



RESEARCH DOCUMENT

(RE)DIRECTION

ATTENTION

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ABSTRACT :

This project explores the Attention Economy, and how it is affecting our ability to give attention to our environment in the physical world. Our attention in the online sphere is the prime source of capital for large social media companies such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram due to the way their advertising models are built. Through participant observation I discovered Tristan Harris (2014) who discusses that these companies use a variety of aggressive tools of persuasion to ensure we stay engaged in our online worlds, which draws away from the physical realm. One key tool of persuasion that is used is showing a user only posts that the user would like, placing users into what Eli Pariser (2011) coined as a filter bubble. These filter bubbles construct individual realities for people due to the hyper personalisation of the online sphere.

This research asks, how can we reimagine the model that the Attention Economy is built on, in order to implement it into the physical sphere, so that we have the opportunity to engage with our spaces and connect within our shared reality rather than individualistic realities we live in online?

This research thus explores what the foundation and effects of this economy are and from that how we can rehumanize it.

To understand the concept of the Attention Economy better I departed from the literature of Jenny Odell (2019) and analysed it. Odell argues that the physical world is our last common reference point (148), and that there is an utmost need to deepen our attention rather than simply resisting the Attention Economy (120). Her idea of redirecting our attention to our natural surroundings provoked me to examine my own attention habits. I began by mapping out locations in public space where I am most vulnerable to falling for the Attention Economy, as well as using non-participant observation to analyse others in these points of vulnerability.

Through a variety of design experiments, I have created a public installation to entice people to rediscover their surroundings, by highlighting elements, engaging the senses and contrasting the shared reality experience to the individual online reality experience in these points of vulnerability.

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INTRODUCTION :

This research explores the inner workings of the Attention Economy, and how it can be implemented into the physical realm so that it can be rehumanized. This concept arose as I began deliberating with myself what social impacts of algorithmic advances and online hyper personalization are in today's society. This coincided with the release of Jeff Orlowski's film "The Social Dilemma", which inspired me to dive deeper into the topic.

In this research I have outlined what the Attention Economy is, explored the business model it is built off, together with what the persuasive mechanisms within this economy are to gain a deeper understanding of how to implement it in the physical sphere.

I have achieved this by a combination of research methodologies. I used participant observation, to gather information on my sub research questions, for example diving into the practice of Tristan Harris, an ex-Google design ethicist who speaks freely of the persuasive design in technology, along with the asymmetrical power balance between us and the machine that runs off our engagement (2017).

I also analysed a number of different literatures to explore diverse aspects of the attention economy, diving further into the work of Harris, along with Devangi Vivrekari's work on "Persuasive Design Techniques" to understand how the Attention Economy works. I explored the work of Eli Praiser (2011) in order to comprehend the causes and effects of what he coined as "Filter Bubbles". Throughout this research process, I found it difficult to discover ways in dealing with the Attention Economy that is not just surface level changing our online habits until discovering the work of Jenny Odell (2019). Her chapters "Chapter 2: The Impossibility for Retreat", "Chapter 4: Exercise in Attention" and "Chapter 5: Ecology of Strangers" inspired me greatly. Odell taught me that rather than resisting the Attention Economy completely, it would be far more beneficial for people to learn how to redirect their attention. For people to be able to regularly step away from the Attention Economy and have the ability to emerge themselves in the physical world. To do this we must, as Odell states, "re-render" how we see our world.

Following the analysis of Odell's work, I decided to explore my own relationship with the Attention Economy in public space. This led me to discover that there are points within public space in which I am more vulnerable to falling into the hands of the Attention Economy. As a follow up to this, I conducted a non-participant observation in which I discovered I was not alone in these points of vulnerability.

I found public benches to be the most interesting locations, as generally speaking they are located in environments which have a lot to offer. I carried out a number of design experiments in order to determine what the best method would be to redirect people's attention away from the Attention Economy and back into their environment.

How can we reimagine the model that the Attention Economy is built on, in order to implement it into the physical sphere, so that we have the opportunity to engage with our spaces and connect within our shared reality rather than individualistic realities we live in online?

3 //

WHAT IS THE ATTENTION ECONOMY :

3.1 // ATTENTION ECONOMY INTRODUCTION

The Attention Economy is the way in which our attention has become one of the most lucrative commodities today's society. This concept of attention economics was first introduced by Herbert A. Simon, an American economist who says;

“in an information-rich world, the wealth of information means a dearth of something else: a scarcity of whatever it is that information consumes. What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients.” (40).

To understand what the attention economy is and how it works, I used literary analysis along with participatory observation.

3.2 // ATTENTION DEFINITION

Before trying to understand what the Attention Economy is, I think it is important to define what attention itself is. According to the American Psychological Association attention is:

attention

n. a state in which cognitive resources are focused on certain aspects of the environment rather than on others and the central nervous system is in a state of readiness to respond to stimuli. Because it has been presumed that human beings do not have an infinite capacity to attend to everything—focusing on certain items at the expense of others—much of the research in this field has been devoted to discerning which factors influence attention and to understanding the neural mechanisms that are involved in the selective processing of information. For example, past experience affects perceptual experience (we notice things that have meaning for us), and some activities (e.g., reading) require conscious participation (i.e., voluntary attention). However, attention can also be captured (i.e., directed involuntarily) by qualities of stimuli in the environment, such as intensity, movement, repetition, contrast, and novelty.

3.3// BUSINESS MODEL OF THE ATTENTION ECONOMY

It is important to note that whenever a service is 'free', we are no longer the consumer but the product. This is why Jaron Lanier, an American computer philosophy writer, said that

"It's the gradual, slight, imperceptible change in your own behaviour and perception that is the product" (The Social Dilemma, 14:34).

But how did it become like this? Tim Kendall was brought into Facebook as the director of monetization in 2006. He was in awe of what Google had already begun, which was using advertising as their main source of income. Kendall described that he felt this business model to be "elegant" so he eagerly pushed Facebook to follow in Google's footsteps. Like a domino effect, one by one other companies followed suit until it became the norm.

Kendall in the Social Dilemma describes the forming of this standard model began by thinking "how can we get as much of this person's attention as we possibly can? How much time can we get you to spend? How much of your life can we get you to give to us?" (13:50-13:57). Monetization teams began to realise, the more of our lives we give to them the more information they will have on us. The more data they will have on who we are, the more they can predict what we will buy. Algorithms were built to create a clear image of who a consumer is, meaning

3.4// HOW DOES THE ATTENTION ECONOMY WORK?

As a result of an increasing number of social media companies entering the market, there is an increasing need for more aggressive tools to be created to persuade us to keep clicking, scrolling and watching on their platform rather than moving to their competitors.

Ex- Google design Ethicist Harris, testified for the US Senate hearing on "Persuasive Technology and Optimizing for Engagement" in June 2019. Here he described this race for attention as "the race to the bottom of the brainstem" (1:03). I find this depiction extremely vivid, and confronting. I see it as which social media company can hold you captive for the longest period of time by burrowing into the base of your brain, hijacking your basic human functions so that you can draw in the most amount of profit for them? Harris continues to explain these methods in an article for Medium called "How Technology is Hijacking People's Minds".

TOOLS OF PERSUASION :

1// PULL TO REFRESH

Harris describes this action to have the same effect on you as using a slot machine by giving you intermittent variable rewards. This motion has the same addictive qualities and gives you the same dopamine hit as in a casino, but here you pull and you are given a fresh set of content to consume (Medium.com).

2// REMOVING STOPPING QUEUES

Removing stopping queues means that you have an endless feed. Harris described this as if you had a glass of wine, and someone kept filling it up you would not know when to stop drinking. The same thing occurs when you remove stopping queues, you are not made aware of how far you have come so it is far easier to keep going. It allows you to distance yourself from the time you are spending scrolling. This method can also be seen in platforms such as Netflix and Youtube where they have Autoplay. The CEO of Netflix, Reed Hastings said that along with YouTube and Amazon-Prime their biggest competitor was sleep (Independent.co.uk).

3// PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Push notifications are there to instigate curiosity. These notifications are not always there to connect you with another human, for example getting a text message or a phone call. The majority of the time these are there to get you to go back into an application. Many of these social media companies use this to simulate the feeling of human interaction, for example Facebook sending you a notification that a friend of yours is interested in an event near you, Facebook is essentially acting as a puppet master in an effort to get you to spend more time on their platform (Vox, 1:20).

4 // RANDOMIZED TIMING OF NOTIFICATIONS

Social media companies send us these push notifications in intermittent intervals. When the delivery time of these notifications vary, it becomes unexpected and therefore interesting (Vivrekar, 30). This has the ability to disrupt your attention from other areas in our life much more, as we do not know or expect their arrival.

TOOLS OF PERSUASION :

5// COLOUR AND NUMBERS

The human eye gravitates to warmer brighter colours, particularly vibrant reds and oranges (Vox, 2:57). Along with using the bright vibrant colours, having a number next to icons creates the feeling of urgency, a to-do per se. This creates the feeling to get the number to 0 with dives into our “base desire for having order instead of chaos” (Vivrekar, 30).

6// FILTER BUBBLE

Another way in which these companies have such a strong hold on us is the fact that we feel as if these online spaces are ‘safe spaces’. We know what to expect, nothing will shock us too much. For example I have a vague presumption of what type of content I will see on my feed from exhibition openings on Facebook events to timelapses of paintings on Instagram. This is due to the fact I have been placed into a ‘Filter bubble’. This term was first coined by Eli Pariser in 2011, when he spoke about the dangers of a hyper personalised Internet in his book “Filter Bubble”.

The definition of the phrase, now in the Cambridge dictionary is:

Filter Bubble

a situation in which someone only hears or sees news and information that supports what they already believe and like, especially a situation created on the internet as a result of algorithms (= sets of rules) that choose the results of someone's searches:

These companies use the data they have on us to feed it into Artificial Intelligence in order to predict what we would like next. Harris even mentioned in the US senate that they can predict things about us before we even know it ourselves (3.33).

These supercomputers, which run each of these different social media companies want:

- To know who you are better so that they predict what you will like/who can advertise to you.
- To get you to spend the most amount of time possible on their platform.

When these two things come together, it makes sense why they adopted the scheme of showing us what we like, and only what we like. But when this happens at mass, we are no longer introduced to new or different ideas or perspectives. We begin to have a very flat view on the world. Pariser, while speaking at TED in 2011 describes how he noticed this shift. One day all of the conservative people that he followed just disappeared from his feed. Facebook had edited them out, without consulting him. He illustrated this as invisible, algorithmically editing of the web (TED, 1:30). This editing of what we see, so that we click on more things and spend more time on these sites can drastically change our perspective of the world around us. The web no longer is this open free platform, but one that is individually carefully curated to make us feel comfortable. Pariser goes on to say that “this moves us very quickly toward a world in which the Internet is showing us what it thinks we want to see, but not necessarily what we need to see” (3:09).

The filter bubble essentially is the world that you live in, where everything you see and hear in the online sphere is tailored, personalised to what you like the most to where you feel the most comfortable. What gets in your filter bubble depends on what you do, who you are, and who you surround yourself with. Pariser describes the main problem of this is that “you don’t decide what gets in and more importantly you don’t actually see what gets edited out”. And that is exactly it, when we don’t know what we don’t see, it’s very easy for us to believe that that world we see online, is the world everyone else sees too. “While Google and others are beginning to grapple with the consequences, most personalized filters have no way of prioritizing what really matters but gets fewer clicks. And in the end, “Give the people what they want” is a brittle and shallow civic philosophy.” (Pariser, 75-56). These filter bubbles mean that we all live in individual realities, which can greatly differ from person to person.

James Williams, a technology ethicist wrote in a blog on “Practical Ethics” in the University of Oxford:

“We experience the externalities of the attention economy in little drips, so we tend to describe them with words of mild bemusement like “annoying” or “distracting.” But this is a grave misreading of their nature. In the short term, distractions can keep us from doing the things we want to do. In the longer term, however, they can accumulate and keep us from living the lives we want to live, or, even worse, undermine our capacities for reflection and self-regulation, making it harder, in the words of Harry Frankfurt, to “want what we want to want.” Thus there are deep ethical implications lurking here for freedom, wellbeing, and the integrity of the self.”

I think it is the fact that these methods of persuasion appear to be subtle, yet even when I know about them I can not help but continue to fall for them. This means we need to find an alternative to our direction of attention, in order to overcome some of the effects.

4//

THE WORK OF JENNY ODELL :

HOW TO DO NOTHING: RESISTING THE ATTENTION ECONOMY.



SOURCE: penguinrandomhouse.com

To further understand the Attention Economy and what we can do about it, I dived into a book by Jenny Odell titled "How to do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy". Her chapters "Chapter 2: The Impossibility for Retreat", "Chapter 4: Exercise in Attention" and "Chapter 5: Ecology of Strangers" helped me understand another perspective when trying to deal with the Attention Economy.

"The Impossibility for Retreat" explores the numerous ways people tried to exit the norms in society, from the garden school of Epicurus to Camp Grounded, a digital detox retreat. Her description of these examples are all quite extreme, and are a demonstration of complete refusal of ongoing in society. But when I think about the Attention Economy it is extremely difficult to completely step away. These systems that make up the Attention Economy are also vital entities in our lives for example only studies, calendar, basic communication all run through the platforms that make up the Attention Economy.

But, what is a possibility, and what is a necessity for us to do, is to periodically retreat. Odell states that "we absolutely require distance and time to be able to see the mechanisms we thoughtlessly submit to". That by taking time apart, and briefly exiting the Attention Economy we can better understand what the Attention Economy is and what it does to us.

The chapter “Exercise in Attention” delves into what our attention is, and what it can bring when redirected or retrained. Odell discusses when she witnessed John Cage’s 4’33”, a symphony piece where he plays nothing. Where the sounds of people coughing, scooching chairs and awkward laughter of the concert hall make the piece. This highlighting of everyday sounds awakened something in her, giving her the ability to ‘hear better’ than she ever had before (101-102). This act of pointing out what is already there, was able to redirect her attention to these sounds outside of the concert hall and into the streets she walked everyday. I find this extremely interesting, how by emphasising a certain element can have a prolonged effect on a person’s direction of attention.

She goes on to describe this shift as:

“changes in rendering” (121), that when “you notice something once (or someone points it out to you)”, you begin to notice it everywhere.

This idea is something I would like to implement in my own work, giving people the ability to notice something once, so that they have the opportunity to notice it everywhere.

In relation to the Attention economy Odell points out that there is “more reasons to deepen attention than simply resisting the Attention Economy” (120). If we can find a way to deepen our attention towards what is around us, we can begin to live in what Odell calls a collective attention rather than individual attention. When we exercise this collective attention, we can see the shared reality in which we live in (126). Her way of identifying the physical world as this shared reality allowed me to see my research question in a new light. It created a clear visual of the dual realities we all live in. How online filter bubbles are making our online reality increasingly more individual whereas like Odell states this shared reality, our natural world, our surroundings, is the last common thing we share and we should learn to redirect our attention back to the common so that we have the ability to see beyond our online realities.

The fifth chapter “Ecology of Strangers” discusses the importance of interconnected relationships, both with other people and the bioregion around us. How understanding and having knowledge of the ecosystem around us can help us have the ability to pay attention to this shared reality.

Odell states she “[worries] that if we let our real-life interactions be corralled by our filter bubbles and branded identities, we are also running the risk of never being surprised, challenged, or changed - never seeing anything outside of ourselves, including our own privilege.” (138). That we in fact need to be surprised, challenged and changed and by redirecting our attention to our environment we have the opportunity for this to happen.

As the chapter continues, she compared the Attention Economy to an industrial farm. Where we can grow tall and straight, all next to one another without ever having to touch (153-154). But we as humans are social beings, and we have this embedded need to move, mingle and to be curious. The Attention Economy is taking our ability to do this away, piece by piece, little by little to the point we no longer notice the shift. But the shift is there. We as humans are “emergent and fluid wonders” (154) and we need to learn how to redirect our attention to the elements in life that allow us to flourish like this.

This book overall gave me a fresh perspective at looking at the ways we can handle the Attention Economy. In the initial stages of my research, when looking for ways to manage the Attention Economy I was bombarded with advice like turn your notifications off, make your phone black and white, only have necessary apps on your home screen etcetera. But I feel as if there is a deeper way we can deal with this, and Odell’s work has opened my mind to the possibilities. She has taught me the physical world is our last common reference point (148), and that there is an utmost need to deepen our attention in this sphere rather than simply resisting the attention economy (120), and engaging with our world around us is a wonderful way to do this.

5//

WHERE DO I WANT TO INTERVENE?

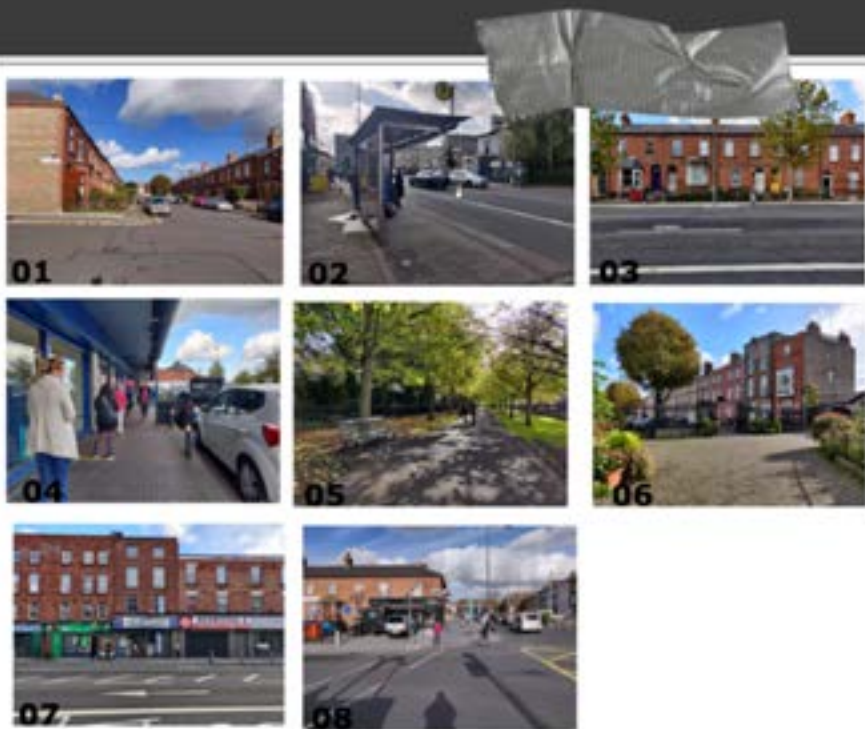
From reading the work of Jenny Odell, I found that public space to be an interesting point to attempt to intervene with the Attention Economy. I was curious at first, where do I personally feel like I am most susceptible to falling for the Attention Economy. **Where do I personally feel most vulnerable to sliding into the hands of this power?**

I began this research by simply going on a walk. This walk was in my home city, in Dublin, Ireland. I had not been there in 11 months due to Covid-19, and before my arrival I was getting quite homesick. So I felt like this is a good experiment to try on myself, as I had been longing to be in Dublin again, to see the streets, the people walking by and to just enjoy all the elements of the city I missed while being in Rotterdam so long. I tried to let myself act as natural as possible, taking note of the points in my walk where I couldn't resist the urge to take my phone out.

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MAPPING ON A WALK, THE POINTS IN PUBLIC SPACE THAT I WAS MUST VULNERABLE TO TAKING MY PHONE OUT, INSTEAD OF ENJOYING MY SPACE AND ENVIROMENT. DRUMCONDRA, DUBLIN.



- 01 EMPTY STREET
- 02 BUS STOP
- 03 WALKING ALONE
- 04 QUEING FOR SHOP
- 05 PARK BENCH
- 06 WAITING @ GATES
- 07 BUS STOP
- 08 TRAFFIC LIGHTS

SOURCE: powerplayalicia.hotglue.me

I resented myself a bit after this experiment. Why did I want to see so badly what was happening on Instagram, or who had posted about an event on Facebook especially when for the past 11 months I had been dreaming of just being present in Dublin City. I wanted to smell the smoke from the chimneys, hear that distinct Dublin accent from people as they passed me and see the way the distinct orange street lights interacted with the street. But even though I wanted this so badly, I let myself go and let my attention be diverted back into this online world, which I have access to at all times. I felt the need to intervene with the power structure in place, that was stopping me from doing what I had been thinking of for 11 months. It was at this moment I knew I wanted to intervene here.

The places in public space that I was vulnerable to falling into the Attention Economy consists of a variety of 'stopping places' in public space. But as I continued my research, by carrying out non-participatory observation I found others also had similar habits to mine. Public benches stood out to me the most. Not only was this the stop in which I saw most people engaged on their phone while out in public, but benches are also often located in parts of the city that have a lot to offer. For example in parks with trees, flowers, wildlife all around them. Or along canals looking onto the water that seems to catch the sunlight gracefully.

How can we get people to redirect their attention back to the physical world when they are at public benches so that they maybe have the opportunity to connect in the real world and not be a pawn in the Attention Economy? How can we rehumanise the tools that are used to draw us into the online world, so that we can use them in the physical world?

6//

THIS PROJECT x DECOLONIAL LISTENING



Audre Lorde

SOURCE: brainpickings.org



Rolando Vázquez

SOURCE: youtube.com

I have explored the work of Rolando Vázquez on decolonial listening and critiques of modernity. To see how decolonial listening is linked to this project, I want to begin by explaining what I understand decolonial listening to be. I see decolonial listening to be a form of studying, feeling, understanding and listening to individuals and stories who have been silenced due to a systemic structural power. This power is modernity. This modernity can be seen as the movement of time, development of ways of being and advancements in technology. Therefore, by listening to the silenced we have the opportunity to reawaken those pasts, presents and the future and have the ability to disrupt what we know modernity to be.

Vázquez mentions in his interview with Zoe Dankert that decolonial listening requires a “humbling of modernity” (149) and that “if you assume your view is the only view” (149) it can be exceedingly difficult to listen to what goes on beyond your framework of knowledge or understanding. I see this strongly relating to my research, whereas we are being placed into filter bubbles for the sole reason of optimal profit, our framework of knowledge is becoming increasingly smaller. We are in fact allowing this next phase of modernity, which is run by capitalism, to allow us to live in individualistic realities where people are systematically being silenced and removed from our feeds and worlds. We lose the opportunity to interact with one another outside of what we are given. As our lives become more, and more integrated into the platforms that bracket us into individual realities, and they develop stronger tools of persuasion to keep us engrossed in our individual realities we lose sight of what true reality is.

Vázquez goes on to ask, “How can you receive and relate realities and ways of thinking that do not belong to your framework of intelligibility?” (149). This got me thinking, if our online worlds are becoming increasingly personalized and algorithmically organized, giving us an extremely narrow window of knowledge, we can investigate the sphere in which these platforms do not (yet) have the power to curate our view.

This sphere is the shared reality we have, or better known as the physical world. If we have the ability to redirect people’s attention back into the real world, there is an opportunity for us to connect with others and expand upon our narrow window of knowledge as the people who pass in the real world have not been curated to pass you at a certain time nor have they been programmed to say something that will shock you into engaging with them. They are out of the hands and power of social media companies. Vázquez (151) describes futurity not as innovation but rather, as activating trajectories that have been erased. In this research, I have discovered that in a world that is so interconnected online, we are more disconnected than ever. So, for futurity to flourish we need to back track and find a way to engage with our physical space around us so that we have the opportunity to break out of our individual capitalistic realities and back into the shared reality. To regain the power to connect and communicate with who and what we want, and not just with who we are given.

Audre Lorde discusses in her essay “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” the importance of differences. We need to engage with people who have differences to us, in order to see, share and feel our similarities. She states “difference must not be merely tolerated, but seen as a fun of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic.” (11). She asserts the necessity for differences so that a more open conversation can begin. She continues with “the interdependence of mutual (nondominant) differences lies that security which enables us to descend into the chaos of knowledge and return with true visions of our future” (11). By living in these individualistic realities, there is this lack of knowledge sharing where no fresh dialogues can take place.

Therefore, by redirecting one’s attention back into the shared reality, one can expand upon one’s knowledge and listen to those who may have been silenced in one’s individual reality. Getting to know our differences so that an alternative narrative can begin to unfold.

Taking this decolonial option, there is this shift that can take place. Coloniality works to maintain the power of knowledge and distribution which in this project is the coloniality of technology. The social media companies and their filtering of what we see along with the aggressive tools of persuasion to keep us hooked. Decoloniality in this sense would be opening people’s eyes to the static world, where information and knowledge is more in the hands of the individual, disrupting the norm of filtered views. Modernity like this is anti-collectiveness. Once people begin to engage with their shared reality, doors can open to build a relationship between others and their shared environment to stave off this individualistic model that is advancing. Priorities can be altered and a future of a remolded modernity can be possible.

This project will focus on redirecting people’s attention back to their environment, allowing room for interpersonal and intersenses connections to take place.



HOW DO I WANT TO INTERVENE?

After exploring the foundations and the effects of the Attention Economy, the work of Odell, linking this research to Decolonial Listening and discovering where in public space both I and others are most vulnerable to falling into the hands of the Attention Economy, I have decided to create an installation experience to help people reconnect with the shared reality.

I have designed an installation that will help people to take some of the actions which Odell describes, so that we can allow futurity as Vázquez describes thrive. To entice curiosity in people using some of the persuasive tools of technology the Attention Economy has developed, but in the physical realm rather than online.

I also do find it important to illustrate how the Attention Economy creates us to be absent minded beings, who can scroll indefinitely even though it only engages two of our senses. I would like to make a comparison, or dual experience to really highlight the differences between the individual and shared realities.

My design research, along with my experimentations can be found on my Hotglue "Practice Sketchbook" page (Rottke Fitzpatrick, 2020).

<https://powerplayalicia.hotglue.me/>



CONCLUSION :

8.1 // MY PRACTICE PROJECT

This installation is designed to highlight elements within the environment, and encourages people to engage with their senses via tags that have been attached to the highlighted elements. From the bench itself, people are invited to scan a QR code which brings them to a website. This site confronts the person engaging with the installation with a variety of images I collected during my non-participant observations, of others also being fully engaged on their phone and their online individual reality. The person engaging with the installation, scrolls past these images before arriving at a message linking my research to their actions. There is this dual experience that occurs when one engages with this installation, discovering the shared reality alongside being confronted with the individual reality. This contrasting of journeys is to create a comparison between what it is like to be aimlessly scrolling and really using your senses and engaging with the space around you.

8.1 // RELATING PROJECT TO THE THEORETICAL

I have embodied some of my interpretations of Odells ideas into this installation, in an attempt in dealing with the Attention Economy. This installation is an opportunity for people to understand what it is like to periodically step away from the Attention Economy. By provoking people to use their senses, and activating the tools we have within us there is this opportunity for a re-rendering of how we experience a space. By guiding people to stop, they may notice something, which can lead them to notice it again and again. We as humans are curious shifting beings, but as the Attention Economy gives us 'what we want' we can lose this curiosity as we are no longer surprised, challenged or changed. This installation is an attempt to reignite this curiosity and discovery in the reality in which we share.

As my research question was "How can we reimagine the model that the Attention Economy is built on, in order to implement it into the physical sphere, so that we have the opportunity to engage with our spaces and connect within our shared reality rather than individualistic realities we live in online?" I wanted to include some of the design elements used in the Attention Economy in the installation.

Firstly the colour used to highlight the elements on and around the bench, a bright orange, is used because the eyes are naturally drawn to these warmer brighter colours. The same way many apps have warm and bright logos and notifications.

Secondly, like push notifications, creating this collection of elements around the bench can instigate curiosity. A milder version of a puppet master, connecting objects together to entice people to find out more.

Thirdly I have numbered the tags on the elements from 6-1, beginning with number 6 the QR code at the bench. This plays into the same method used in social media by numbering the amount of notifications we get there is this inner need to get from chaos to order. This also encourages people that there is more to discover, if number 6 is on the bench, there must be more around it.

I have also included some design elements that assist in bridging these two realities. The shape of the tags mimic an application with a notification. This allows for people to understand early on that the installation is linked in some way to the online world. On the tags that invite people to engage with their senses, I have the English word on them along with an emoji symbol that links to the action being asked. I choose this as it also initiates the idea that this project is associated with online experience, but also that emojis are a modern day universal language. Hopefully this can encourage people from a variety of linguistic backgrounds to engage with the installation.

Overall, my hopes with this installation are to show people how much their environment and shared reality have to offer. To point out what the Attention Economy does to us, and how individual it can be. Both the confronting images and the engaging with the senses play the part of pointing something out to somebody once, in hopes that they can notice it again. This noticing, hopefully can lead to a re-rendering of how we view our space around us, and our habits and role in the Attentioneconomy. My wish is that this installation can begin both internal dialogues with oneself, and dialogue with others so that we can regain the power of our attention.

8.1 // REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS

I thoroughly enjoyed this research process, as it has helped me to be more mindful of my actions and attitude towards my online world. What I wish to achieve with my installation is to share a fragment of what I have learned with others so that we can collectively begin to regain power of our direction of attention.

I have also enjoyed the challenging journey of understanding decolonial listening, and how it can be incorporated into more aspects of life. I think listening to erased stories is extremely important in allowing futurity to flourish.

Overall this minor has been a learning curve, from changing ideas, formulating research questions, morphing research into a practice project. Each stage had it's up's and down's, but it was this process that has allowed my project to develop into what it is.

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