Part 1: Social Media and Advertising

In our technologically advanced world, nearly all individuals with a cell phone are on some form of social media; whether that be Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and things of the like. Of the entire U.S. population, there are approximately 78% of people on some form of social networking site (“Social Media Statistics & Facts”). With this much attention being paid to people’s mobile devices, advertisers now have the perfect audience to market their various products and services to. As our technology continues to grow, so do our social networking capabilities. This in turn leads to a growing number in advertisements across the digital world.

How does a company get the word out about their product to the world? The obvious answer is advertisements. Advertising doesn’t need to 100% sell their product to a customer, all it has to do is make their brand memorable in the minds of the average person. The goal with any company, brand, product, and what have you is to remain relevant to the world. Anyone can name any big brand just because of how relevant their name is. Nowadays, the ways people become and remain relevant is through the internet, internet users know this and so do advertisement companies. This simple concept has spawned an advertisement big bang,
so to speak. Mobile advertisement used to be a very minimalist thing as ads were very small in terms of the screen and used to be few and far between. Now, however, one cannot open up Twitter and scroll through their feed without being forced to view some sort of promotional ad. The ever-growing presence of advertisements in the digital world is the perfect way to market to the technologically adept, predominantly being the millennial generation. But for what reason are we seeing this surge in ads?

According to an article by Malathi Nayak on Reuters.com, the increase in advertisements on social media outlets is a result of the limited and shrinking “reach of free social marketing, according to a report from research firm Gartner.” Not only is the number of advertisements increasing, but these ads are paid advertising. No longer is social media marketing relying on free marketing tools but now must resort to paid for ads to maintain their relevancy.

While I understand from a business perspective that advertisement is necessary in order to keep up with relevancy as well as helping these social media outlets make a profit of sorts, there are many downsides as a social media user. My personal problem with the surge in the presence of digital advertisement dilutes the feed that I, as a user, actually care about. Moreover, many of the ads I see, depending on the type of social media, are irrelevant to my interests. This creates an even more frustrating experience when using my social media. It is one issue to be forced to view ads, but it is another issue entirely if these ads are irrelevant and useless to me.
The use of advertisements across social media and the internet in general related to our lecture discussion regarding ethics and ethical use of the internet. Some argue the ethics of people being forced to view advertisement which interferes with their user experience. We as the average user have no say in what ads we can and cannot view within our social media pages. I feel the sad truth is we will see no decrease in digital advertising across social media platforms, yet I do feel that there will not be another large noticeable burst in its presence.
Works Cited:


Part 2:

Television show: Silicon Valley

Season 1 Episode 08

Silicon Valley is an HBO original show which covers the escapade of protagonist Richard Hendricks, a nerdy but lovable coder, and his gang of coders/best friends: Erlich, Danesh, Gilfoyle, Bighead, and others. The entire crew worked at a huge tech company called Hooli, a company with the persona and power of google in real life. Richard created an algorithm which would allow for data compression on a scale never before seen, which he has named “Pied Piper”. Upon realizing the diversity with which his masterpiece of an algorithm can be applied to technology, Richard and his gang of merry friends leave their jobs from the tech giant in hopes of starting up their own company.

However, as Richard and his friends think their plan will go smooth sailing, many problems occur on the road to their eventual success. Their ex-employer and CEO of Hooli, Gavin Belson, is out to mimic Richard’s algorithm. This leads to a rivalry and competition in this episode where Richard and his team debut their program at a tech startup competition where one of the participants is Hooli with their own (lesser) version of Richard’s algorithm. Ultimately, Richard and his team win the competition after proving to judges just how capable
and applicable this program will be in the world. Their winnings, a $50,000 check to start what could be a multi-billion dollar company.

The greatest piece of technology within the entire show is Pied Piper (Richard’s algorithm). Essentially, this code has the ability to shrink files down to a shocking level while maintaining the data’s integrity throughout the process. What this means for the future of technology is that a significant amount of data can be shrunk down thus creating speed and quality like never seen before. This algorithm, from what the show states, has nearly no limits to its applicability across the various forms of technology, cell phones, computers, data storage, live streaming, video, etc. In real life, this type of technology is not available, yet in the show, it’s available to a select few, the creators and those who fund Pied Piper’s company. At this junction in the series, Pied Piper is not yet ready to be launched to the public for every user use. The reason it is not available yet is because Pied Piper is in its beginning stages. What Richard and his team need to do is get funded in order to create the final platform for Richard’s algorithm in order to present it to the world.

The technology that Richard and his team have created will be used to solve many problems with user interface and data storage/data manipulation. However, the versatility and strength of this program has its drawbacks. It can delete data just as quickly as it can compress and store it. In an episode of Silicon Valley, the gang, while working for an internet porn company, accidently deleted nearly a third of the adult content from the pornography company. Which while at face value, the deleting of the data is bad, the bright side is that the speed with which the program deleted is unparalleled.

The journey of Pied Piper and its team of coders is not an easy one. From the very get-go, Richard and his friends have hit snags and bumps in the road. They’ve had part of their
algorithm stolen from competing companies, they’ve been sued for intellectual ownership of their algorithm, as well as having to deal with constant power struggles for the position of CEO for Pied Piper. Yet every single one of Pied Piper’s original team has found a way to fight through the adversity in order to get their algorithm out there to the world. While in the moment, they all have had their downs, their passion has carried them on and ultimately made them stronger individuals.

In my opinion, the technology within the show Silicon Valley is ethical. It has the ability to push out technology capabilities to the next level. What makes me believe ethical integrity of this algorithm is that Richard and his team want this product to not be limited to who it goes to. It would be technology for the people and fashioned in a way where no party could abuse it’s capabilities.

The thing about time and technology is that it is always growing, always progressing into something newer and better. Within 5 to 10 years, the use of Pied Piper’s technology could grow to become a revolutionary invention.
Works Cited
