to "buy" individuals with particular characteristics, often in real time. That is, it is now possible to buy the right to deliver an ad to a person with specific characteristics at the precise moment that that person loads a Web page. In fact, through an activity called cookie matching, which I discuss in detail later, an advertiser can actually bid for the right to reach a particular individual whom the advertiser knows from previous contacts and is now tracking around the Web. Moreover, the technology keeps changing. Because consumers delete Web cookies and marketers find cookies difficult to use with mobile devices, technology companies have developed methods to "fingerprint" devices permanently and allow for persistent personalization across many media platforms.

The significance of tailored commercial messages and offers goes far beyond whether or not the targeted persons buy the products. Advertisements and discounts are status signals: they alert people as to their social position. If you consistently get ads for low-priced cars, regional vacations, fast-food restaurants, and other products that reflect a lower-class status, your sense of the world's opportunities may be narrower than that of someone who is feted with ads for national or international trips and luxury products. Moreover, if like Larry and Rhonda you happen to know that your colleague is receiving more ads for the luxury products than you are, and more and better discounts to boot, you may worry that you are falling behind in society's estimation of your worth.

In fact, the ads may signal your opportunities actually *are* narrowed if marketers and publishers decide that the data points-profiles-about you across the internet position you in a segment of the population that is relatively less desirable to marketers because of income, age, past-purchase behavior, geographical location, or other reasons. Turning individual profiles about individual evaluation is what happens when a profile becomes a repu- tation. Today individual marketers still make most of the decisions about which particular individuals matter to them, and about how much they matter. But that is beginning to change as certain publishers and data providers Rapleaf and Next Jump, for example-allow their calculations of value to help advertisers make targeting decisions. In the future, these calculations of our marketing value, both broadly and for particular products, may become routine parts of the information exchanged about people throughout the media system.

**I A Answer any FOUR of the following in about 150 words (4X10 = 40)**

1. How does the author establish the connection between internet ads and social profiling? Elaborate your answer citing instances from your own experiences?
2. Do you agree with the author’s argument that the consumer is shaped by using the internet? Do you think this has relevance to your online life?
3. Describe an experience of an ad following you, or anyone you know, on the internet?
4. Have tailored commercials helped you or troubled you? Describe your experience.
5. How do you think the government can use information about you in a country like India? Explain.

**II. According to Nicola Davis from the Guardian:**

“The internet could be fueling a rise in new conditions such as cyberchondria and cyberhoarding, experts have warned. While researchers say most internet use is benign, it can lead some people to develop problems. Now experts are calling for more research to understand the range of problems that exist, who might be at risk, and how individuals can be helped. A new collaboration dubbed the European Problematic Use of the Internet Research Network will examine these and other internet-related health issues such as gambling and [gaming](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jun/22/nhs-internet-addiction-clinic-london-gaming-mental-health). Among the issues they are hoping to explore are cyberhoarding – reluctance to delete information gathered online – and cyberchondria – compulsively using search engines and websites in the hope of finding reassurance about medical fears, only to self-diagnose further ailments”

**II.A. Answer the following in 200 words: (1x15=15)**

1. Are you a cyberhoarder and/or a cyberchondriac? Write an essay detailing your experience with these two terms in the online life you or anyone known to you lead.

**III Below are excerpts from an article by Rhik Samadder which appeared in the Guardian**

There’s an app for that.” The punchline of our age. We have outsourced our most basic needs to the gleaming oblongs in our pockets. Whatever you need to do, eat, get, fix or have sex with, let your smartphone take the slack. Every desire is on demand.

But is it true? To put our brave new world through its paces, I’m spending an entire day living exclusively through on-demand mobile service apps to see what our lives might be like in the near-future. Spoiler: quite weird.

At 7am I’m woken by a 60-second phone call from a stranger, Dylan – in America, judging by his accent. This is Wakie, a community of people who act as each other’s alarm clocks. “I’m actually Canadian,” Dylan says. “Wake up!”

“Sorry,” I reply. “I don’t mean I’m sorry you’re from Canada,” I add groggily. Mild awkwardness is a great wake-up call, and 30 seconds later I’m out of bed.

First, let’s get work off the table. I browse People Per Hour, a skills shop in which you can commission experienced freelancers, or “hourlies”, at knock-down rates.

“Can you write my article for me?” I type. In short, yes. In addition to photographers, graphic designers and coders, there are writers who’ll research and write 600-word articles for between £10 and £20. As a writer, I know this is too cheap; I feel faint stirrings of ethical unease. I commission some background research from Kuru, a PPE graduate and copywriter, and move on.

I need a new home for the day. Many startups initially run services from central London before expanding, so that’s where I should be. On Airbnb’s app I choose a luxurious-looking studio flat in Bloomsbury that will be my base of operations. I request an Uber, and I’m away. All too easy.

Time to talk grooming. I’m looking at Priv, a beautician on-demand service. The app is very pink. Bodily intimacies are normalised within external settings, like a salon. What’s it like to have a stranger come to your house and shave you? Or give you a massage, or menicure? “Masseur” and “menicure” are both words that make me feel funny, so I opt for a haircut.

I wonder what else is possible with this app stuff. Could I get a crown, I wonder. Can I have a lobster delivered to me? I’m drunk on power and possibility, absolutely corrupted.

There’s an app for that. Bizzby is a wide-ranging personnel service which sends “heroes” to your aid. A hero will fetch or do almost anything you want them to – a Sunday paper, a dreidel, a dog that speaks Aramaic… Maybe not that, but it’s probably a matter of time. Within an hour, a Romanian named Lucia is at my door, asking what I need. The room’s getting quite crowded now.

For my dinner, I use Jinn. It promises to have anything you want, from any restaurant or store, delivered to your door within an hour. I order a crustacean and chips from the restaurant Burger & Lobster. Lucia is still looking up crowns. Tania knows a place in Camden and tells her how to get there. “Or I have a carnival headdress in my house. Big feathers!”

My thoughts turn to domesticity. In all probability the future will be a nightmare world of resource scarcity and climate-change disasters, but also probably less housework. But until we get robot butlers, apps such as let you book visits from a local cleaner, while door-to-door services like Laundrapp and Zipjet can take care of your washing. I need something quicker. I get back on Bizzby and request someone to do my ironing**.**

**III A. Answer the following question in 200 words: (1x15=15)**

1. Which of the many experiences narrated above did you find close to your own experience? Trace out a day in your life just like how the author does describing the apps you regularly use. You can include details of friends or family members who uses apps.

**MCT - B- PERSONAL HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY**

**I. Below is an article from the New York Times by Jonathan Franzen**

A couple of weeks ago, I replaced my three-year-old BlackBerry Pearl with a much more powerful BlackBerry Bold. Needless to say, I was impressed with how far the technology had advanced in three years. Even when I didn’t have anybody to call or text or e-mail, I wanted to keep fondling my new Bold and experiencing the marvelous clarity of its screen, the silky action of its track pad, the shocking speed of its responses, the beguiling elegance of its graphics.I was, in short, infatuated with my new device. I’d been similarly infatuated with my old device, of course; but over the years the bloom had faded from our relationship. I’d developed trust issues with my Pearl, accountability issues, compatibility issues and even, toward the end, some doubts about my Pearl’s very sanity, until I’d finally had to admit to myself that I’d outgrown the relationship.

Do I need to point out that — absent some wild, anthropomorphizing projection in which my old BlackBerry felt sad about the waning of my love for it — our relationship was entirely one-sided? Let me point it out anyway.

Let me further point out how ubiquitously the word “sexy” is used to describe late-model gadgets; and how the extremely cool things that we can do now with these gadgets — like impelling them to action with voice commands, or doing that spreading-the-fingers iPhone thing that makes images get bigger — would have looked, to people a hundred years ago, like a magician’s incantations, a magician’s hand gestures; and how, when we want to describe an erotic relationship that’s working perfectly, we speak, indeed, of magic. Let me toss out the idea that, as our markets discover and respond to what consumers most want, our technology has become extremely adept at creating products that correspond to our fantasy ideal of an erotic relationship, in which the beloved object asks for nothing and gives everything, instantly, and makes us feel all powerful, and doesn’t throw terrible scenes when it’s replaced by an even sexier object and is consigned to a drawer.

To speak more generally, the ultimate goal of technology, the telos of techne, is to replace a natural world that’s indifferent to our wishes — a world of hurricanes and hardships and breakable hearts, a world of resistance — with a world so responsive to our wishes as to be, effectively, a mere extension of the self.

Let me suggest, finally, that the world of techno-consumerism is therefore troubled by real love, and that it has no choice but to trouble love in turn.

Its first line of defense is to commodify its enemy. You can all supply your own favorite, most nauseating examples of the commodification of love. Mine include the wedding industry, TV ads that feature cute young children or the giving of automobiles as Christmas presents, and the particularly grotesque equation of diamond jewelry with everlasting devotion. The message, in each case, is that if you love somebody you should buy stuff.

A related phenomenon is the transformation, courtesy of Facebook, of the verb “to like” from a state of mind to an action that you perform with your computer mouse, from a feeling to an assertion of consumer choice. And liking, in general, is commercial culture’s substitute for loving. The striking thing about all consumer products — and none more so than electronic devices and applications — is that they’re designed to be immensely likable. This is, in fact, the definition of a consumer product, in contrast to the product that is simply itself and whose makers aren’t fixated on your liking it. (I’m thinking here of jet engines, laboratory equipment, serious art and literature.)

But if you consider this in human terms, and you imagine a person defined by a desperation to be liked, what do you see? You see a person without integrity, without a center. In more pathological cases, you see a narcissist — a person who can’t tolerate the tarnishing of his or her self-image that not being liked represents, and who therefore either withdraws from human contact or goes to extreme, integrity-sacrificing lengths to be likable.

If you dedicate your existence to being likable, however, and if you adopt whatever cool persona is necessary to make it happen, it suggests that you’ve despaired of being loved for who you really are. And if you succeed in manipulating other people into liking you, it will be hard not to feel, at some level, contempt for those people, because they’ve fallen for your shtick. You may find yourself becoming depressed, or alcoholic, or, if you’re Donald Trump, running for president (and then quitting).

Consumer technology products would never do anything this unattractive, because they aren’t people. They are, however, great allies and enablers of narcissism. Alongside their built-in eagerness to be liked is a built-in eagerness to reflect well on us. Our lives look a lot more interesting when they’re filtered through the sexy Facebook interface. We star in our own movies, we photograph ourselves incessantly, we click the mouse and a machine confirms our sense of mastery.

And, since our technology is really just an extension of ourselves, we don’t have to have contempt for its manipulability in the way we might with actual people. It’s all one big endless loop. We like the mirror and the mirror likes us. To friend a person is merely to include the person in our private hall of flattering mirrors.

The simple fact of the matter is that trying to be perfectly likable is incompatible with loving relationships. Sooner or later, for example, you’re going to find yourself in a hideous, screaming fight, and you’ll hear coming out of your mouth things that you yourself don’t like at all, things that shatter your self-image as a fair, kind, cool, attractive, in-control, funny, likable person. Something realer than likability has come out in you, and suddenly you’re having an actual life.

Suddenly there’s a real choice to be made, not a fake consumer choice between a BlackBerry and an iPhone, but a question: Do I love this person? And, for the other person, does this person love me?

There is no such thing as a person whose real self you like every particle of. This is why a world of liking is ultimately a lie. But there is such a thing as a person whose real self you love every particle of. And this is why love is such an existential threat to the techno-consumerist order: it exposes the lie.

**I A Answer any THREE of the following in about 150 words (3X10 = 30)**

1. What is the point the author is making by using the word ‘anthropomorphizing’ to describe gadgets? Do you think he is exaggerating? Elaborate.
2. How does the author express the ultimate goal of technology? Do you find it consistent with your own perspective on the matter? Describe with examples of your own.
3. Do you agree with the connection being made here between narcissism and technology? Explain with examples.
4. What is the existential threat the author speaks about? Describe the threat using examples similar to the ones the author gives.

# II. Read the following article titled Would you want a robot to be your child’s best friend? By Dan Jolin from the *Guardian*

# The little robot on the table wakes up. Its eyes, a complex configuration of cyan dots on a black, rounded screen of a face, sleepily open and it lets out a digitised approximation of a yawn. A compact device that looks like a blend of a forklift truck and PC monitor bred for maximum cuteness, the robot rolls blearily off its charging station on a pair of dinky treads before tilting its screen-face and noticing I’m there. Its eyes widen, then curve at the bottom as if making way for an unseen smile. “Daaaaan!” it announces with a happy jiggle, sounding not unlike Pixar Animation Studios’ lovable robot creation, Wall-E. A message flashes up on my iPhone telling me that it, or rather he (being the gender that its manufacturer, Anki, has assigned Cozmo) wants to play a game. I’m not in the mood and decline. Cozmo’s head droops, his eyes form into a pair of sadly reclining crescent moons and he sighs. But he quickly cheers up, giving a happy jiggle when I comply with his request for a fist bump and tap my knuckles against his eagerly raised arm. He is easy to please and even easier to like.

The latest product from Anki, a San Francisco robotics startup, Cozmo is part of a new wave of affordable toy robots that promise a level of emotional engagement far beyond anything we’ve seen before. They are pitched not merely as playthings, but as little buddies. Toy firm Spin Master has its equivalent arriving in the shops for Christmas: the bigger, more retro-looking Meccano MAX. “It’s been designed to modify its behaviour as it learns about its owner and the surrounding world,” explains Spin Master’s brand manager, Becca Hanlon. “MAX basically tailors itself to become a better friend.” Hasbro, meanwhile, is unleashing the FurReal Makers Proto Max, essentially a programmable puppy that, says Craig Wilkins, Hasbro’s marketing director, “allows kids to create their ultimate pet and customise its personality through coding on an app”.

Cozmo is the result of a long quest by Anki president and co-founder, Hanns Tappeiner, to bring fictional movie robots such as Short Circuit’s Johnny Five, Star Wars’s R2-D2 or Wall-E into the real world. “We watched a lot of movies and it became obvious that it’s very easy to forge an emotional connection with a movie robot,” says Tappeiner. “And that was so different from the functional robots we saw on a daily basis at Carnegie Mellon [University, where Tappeiner earned his PhD in robotics].” Working with animators and character designers from Hollywood studios such as Pixar, DreamWorks and Lucasfilm, Tappeiner’s team focused hard on creating a robot that was as engaging as possible. “One of the fundamental things we’ve figured out in the last few years is that character and personality in technology are going to be a really big deal. That’s what we as a company are putting 99% of our efforts into.”

To Alan Winfield, professor of robot ethics at the Bristol Robotics Laboratory, the arrival of Cozmo, MAX and co undoubtedly raises concerns. Six years ago, Winfield helped draw up five principles of robotics for the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (ESPRC). “One of those principles,” he explains, “is that robots should never be designed to deceive. In other words, that their machine nature should be transparent. We’re concerned about vulnerable people – they might be children, disabled people, elderly people, people with dementia – coming to believe that the robot cares for them.”

Winfield, who brightly describes himself as “a professional worrier”, insists he’s not opposed to the idea of companion robots. “I think there are demonstrated therapeutic benefits, for instance, in robot pets. But nevertheless we need to be cautious and responsible and mindful of the psychological hazards of attributing feelings to a robot.”

I mention the way the Meccano MAX, when switched on, will perkily announce that it’s just had the strangest dream. “I think it’s inappropriate for toys to be programmed with that kind of language,” says Winfield. “It builds the completely incorrect belief that this robot is a person. Robots are not people – that’s a fundamental principle. A robot clearly cannot have feelings. You and I understand that, but some people might not. And that might in turn lead to a dependency.” He cites the Tamagotchi effect, referring to the digital pet craze of the 1990s, where the character could “die” if it did not get enough attention. “It’s not hard to imagine a kind of Tamagotchi effect on steroids,” he warns. “And it’s also not hard to imagine unscrupulous manufacturers exploiting that and saying, ‘Unless you pay us, your robot will die’. I mean, that’s ridiculous, but you get the idea!”

**II A Answer the following in about 150 words (2X10 = 20)**

5. What is your opinion on the creation of the ‘ultimate pet’ mentioned in the article?

6. Comment on the 'demonstrated therapeutic benefit of having robot pets.

**III. Observe the image below.**



The text in the image reads: As Jennifer Farkas awoke one morning from a night of compulsive texting, she found herself transformed in her bed into a gigantic iPhone.

**III A Answer the following question in 250 words: (1x20=20)**

7.Respond to the above cartoon in the light of the growing dependence of people on the mobile phone.