MARIA REGINA ANGELORUM

CRUCI DUM SPIRO FIDO

LORETO COLLEGE

IN HOUSE JOURNAL

I.C.T SOCIETY

FOURTEENTH EDITION
2020-2021

CONNECT

IMPACT OF DIGITAL SURGE DURING COVID 19 AND BEYOND

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Note from the Principal's Desk

While digitalization has surged since the Pandemic has kept people boxed in the confines of their residences and 'work from home' has been the acceptable norm to enable connectivity across the board, it is undeniable that the digital divide exists, excluding certain sections of society from availing of the facilities offered thus. It is through the alleviation of poverty and enabling the availability of devices and bandwidth to reach rural and remote areas that this gap can be bridged. However, its impact on the environment could leave an irreversible and indelible damage for future generations from whom we have borrowed the earth.

Dependence on digital communication has increased significantly during the past 15 months. The enhanced use of digital devices in all fields has proved the 'smart means' through which information and relief has reached different spheres, thus bringing about a cultural change in essential services and in smaller and less publicized of areas of life.

While the 2020-2021 issue of 'Connect' explores the brighter side of advancement in digitalization, one needs to consider the shade as well. It is in critically thinking out of the box that seeds sown germinate. I thank Ms. Chandrani Sengupta, Dr. Soumya Dutta and Ms. Banerjee for enabling the student contributors to reflect on digital development during the Covid-19 Pandemic and in putting their thoughts to words. Appreciation to the team work involved in bringing forth 'Connect 2020-2021'.

Sr. Christine Coutinho
Principal

Note from Staff Advisors' Desk

The world around us is no longer the same. There have been unprecedented changes due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. People across continents have been forced to stay and work from home. There have been widespread job losses across various sectors. The migrant labourers and the daily wage earners have been badly hit. As the pandemic rages on with new variants threatening to affect more, we are witnessing one of the darkest phases of human history. However, the human spirit is always resilient and this too shall pass. The unprecedented situation has led to new modes of virtual communication. The education sector was among the first to adapt to the changing scenario. Classes started over various digital platforms. Students and teachers quickly overcame the initial hiccups of new platforms and went ahead with the pursuit of knowledge.

The National Education Policy 2020 promotes multi-modal approaches for learning which includes face-to-face, online and distance or virtual mode to deliver value-added and skill-development courses. The digital surge that we are witnessing now is an integral part of the future learning models. Though it cannot be a substitute for the face-to-face teaching-learning method a blended model is sure to widen the horizon of the learners as well as the teachers. The digital divide in a country like ours is an impediment. More and more access to digital platforms for the less privileged sections will augur well in the days to come.

Ms. Chandrani Sengupta
Dr. Soumya Dutta
Ms. Meghna Banerjee

Note from the Editors' Desk

With immense pleasure and gratitude, we write the editorial for this year's annual magazine of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) Society.

The theme chosen for this edition is "The Impact of Digital Surge During COVID-19 And Beyond" Given the ever-increasing importance of technology in our daily lives, particularly during the ongoing pandemic, digitalization has proven to offer both benefits as well as disadvantages. The purpose of this theme is to weigh out the pros and cons and realize what consequences it may have in the future. We asked students to present us with their varied perspectives on the topic and we were delighted to be met with enthusiastic participation, offering us a selection of material for publishing in our journal.

We would like to thank our Principal- Sister Christine Coutinho and our staff advisers- Ms. Chandrani Sengupta, Dr. Soumya Dutta and Ms. Meghna Banerjee for their invaluable guidance in making this magazine a success.

President - Anusoma Chatterjee
Vice President – Shweta Tiwari
Treasurer – Nandini Das

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EFFECT OF DIGITALISATION DURING COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an inevitable surge in the use of digital technologies due to the social distancing norms and nationwide lockdowns. People and organizations all over the world have had to adjust to new ways of work and life.

Increasing DIGITISATION

As the use of video and audio conferencing tools increases significantly, organizations will ramp up their technology infrastructure to account for the surge. This will lead to increased investment in bandwidth expansion, network equipment and software that leverages cloud services. With employees becoming acclimatized to the idea of work-from-home (WFH), meeting and transacting online, firms will shift to WFH as a norm rather than as an expectation. This is being adopted by many firms, which have the digital infrastructure in place to handle the required load and bandwidth.

Education is another domain in which there is a dramatic shift to the online mode of transacting. Since the beginning of the lockdown, schools, colleges and universities around the world have shifted their classes to video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google Meet. Some institutions are now shifting entirely to the online mode for the forthcoming academic year, with the exception of sessions that require a physical presence.

Blockchain (BC) technology presents an opportunity to create secure and trusted information control mechanisms. As education and healthcare services witness a shift to the digital domain, BCs enable a way to secure and authenticate certificates, health records, medical records and prescriptions. Research on the design of such systems, along with maintaining their ease-of-use will gain importance. Another issue is that of designing systems that work with smart contracts- how the contracts are authenticated, how these contracts will be designed in a complex chain of processes with many agents involved, and how arbitration related to contracts will be handled.

WORK-FROM-HOME AND GIG WORKERS

The gig economy is driven by online platforms that hire workers on an ad hoc, short contract and mostly on an informal basis. Well known examples of these include Ola, Uber, Swiggy. During the lockdown, workers employed by these platforms have suffered heavily, as the

demand for their services, taxi rides, rentals have disappeared. Since these workers had no guaranteed salaries, their incomes dropped dramatically.

In the post-pandemic scenario, there is likely to be in the short term, a slow return of gig economy workers, as manufacturing and service firms return to their old activities. However, it is anticipated that in long term as the threat of infection and spread recedes, the gig economy will thrive.

Work-from-home and gig work have received great attention through topics in telecommuting, digital nomads and virtual teams. One key issue is that of work allocation and collaboration across and inside teams and across projects. This issue will face a rise in scale and importance in the post-pandemic world, as the numbers of WFH and gig workers increase.

WORKPLACE MONITORING AND TECHNOSTRESS

Another aspect of digital use by large sections of the working population is that of constant workplace monitoring and being on the job continuously. Those working from home using video conferencing technology find themselves under intense scrutiny. Digital technology makes it easier for bosses and managers to call subordinates at any time, knowing that they can be reached at all times. Though there is anecdotal early evidence that this has led to an increase in productivity, it has also led to increased technostress where employees must learn new technologies, be available for work at all times, stay with digital devices all the time and cope with multitasking.

Post-pandemic, it is likely that workers' organizations will demand no digital hours, where they will find refuge from the constant work pressure.

ONLINE FRAUD

Along with the surge in the use of digital technologies, we are now witnessing a rise in online fraud, scams, intrusions and security breaches. The pandemic has created a scenario of insecurity that is inviting fraudsters to exploit the crisis situation by extracting money or information or by creating vulnerabilities.

Many users are beginning to rely on digital resources extensively, some for the first time and are becoming targets for fraud and scams. Organizations and governments are aware of this threat and are taking countermeasures- for instance some governments took a strong stand against Zoom sessions for education, forcing the platform provider to upgrade security.

It is likely that these scams and frauds will increase in intensity after the pandemic. Organizations will implement massive security arrangements, along with extensive information campaigns by government departments. Security innovations and firms that offer security services will rise.

INTERNET ACCESS AND DIGITAL DIVIDE

Information technology and particularly the internet will remain central to the post-pandemic scenario, where innovations will drive the surge in use. The regulation of the internet will become crucial after the pandemic as it will remain a policy tool for governments. They can intercede on aspects of monitoring, bandwidth control, surveillance, intermediary liability and e-commerce.

The pandemic has brought the world to a situation where those not connected to the internet are facing total exclusion. With strict social and physical distancing measures in place, new routines require accessing the internet for most services. Hence, those on the wrong side of digital divide are completely left out. Reasons for the divide are many: unaffordable device access, unaffordable internet access, government ordered internet shutdowns. In developing countries, the condition is more serious.

Thus it becomes extremely important to explore the possibilities of ensuring connectivity. Covid-19 has brought about a situation where internet access seems to have become necessary for survival. As a few studies have suggested, access or no access to ICTs may reinforce social inequalities, where the post-pandemic situation may enhance this further. With substantial use of technology in accessing basic requirements like health and education it is imperative to understand the impact of the digital divide on social equality.

To conclude, we can understand that a pandemic can have several consequences, including changing the political contour of the world, destroying empires and creating nations. For the Covid-19 pandemic we envisage a dramatic shift in digital usage with impacts on all aspects of work and life. How this change plays out remains largely dependent on our responses to and shaping of the emerging trends.

Adrija Giri,
History Honours, 1st Year

WORD SEARCH 1

F	Q	W	S	D	E	F	C	B	H	O	T	S	P	O	T	A	K	C
V	W	S	O	R	X	M	B	V	T	Z	M	C	W	J	E	L	U	O
F	F	M	E	U	I	S	O	L	A	T	I	O	N	H	X	W	G	N
E	D	L	N	S	A	F	D	H	Y	U	O	P	V	E	Y	H	R	T
V	A	Y	B	T	S	C	F	O	M	I	T	E	S	G	L	O	F	A
E	B	R	T	E	S	A	F	M	K	O	H	L	V	B	J	Y	S	I
R	S	D	Y	L	D	M	L	Q	U	A	R	A	N	T	I	N	E	N
G	Q	I	A	P	H	T	H	C	Z	A	R	F	W	Q	H	U	V	M
L	A	V	W	O	V	G	K	O	E	C	E	B	K	G	G	I	S	E
J	F	O	K	R	G	B	S	R	Y	N	S	F	T	R	U	Z	S	N
L	O	C	K	D	O	W	N	T	U	D	I	E	G	A	O	H	O	T
A	C	J	R	Q	Z	R	L	I	S	A	T	L	U	H	C	W	I	Z
Z	I	V	A	C	C	I	N	E	S	X	I	Y	N	U	I	U	M	O
H	E	K	D	L	B	G	J	A	Y	Z	N	P	N	O	J	H	K	N
G	P	Y	A	S	Y	M	P	T	O	M	A	T	I	C	S	A	R	E
G	F	J	W	M	C	N	M	A	S	K	S	H	J	O	G	N	N	L
S	O	C	I	A	L	D	I	S	T	A	N	C	I	N	G	P	O	Q

1. Covid
2. Wuhan
3. Fomites
4. Droplets
5. Cough
6. Fever
7. Asymptomatic
8. Quarantine
9. Isolation
10. Containment zone
11. Hotspot
12. Lockdown
13. Work from home
14. Online classes
15. Social distancing
16. Masks
17. Sanitiser
18. Vaccine
19. WHO
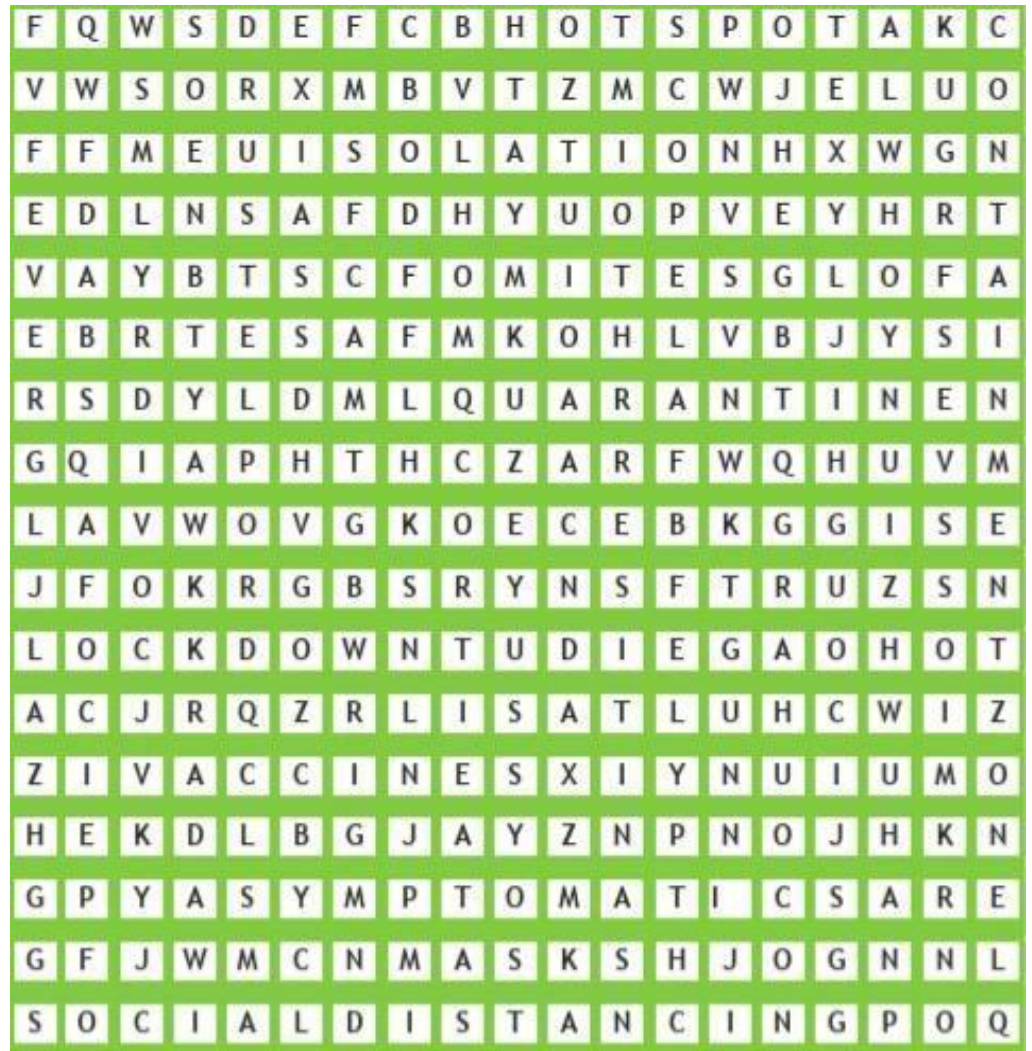
Annweshaa Chatterjee
Psychology Honours, 1st Year

SOCIAL LIFE = DIGITAL LIFE

Komal Kumari

English Honours, First Year

IMPACT OF THE INEVITABLE SURGE IN DIGITALIZATION

By late May 2020, at the time of writing of this article, over 200 countries and territories in the world were affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. This included most urban clusters and even rural regions. With the spread of the pandemic, almost all regions have implemented lockdowns, shutting down activities that require human gathering and interactions - including colleges, schools, malls, temples, offices, airports, and railway stations. The lockdown has resulted in most people taking to the internet and internet-based services to communicate, interact, and continue with their job responsibilities from home. Internet services have seen rises in usage from 40 % to 100 %, compared to pre-lockdown levels. Video-conferencing services like Zoom have seen ten times increase in usage, and content delivery services like Akamai have seen a 30 % increase in content usage. Cities like Bangalore have seen a 100 % increase in internet traffic.

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an inevitable surge in the use of digital technologies due to the social distancing norms and nationwide lockdowns.
An increase in digitalization is leading firms and educational institutions to shift to work-from-home (WFH). Blockchain technology will become important and will entail research on design and regulations. Gig workers and the gig economy is likely to increase in scale, raising questions of work allocation, collaboration, motivation, and aspects of work overload and presenteeism. By late May 2020, at the time of writing of this article, over 200 countries and territories in the world were affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. This included most urban clusters and even rural regions.

With the spread of the pandemic, almost all regions have implemented lockdowns, shutting down activities that require human gathering and interactions - including colleges, schools, malls, temples, offices, airports, and railway stations. The lockdown has resulted in most people taking to the internet and internet-based services to communicate, interact, and continue with their job responsibilities from home. Internet services have seen rises in usage from 40 % to 100 %, compared to pre-lockdown levels. Video-conferencing services like Zoom have seen ten times increase in usage.

Education is another domain in which there a dramatic shift to the online mode of transacting. Since the beginning of the lockdown, schools, colleges, and universities around the world have shifted their classes to video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google Meet. Further, since these workers had no guaranteed salaries, their incomes dropped dramatically.

In the post-pandemic scenario, there is likely to be, in the short term, a slow return of gig economy workers, as manufacturing and service firms return to their old activities. However, we anticipate that in the longer term as the threat of infection and spread recedes, the gig economy will thrive. This will also be driven by the WFH culture. The gig economy is driven by online platforms that hire workers on an ad hoc, short-contract, and mostly informal basis.

Well-known examples of these include Uber and Airbnb globally and Ola and Swiggy in India. These platforms have grown immensely since the wide availability of smartphones from 2010 onwards. During the lockdown, workers employed by these platforms have suffered heavily, as the demand for their services, taxi rides, rentals, or skill work, has disappeared (Bhattacharya, 2020). Further, since these workers had no guaranteed salaries, their incomes dropped dramatically.

In the post-pandemic scenario, there is likely to be, in the short term, a slow return of gig economy workers, as manufacturing and service firms return to their old activities.We anticipate that the "dark side" of virtual teams and dispersed work also assumes importance in the post-pandemic world. Substantive issues related to technostress - particularly work overload and presenteeism arise in these situations. Research will have to address issues of design of collaborative work, evaluation, team performance and motivation, stress, and the issue of continuous learning.

The lockdowns across countries have entailed a rise in the use of information systems and networks, with massive changes in usage patterns and usage behaviour. Employees are adjusting to new "normal" - with meetings going completely online, office work shifting to the home, with new emerging patterns of work. These changes have come across most organizations, whether in business, society, or government. The changes have also come suddenly, with barely any time for organizations and people to plan for, prepare and implement new setups and arrangements; they have had to adjust, try, experiment, and find ways that did not exist before.

The pandemic has brought the world to a situation where those not connected to the internet are facing total exclusion. With strict social and physical distancing measures in place, new routines require accessing the internet for most services. Hence, those on the wrong side of the digital divide are completely left out. Reasons for the divide are many: unaffordable device access, unaffordable Internet access, content relevance, access skills or government ordered Internet shutdowns. In developing countries, the condition is more serious.

 Thus, it becomes extremely important to explore the possibilities of ensuring connectivity.

Aparupa Rez
Geography Honours 1st Year

DIGITAL LIFE

all our lives are
ON the LINE
we're staring at life from behind
a SCREEN
our faces only light up when a
GADGET is up in our faces
living the DIGITAL life

Sharmi Chakraborty

History Honours, First Year

IMPACT OF DIGITALIZATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

We have all had a tremendous voyage of disease, unhappiness, and despondent, melancholy, and gloomy 2020. We have lost many of our dear ones. We have faced a situation which has shaken the world voraciously. This year was stacked with natural and man-made disasters, economic and mental collapse, bleeding healthcare and the untimely and unnecessary deaths of hundreds and thousands. No wonder we were all waiting for the year to end and find some peace of mind that it will all be over soon – and that 2021 will be better.

The unprecedented circumstances of 2020 made one wonder "When would it end?" No one seems to know the answer to this question. We can only make assumptions about how things might be in the coming future. All of us experience "negative" thoughts at some point in our lives. These thoughts could be understood as pessimistic thoughts which could be related to ourselves, others or the future. But we still learn to instill positive hopes in ourselves and wish for the best in future.

With the Covid-19 pandemic settled in almost all countries of the world, a huge number of people locked down in homes are relying on digital means to talk, meet, work, argue, read about the world, express their concerns, and share their hopes. The digital networks are buzzing. We are living in a world with an almost 100% rise in internet trafficking.

Just as digital media had made our work easier even during the lockdown, it also had many aftermaths. We see a rise in mischief-making, frauds, and scams. For instance, we have mischief-makers who infiltrate video calling sessions and hurl pornographic images at participants, usually during school and college online lectures. This has led many educational institutions around the world to ban Zoom conferences, and even the Indian government has issued warning notices.

Since all kinds of payments have shifted to online mode, it has created a fraudulent system for bank piracy by cyber criminals. Digital marketing has made life easier for us, as we can simply pay a merchant from our phone, without having to pull out our wallets and count cash, wondering if we have the change or the full amount. These are the readily visible possibilities. The possibilities of mobile payments encourage tricksters to engage in fraud. They see that people can be made to make payments remotely, so they find ways to lure them. Those

tricksters ask people to reveal their debit card numbers and one-time-passwords by posing as bank managers. Another trick is to ask people for their account details to give them a refund, and then relieving them of thousands. Tricksters understand the sleight-of-hand possibilities of mobile payments, and prey on victims remotely.

Everything has come up to be online. Children are attending schools and colleges through media, in a way being exposed to the screen for 8-7 hours a day. Increase in screen-time has also created health issues. Not just COVID-19 but also other factors specifically ill effects of the digital surge decreases life time. Workplace monitoring and techno stress issues will become prominent with an increase in digital presence.

The lockdown has resulted in most people taking to the internet and internet-based services to communicate, interact, and continue with their job responsibilities from home. Internet services have seen rises in usage from 40 % to 100 %, compared to pre-lockdown levels. Video-conferencing services have seen a ten times increase in usage, and content delivery services. Our estimation of these effects assumes that there was a digital transformation already underway, before the pandemic set in, and it will take certain forms owing to the impact of the lockdowns.

We examine the possible scenarios in this surge in information technology usage during and post the pandemic.

Ditsa Chakraborty
English Honours, 1st Year

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION DURING COVID 19 AND BEYOND

The COVID-19 outbreak has led to revised growth forecasts for the global economy. Every aspect of our lives has been affected by the outbreak. Its impact on economic activity is extremely broad: from dramatically diminished consumer discretionary spending to a freeze on business activities including capital budgets, hiring and a reduction in everything but essential operational expenses. Even so, it is clear that under the current conditions some businesses may become more critical to our lives and could face an increase in demand, such as in the case of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Industry.

According to IDC, more than 59 zettabytes (ZB) of data are going to be created and consumed globally in 2020 and this is forecast to grow to 175 ZB by 2025. How much is 1 ZB you ask? It is equivalent to a trillion gigabytes or 100 million HD movies worth of data. As it turns out, according to IDC, instead of hindering growth, particularly in 2020 and 2021, due to abrupt increases in work from home employees, a changing mix of richer data sets and a surge in video-based content consumption.

A primary motivation for assessing this issue was to understand how telecommunication networks have performed in the face of the pandemic-triggered lockdown. Along those lines, even if networks performed appropriately, could we identify any potential points of failure to be considered in future planning? Another concern that triggered the need to address the issue of impact on digital infrastructure was to understand whether the financial disruption caused by the pandemic was going to have an impact on the rate of deployment of advanced telecommunication technologies, such as 5G and FTTx.

The gradual deployment of prophylactic measures taken to deal with COVID-19, such as the closure of workplaces and home quarantine, has led to a spike in telecommunication network usage. Overall, internet traffic has increased by approximately 30%. The transition to telecommuting has brought about a shift from enterprise to residential access. Traffic no longer comes primarily from central business districts, shifting instead to residential areas. Similarly, in response to the lockdown, a portion of data traffic has shifted from mobile to fixed/Wi-Fi networks. Daily traffic patterns have also changed. Contrary to the period prior to COVID-19, internet traffic has started to surge in the morning at levels close to the evening peak, partly as

a result of telecommuting, but also driven by an increase in both the number of calls and their duration.

While the Digital Vs Print debate has been done to death, the topic has reared its head again as print industry looks to assert its significance in these tough and trying times. With newspapers not accessible to people amid the lockdown, digital platforms have become the number one source for networking, entertainment and information for most people. Television, especially news channels too have seen an escalation in viewership as more and more people tune in to keep themselves adhered on the latest developments.

With the growth of eyeballs, advertiser interest is also seen shifting toward digital platform. The newspaper companies too are very actively using their respective digital channels to distribute e-papers. New innovations and opportunities created by digital platforms will not only attract new users, but also advertisers. New trends on social media are on the rise. Virtual communications and virtual parties have picked up pace. Hashtags like #NetflixParty are trending on social media.

Last but not the least is securing data pertaining to organization, customer and other sensitive information. There is a surge in security breaches during the COVID-19 period mainly due to substantial increase in usage by working remotely. The recent example is about the security concerns highlighted in Zoom, wherein their management acknowledged that the product was not designed considering the sudden surge in the number of people using it remotely. Majority of us do not possess clairvoyance, but I am quite optimistic that once the crisis gets over, the global trade dynamics will change and the economies will bounce back stronger.

Hence, we need to stay prepared and course correct our digital strategies by plugging the gaps, wherever needed. The roundtable experts estimated that COVID-19 could be a window of opportunity to drive digital transformation in sectors in which it had not been a focus in recent decades. Similar to the effect of SARS in China in 2003 which triggered tremendous growth in e-commerce, new production modes would emerge.

As a result, COVID-19 global crisis too could become a catalyst for the adoption of digitalization in sectors where it had not occurred before, especially in more business-oriented applications. We understand that a pandemic can have severe consequences and devastating

repercussions, including changing the political contour of the world, destroying empires and so on. For the COVIS-19 pandemic, we envisage a dramatic shift in digital usage with impacts on all aspects of work and life. How this change plays out remains largely dependent on our responses to and shaping of the emerging trends.

Rinku Kumari
Education Honours, 1st Year

STAY HOME. STAY SAFE.

Sagarika Ganguly
History Honours, First Year

A DIGITAL PLANET

It made me bite my tongue with fear

When they said "Stay in. It's Covid dear"

At first it was all casual and bizarre,

Who knew it would go so far?

Then came up a sudden Lockdown

Roads got silent throughout my town

No touch, No meet, everyone kept in

Not wearing a mask became a sin.

To help the crowd in the markets fade

"SOCIAL DISTANCING"- a norm was made

Demand of sanitizers touched the sky

All so worried, so horrified to die!

But as the world was shut behind doors

Internet heard our crying roars

The focus shifted from the physical glam

To "What's Cooking?" on Instagram.

Purchase of tickets before the movie time

Became the subscriptions of Amazon prime.

A little hike in the annual bill

Oh, c'mon it's Netflix and Chill!

And guess what was raising the bar?

My mom's favourite Hotstar!

Technically it became the virtual map-

As for hours we stayed on WhatsApp

When Ludo King made me fight with my brother

There was Carom that brought us closer to one another

My friends and I hung out at Discord

Among Us held my highest record.

I became pro at what knew me as a noob-

Of course, I'm talking about YouTube!

Cue and balls suddenly became so cool

We all were obsessed with 8-ball pool.

Where Pub-G was the most downloaded game,

Fau-G came as the newer version of the same.

And in between these, I also had my birthday

"I need something new to wear"- was all I did say

With Myntra, Amazon and Flipkart around,

My perfect birthday dress was found!

"And what about the cake? "- I thought I had no choice;

But Zomato and Swiggy became my voice.

Their services felt so safe and healthy

With a promise of sanitation, they became trustworthy.

Besides the entertainment, education knocked:

The roads to schools and colleges were blocked.

Then came to rescue a healthy virtual treat

Classes were now conducted on Google Meet.

There was another app where we met our teachers,

It was Zoom with its amazing features

"Silence please" turned to "Mute your audio"

Videos shut, because the internet was slow

Sometimes it did feel that these classes were not so realistic

But professors did their best to keep us enthusiastic

And even beyond college hours they stayed in touch

So altogether, there was no problem as such

Gradually with covered faces, life came on streets

But for all this time we grooved on the Internet beats;

The world now depends on broadband connection

Social media holds all our affection.

And even beyond Covid-19, the Internet won't lose its charm

It's the only thing that has kept us in 'touch' without any harm.

'Home delivery' is so tireless and comfortable-

Just a click, and everything is available.

Amidst all the chaos, this new technical generation is born:

It's accurate to call it the "Wi-Fi Era" from now on.

And the people here will do just fine-

In the planet of online and offline.

Sanjana Khullar,
English Honours, 1st Year

IMPACT OF THE BIG BLOW THEORY

One could have never imagined the unfortunate break that 2020 – the evil eyed year had jinxed our lives with. The arrival of Covid-19 – the unwanted guest in our lives and it's following outcome could only be rightly picturized in 'The BIG BLOW Theory' we all experienced lately.

The BIG BLOW THEORY: Lives in the second decade of the 21st century have been subjected to a great leap when the normal world takes on a contactless journey and is still in the run. Such an inevitable and unwanted shift ultimately results in a big blow/shock which panics the soul and spills in endless frustration, which is not only legit but also a 'new normal', thus stands explained by the 'new' theory!

However, recovering from the frozen sate life was back in almost late May,2020, people have had found new ways of survival. Change is the only constant rule of nature. Man always knew how to abide by it and is no different now as well. Finding out not-so-seamless means to resume lives was another technically feat in the run. And this 'TECHNICAL' itself creates an automatic image of computer screens, tapping of keys on the board and everything 'DIGITAL' in the mind, doesn't it? Well, it should, because that is how it is! Covid-19 in a way has paved the way for a digital world. With every government machinery and work places being shut down in the initial days of the pandemic, another alternative way had to open it's doors. And guess what, Internet was the one to raise it's hands. Step by step, with every sort of job/work, education, finances, health and what not covering their own seat online, we only have the 'information technology' to thank abundantly and undoubtedly.

Though the present days witness minor change in the strict rules shaping our 'covid-struck' lives, with everything relaxing down a little and the opening of several work stations, the only living way to still keep the socially and physically distanced world together, nevertheless, lies in the Digital Interface. Be it ongoing academics or a patient's appointment, from a crucial business meet to speaking one's heart out to a near one, Online Technologies have foot-printed every single domain. This total dependence of every web of life on online modes has resulted, compulsively, in a deliberate 'DIGITAL SURGE' or 'UPSURGE'.

But wait, what? Yes, without beating about the bush for too long, let me draw lines together and come to the overall impact of this digital surge during Covid-19 and beyond.

EDUCATION: The constant and regular use of video conferencing apps like Zoom, Google Meet and the rest has significantly risen the tendency and chances to online fraud where proper security of the same is an issue of major importance. Homesickness, narrowing of imagination and unhealthy minds are some other bits of the same paper.

FINANCES: Numerous payments done online is another addition to the kitty of fraudsters, hence increasing maximum chances of getting robbed digitally. Online scams too, are definitely causing that extra hair to turn grey.

TECHNICAL AND WORK STRESS: The work-from-home shift of all multinational companies and corporate workers has not only increased the quantity of work to be dealt with but also created a vulnerable space of safety of documents. Intense scrutiny, ultra-focused interactions and high work pressure have resulted in several 'technical and techno-stress' issues which cannot be overlooked.

HEALTH: To some great extent, health facilities offered online could not really solve the anxiety of common man. Constant, obligatory use of technical devices had resulted in many eye-strain and problems. Children to adults, all are equal sufferers here because of the unsaid stress being put on those delicate organs.

The impact of digital surge is felt everywhere. Overall security, strength and safety issues have occupied a major share of our concerns. With everything done digitally, there is an average rise from 40% to 100% use of online interfaces during this time, thereby increasing the rate of online traffic in metropolitan cities.

Digital mandate is not a new thing to be dealt with. It is an ever-existing phenomena, just been dragged recently under the spotlight. In short it already had an upper hand in our lives much before. But also, we had our doors open to breathe outside the four-walls freely! Locked in a 'protective-cage' of home, the mind is sick of acting mechanically, almost always. A DIGITAL DIVIDE is what we shall suffer more from. "Is not the Digital Surge directly proportional to Social Down surge?" – a ponderable question I suppose!

Well, a yes is my answer and that cannot be helped either you know! Digitalization is a necessity and the current times have cleared any lingering doubts or so. Even for times beyond this, information technology and it's continuous upsurge shall stay in the same veins for some

more time in the unforeseeable yet obvious future. The assumed scenario of more and more of it's use is definitely in.

The subsequent impacts of it is again sure to rise more because the 'The New Normal' is here to stay! It shall be our foolishness to let the thoughts of lame hopes of golden past mist our realistic minds. However it is, let us consider the silver lining as well. Such equipped digital methods of accomplishing works not only opens a holistic approach to research and resource on the horizon, but also brings forth a newer version of ourselves. We can never undo what Nature does to us, but can always adapt ourselves to the call of the hour. Let humans once again start learning ways to live in a new fashion, under a new model. Let our innovations be the anvils to reshape our new selves and lives for better. And rather going black and blank, let us go Digital!

Swatilekha Mishra
English Honours, 1st Year

CHAINED TO TECHNOLOGY

Tania Baral

Geography Honours, First Year

WORD SEARCH 2

Let us take up this fun segment and try finding out the key words given below related to CORONAVIRUS AND THE IMPACTS!

I	C	G	Y	N	G	I	G	W	O	R	K	S	H	J
N	Q	T	T	P	S	W	R	A	P	I	Q	U	K	D
T	L	Q	I	X	W	S	E	G	M	U	F	R	I	I
E	A	B	R	W	A	P	I	J	Z	K	J	G	O	S
R	P	W	U	O	N	R	L	Y	K	F	I	E	N	T
N	T	J	C	R	U	I	S	E	I	T	L	M	L	A
E	O	L	E	K	P	O	C	K	A	S	V	Y	I	N
T	P	H	S	F	I	S	O	L	A	T	I	O	N	C
T	D	R	T	R	N	L	R	O	N	W	R	Z	E	I
R	C	Z	S	O	P	I	O	A	V	M	U	D	S	N
A	V	L	A	M	R	O	N	W	E	N	S	I	C	G
F	B	K	I	H	U	T	A	M	N	G	O	S	A	X
F	G	I	K	O	R	N	V	E	D	L	G	H	M	Z
I	X	S	L	M	P	A	N	D	E	M	I	C	F	P
C	H	W	T	E	C	H	N	O	S	T	R	E	S	S

INSTRUCTION: FIND WORDS GIVEN IN THE GRID RUNNING IN VERTICAL, HORIZONTAL OR DIAGONAL DIRECTIONS. WORDS MAY BE FORMED GOING BACKWARDS AS WELL!

WORDS TO FIND:

1. SURGE

2. GIG WORKS

3. TECHNO STRESS

4. PANDEMIC

5. DIGITAL

6. INTERNET TRAFFIC

7. SECURITY

8. CORONA

9. ISOLATION

10. DISTANCING

11. VIRUS

12. ONLINE SCAM

13. NEW NORMAL

14. WORK FROM HOME

15. LAPTOP

Swatilekha Mishra,
English Honours, First Year

THE TWO SIDES OF THE PANDEMIC AND IT'S EFFECT ON MANKIND

Life was going normal with its up's and downs before the late 2019 when suddenly the world was hit by a life changing global pandemic. At first no one had little idea that this pandemic Coronavirus that was detected in Wuhan, China would be a life changing event for the whole world.

In the beginning people didn't took the pandemic seriously and treated it as another disease that would go away soon , but little did they knew that this was slowly and steadily spreading in the whole world and stoning the people in their own home.

Soon it became a world pandemic. The whole world was in a shutdown mode for 4-5 months. We had huge locks in front of everything whether it be school, institutions, college, shops , malls, cinemas and every other thing only the hospitals and pharmacies remained open. But then after being in total isolation for 2-3 months people started facing huge losses so they decided to resume but they were still scared of the pandemic that caused a huge loss of life and the world was in despair from the pain of losing their loved ones.

They could not risk anything anymore and they started facing economic, academic problems. Students were losing on to their studies and the others were losing more and more money and experience day by day.

The only thing through which they can help themselves was by starting their work digitally; through online mode. As being a generation of the 21st century they decided to carry things in a more advanced way; and from there it marked the starting of a digital world.

Everything started online be it studies, offices or ordering food from a restaurant or watching a movie online or shopping everything took a U-turn and resumed. In the beginning it wasn't a great success but slowly people got used to it and started living in this way; they started teaching their children online; started their business online; started shopping online and avoided getting in contact with one another and started following the necessary norms to be safe from the covid-19.

As all stories have two sides this digital surge too had a disadvantage that people were becoming lethargic and started avoiding any sort of face to face contact even if its online. They started adapting and making their own cocoon into their own small world which wasn't a nice idea for the long run. Students were more used to typing then writing with a pen and school / college / university education started to loose its charm. There were huge queues outside the eye clinic as students and other people's eyes got affected through the harmful rays emitted by our digital device which became our most important part of life and migraines became a normal

problem. Daily workers like maids ,drivers of public transport and people who earned money through their daily basis work started to lose their work and they started losing their lives as well due to the tension of not being able to feed their family members and this was more common in the Asian countries like India.

Not every time life goes in a smooth way but sometimes it changes everything and transform us into a different human being we were a few months before.

We are thankful enough to the digital mode which helped us cope through all the loss during this difficult time. But this isn't the end to the digital surge maybe it was just the beginning. I believe it was just a starter and slowly we are entering into a digital world.

We have to be a part of this digital surge with all its up's and downs and pro's and con's after all we could not pause our lives for this un ending pandemic who's end is still not in sight.

Till then we shall keep the digital methods close to our hearts and carry on with our work and reach out for our goals which we were trying to achieve before the pandemic.

"AND WHERE THERE IS HOPE THERE IS A WAY"

But currently "WHERE THERE IS INTERNET CONNECTION THERE IS A WAY"

Safwana Rashid
Education Honours, First Year

EFFECT OF DIGITAL SURGE IN 2020

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY: A DRAMATIC SHIFT

The year 2020 was a complete shock to humankind as we witnessed a complete alteration in what we perceived as the 'normal' and a 'new normal' emerged in view of the deadly pandemic, Covid19, for which we were completely unprepared by all means, be it healthcare, finances, or even an efficiently worked out plan of action. Although unprepared because of lack of information relating to the mutant, Covid-19, we managed to adapt to the demand of the ongoing situation in no time, comparatively. The break out of the virus resulted in a chaotic shut down of all institutions as practicing social distancing became indispensable. A sense of despair and insecurity took over, leaving a lot to interpretation as the whole situation spanned out so quickly that it was humanly impossible to let the state of affairs sink in and make sense on an individual level, which also became very crucial at that point of time.

While essential services like healthcare, banking and grocery shops were allowed to operate with restrictions and safety measures, the corporate sector, educational institutions and miscellaneous small vendors had no choice but to suspend their business ventures until the situation improved and restrictions were relaxed. Obviously, small vendors do not have the flexibility and means to switch over to an online portal to continue their trading activities which put them at a disadvantage, adding to their already existing burden. Their poverty-stricken condition only worsened and a few weeks later into the pandemic, the whole world witnessed the largest on-foot migration since the historic Indo-Pak Partition in 1947. Talking about the pandemic, in my opinion, remains incomplete without acknowledging the ordeals faced by the migrants, many of who passed away while traveling itself. Thinking about this scenario paints a rather sad picture of India in front of us which helps us soak in the realization that it was substantially difficult to transition to a completely digital mode to continue large scale operations, that too in a very short span of time.

As a result of the abruptly declared lockdown, educational as well as business institutions, with no other resort, adopted an online or digital mode to persist in the uncertainty. Zoom calls and Google meets emerged as a trend, which proved to be useful to kids and adults alike. A new 'work from home' culture developed as against the traditional work culture largely prevalent in India. Initially, there was a lot of confusion relating to administering newer and flexible work methods as well as working schedules, while being prepared for emergencies. A lot of money had already been lost as a considerably large number of individuals lost their employment,

firms had suffered losses and the Indian economy entered into a period of recession, a major setback. There was a small period of maximal disruption in any economic activity before we transitioned to the digital platform and there was an urgent need to curb this disruption. The longer the period of disruption, the more losses were incurred. Soon after, educational, economic as well as administrative institutions invested in curating their websites and software, suiting their needs and the period of disruption ceased to exist as work was resumed. This modification in working methods, especially in a country like ours where some amount of work, although small, was still being done manually as opposed to technically advanced countries where as much work as possible had been transferred to a digital mode long before, was not only complex to implement in terms of providing electronic gadgets to all employees to enable them to work from home but also being patient, especially with older employees, such as teachers and professors who were not used to operating devices at a stretch and utilizing that medium to work.

With nowhere to go and being restricted within the vicinity of our homes, recreational activities were a few. Came content creators and apps like House party to our rescue. Truly, when everything came to a standstill, we turned to art. Artists were generous enough to conduct concerts online. Everything had become so monotonous that at one point, these online concerts helped in escaping the reality. These concerts not only helped the artists earn money and sustain themselves but some artists even donated a certain part of their earnings from these concerts to the Government or hospitals or orphanages and old age homes. While on one hand, the news media was filled with morose information about death rates increasing day by day and no breakthrough in the research about the virus was, the world of social media kept the audience lively with funny videos, parodies, aesthetic edits, song covers as well as content raising awareness about the virus. A lot of teenagers used this period to get the best out of social media and overcome their insecurities and anxieties, which not only brought in an enormous wave of art and skills on social media but also allowed a lot of people to start earning through content creation on social media. In our country, the film industry is one of the most significant contributors to the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). Although the cinemas were closed because of the lockdown, artists did not fail to deliver movies, web series and documentaries on OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime and more. These OTT platforms have always been very popular among teenagers but during the lockdown, the volume of traffic on these platforms doubled and eventually tripled as more and more users subscribed to these apps.

As the need of the hour demanded all economic, administrative, educational as well as recreational activities to be digitally conducted, the percentage of internet users increased on a

global scale with 4.66 billion (59 per cent of global population, approximately) people actively using it. Although, these digital mediums have proven to be extremely serviceable in the lockdown, in my opinion, we cannot continue to implement the usage of these mediums for a longer period of time. As a substitute, these mediums worked well but it can never be the permanent replacement of the conventional working norms. Too many young adults already have complaints of severe back ache due to sitting in front of screens at a stretch, which if pro-longed, might have serious consequences such as migraine. Added to this is the decline in activity of children, be it through participation in co-curricular events or simply partaking in outdoor games. Moreover, continuity in the usage of digital media also disrupts the already questionable work-life balance of our country as the employees are loaded with extra work for which they have to work beyond working hours, and sometimes during the weekends too.

The digital surge, during the lockdown imposed upon us because of the mutant Covid-19, was impactful in ways more than one. We did not only restore work at its earliest with the help of digitalization but were also able to introduce something new on social media once in a while which saved us from a lot of boredom. Beyond Covid-19, in my opinion, the usage of the digital media to work will reduce drastically as people will want to get out of this cycle of monotony at the soonest. Yes, we have learnt to make the best use of digital media and its benefits can be used to compliment the conventional working norms for greater efficiency and more autonomy to individuals but as a discrete means to work, the digital surge will soon decline.

Priyanka Mundhra
Geography Honours, First Year

THE HARSH REALITY
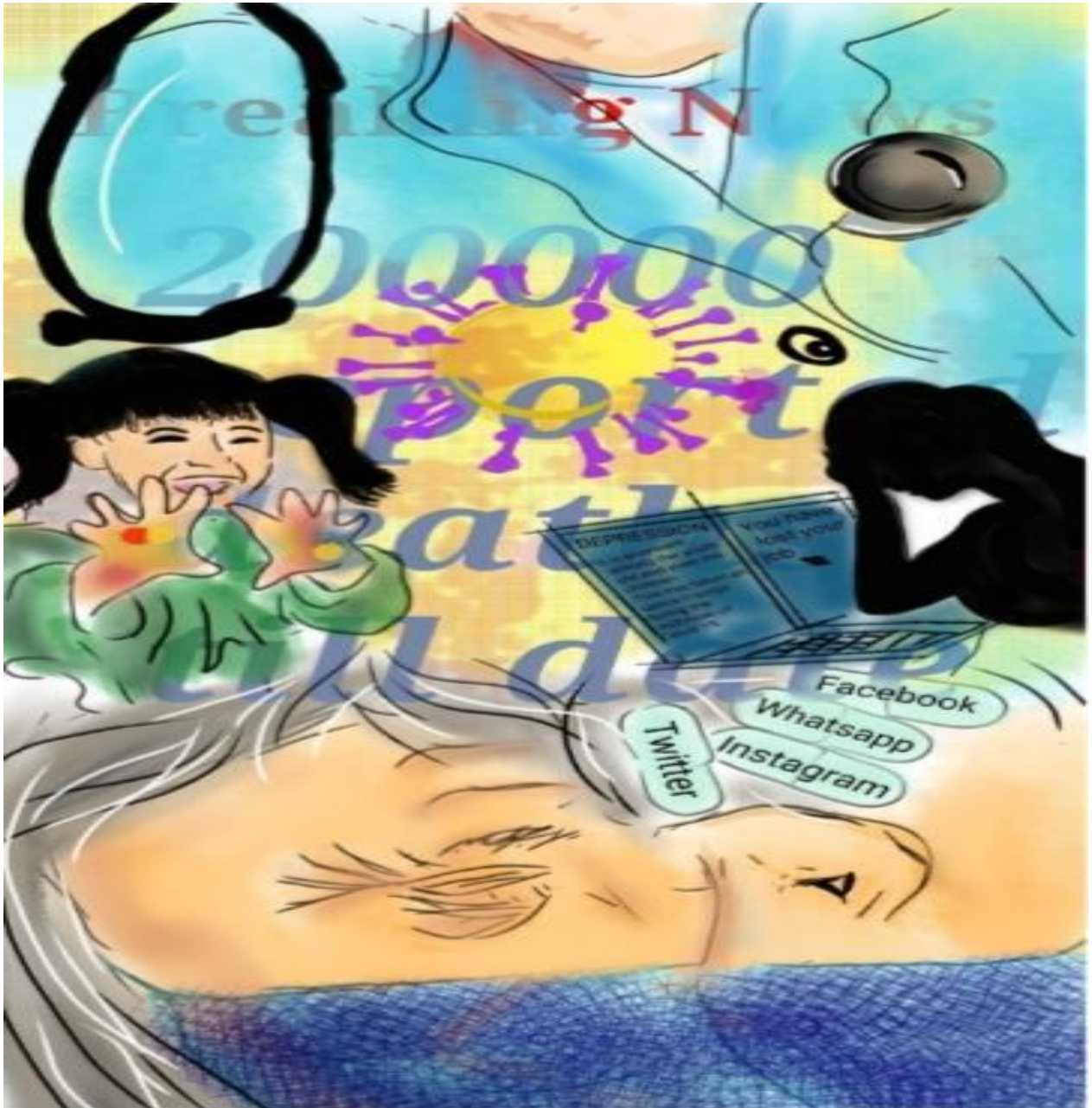
Ritodipa Chowdhury

Economics Honours, First Year

STORY: ALL THANKS TO ONLINE CLASSES

"Miss, can you please show us how to solve the question no 5. I am unable do it." Jhimli wakes up suddenly. It's already 8.30 and she has to take classes from 9.00 AM. "Ohh no! So much of household chores to do before the class commence. How will I manage?!!" And suddenly her eyes falls on the calendar. It's 31st October. And she has no classes today. In fact there will be no classes from tomorrow. Today is her last working day in the primary school – today is her retirement day. Heavily exhales! Really what a year it is. She had planned so many things which she will be doing on her retirement day, but alas! She can do nothing – just nothing. Thanks to online classes.

From 10.00 am onwards she tried to join function which was arranged specially for her on her special day. Though the program was scheduled for 10.30 AM, she started trying early as she didn't wanted to be late to join it. After all technology is not easy for her.

Even after calling her colleagues 3-4 times, texting her daughter for 10 times, still not being able to join the google meeting, she nearly gave up when Som, a little boy who lived in her neighbourhood came as angel, and helped her join the program.

Due to all of this trouble, she was late for 5 minutes. As soon as she entered Headmistress started the celebration. As the program was going on she could feel she is becoming more and more emotional. After speeches from her colleagues followed by student's performance and speech, at last she was requested to say something.

"Since my work was associated with numbers and not words, today I feel my stock of words are really very insufficient to express my feeling, .My journey in this school was really a nice one.

Still I feel that it was really beautiful till we had our "offline class" till March. But from the month of June, when the online classes started it really became a no win situation for me. The hands which never trembled while solving a tough maths problem started trembling when it came to operating the gadgets and taking the class online. And not even in my dreams, I had ever thought of retiring without talking to my dear students or without hugging my colleagues. But it's happening." She sobs.

"I am thinking of helping the children from poor family who can't do the online classes due to …."

She got disconnected from the call. A rush of Adrenaline flowed through her veins. A message popped up on her screen. You have used 100 % of your mobile data. Tears started rolling down her cheeks and started fogging the mobile screen.

Soumi Sengupta
Psychology Honours, First Year

A STUDY ON THE INEVITABLE SURGE IN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to an inevitable surge in the use of digital technologies due to the social distancing norms and nationwide lockdowns. People and organizations all over the world have had to adjust to new ways of work and life. An increase in digitalization is leading firms and educational institutions to shift to work-from-home (WFH).

Block chain technology will become important and will entail research on design and regulations. Gig workers and the gig economy is likely to increase in scale, raising questions of work allocation, collaboration, motivation, and aspects of work overload and presentism. Workplace monitoring and techno stress issues will become prominent with an increase in digital presence. Online fraud is likely to grow, along with research on managing security. The regulation of the internet, a key resource, will be crucial postpandemic.

Research may address the consequences and causes of the digital divide. Further, the issues of net neutrality and zero-rating plans will merit scrutiny. A key research issue will also be the impact and consequences of internet shutdowns, frequently resorted to by countries. Digital money, too, assumes importance in crisis situations and research will address their adoption, consequences, and mode. Aspects of surveillance and privacy gain importance with increased digital usage. By late May 2020, at the time of writing of this article, over 200 countries and territories in the world were affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. This included most urban clusters and even rural regions.

With the spread of the pandemic, almost all regions have implemented lockdowns, shutting down activities that require human gathering and interactions – including colleges, schools, malls, temples, offices, airports, and railway stations. The lockdown has resulted in most people taking to the internet and internet-based services to communicate, interact, and continue with their job responsibilities from home. Internet services have seen rises in usage from 40 % to 100 %, compared to pre-lockdown levels. Video-conferencing services like Zoom have seen a ten times increase in usage, and content delivery services like Akamai have seen a 30 % increase in content usage. Cities like Bangalore have seen a 100 % increase in internet traffic.

The lockdowns across countries have entailed a rise in the use of information systems and networks, with massive changes in usage patterns and usage behaviour. Employees are adjusting to new "normal" – with meetings going completely online, office work shifting to the home, with new emerging patterns of work.

These changes have come across most organizations, whether in business, society, or government. The changes have also come suddenly, with barely any time for organizations and people to plan for, prepare and implement new setups and arrangements; they have had to adjust, try, experiment, and find ways that did not exist before.

Though now, in late May 2020, the pandemic is receding and stabilized in certain countries, it is still on the increase in many others, and with serious threats. Experts in most countries are wary of the possibility of the disease spread re-emerging, and that lockdown norms may be relaxed carefully and slowly with social distancing at the core of the new normal. Some of the most pressing issues regarding the post-pandemic digital surge are as follows:

●   Increasing digitalization
●   Work from home and gig workers
●   Workspace monitoring and techno press
●   Online fraud
●   Internet access and digital divide
●   Internet governance: net neutrality and zero rating
●   Internet governance: shutdowns
●   Digital money
●   Surveillance and privacy

Implications for research
●   While deploying security technologies like the block chain, it will be important to understand the implications of smart contracts, their integration in workflows, and their effectiveness in complex resource-constrained settings, as in developing countries. Further, understanding the implications of secure and non-erasable technologies like block chains will become relevant for regulation.
●   Many research issues arise with regard to work-from-home and gig work, which include aspects of trust, measurement of performance, communication effectiveness, and collaboration.

● It can be expected that the dark side of virtual work and gig work, will raise questions of stress, presentism, work overload, surveillance, and monitoring. New and severe forms of digital surveillance will have to be understood and their implications gauged.

● Though much work has been done in understanding the parameters and impact of the digital divide, it will be important to understand how those without access suffer more from the consequences of the pandemic when the world survives on digital communications and operations.

● Management of the internet within countries is important, and aspects of enhancing networks include regulating zero-rating plans cautiously, seeing their implications for welfare, and how they can enhance access.

● Internet shutdowns during and after a pandemic lead to severe difficulties for citizens, who have come to depend on these services. Research has to examine the direct, second-order, and third-order impacts of these shutdown measures.

● Research on digital payments and their impact in crisis situations, for providing aid and subsidies to affected populations, and for disaster management.

● Surveillance issues about the extent of data collection by contact tracing apps are important areas of research. Issues of persistence and elimination of data, the expanse of data collection, sharing of data between apps, and the multiple trades-offs involved.

Implications for practice:

● Design of secure technologies, like block chain-based applications, for the surge in online education and healthcare activities.

● Policy for regulating digital infrastructure needed for increased digital transformation.

● Design of technologies for managing secure online interactions – for education, healthcare, payments.

● Design of apps for contract tracing and disease surveillance that balance privacy versus public health.

● Managers will have to understand resistance to technology and ways to manage change, both among employees as well as customers.

● Given the significant role which the internet is about to play in times to come, Internet intermediaries will work with government and civil society to address privacy and surveillance issues for better adoption of technology.

We understand that a pandemic can have severe consequences, including changing the political contour of the world, destroying empires, and creating nations. For the Covid-19 pandemic, we envisage a dramatic shift in digital usage with impacts on all aspects of work and life. How this change plays out remains largely dependent on our responses to and shaping of the emerging trends.

Pritha Biswas
English Honours, First Year

DIGITALISATION - THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE
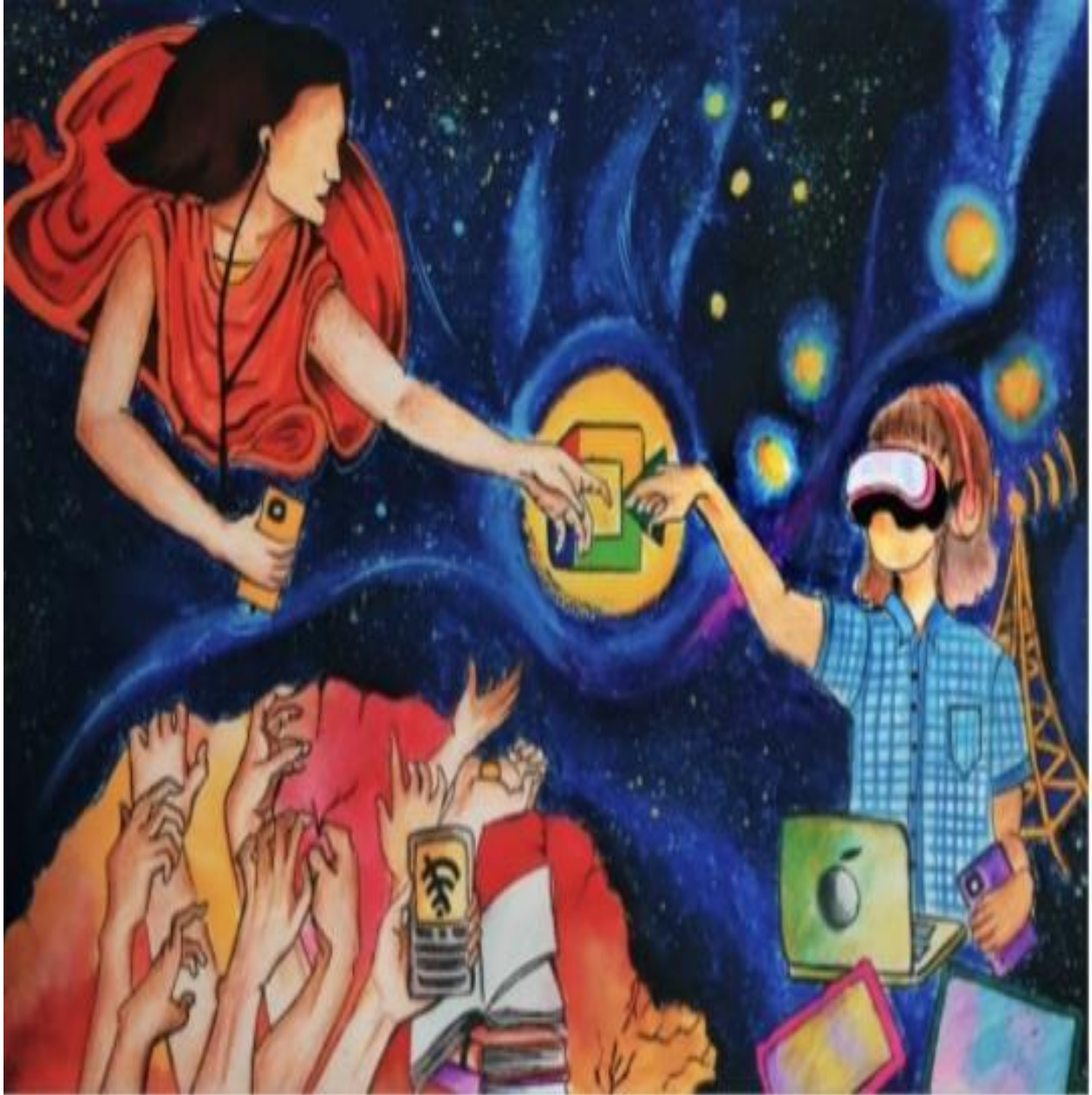
Sneha Bhunia
English Honours, First Year

THE IMPORTANCE OF ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Charles Darwin had rightly said, "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change." This tendency to adapt was put to test with the ravaging effect of the Covid-19 which spread like wildfire, turning people's lives upside down. For the first time since 1945, the entire world is united by this one common entity, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or faith. Hence, as a global lockdown seemed the only feasible mechanism to combat the spread of the deadly virus, people were compelled to limit their interactions to the four walls of their homes.

Technology, in its most basic sense, refers to the use of scientific knowledge to create, monitor, and design tools and pieces of equipment, which are in turn used to make life easier for people. In the world today, people cannot live without technologies such as televisions, mobile phones, computers, and others. These technologies have slowly taken an essential part in people's day-today lives and being without them would be unimaginable for some of us.

'A ship in the harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are built for', William Shedd of the 19th century had observed. That is to say, technology as a means if not exploited to its full potential remains of little value. As the shape of 2020 was gradually determined by the unforeseen pandemic, technology signifies the docked ship that became crucial for facilitating virtual interaction. Zoom and Google Meet became the most widely preferred platforms during these testing times.

How content is created, distributed, and streamed has been fully transformed by COVID-19. Online streaming of live shows and concerts have gained preference across the world to adhere to the social distancing norms. Several film production companies have also been releasing their movies via Over The Top (OTT) platforms such as Amazon Prime Video, Hotstar, Netflix, Zee5, Voot Select, etc. OTT caters to the diversified proclivity of people around the globe. At the same time, the lockdown has helped people realize the ease of viewing content on these platforms. This has led to a significant rise in both app downloads and subscriptions during this lockdown period.

Even as the COVID-19 imposed a bitter toll over the economy, it catalysed digital transformations across all spheres of the globe. Banking and payments, the critical pillars of the economy, are among the core areas that have seen a major elevation in the realm of the digital transition. Although emerging technology is not new to the market, the pandemic has greatly intensified the introduction of digital technologies such as the UPI (Unified Payment

Interface), the BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money), PhonePe, Amazon Pay, etc., with far-reaching consequences for the future not only of the banking sector but also of the broader financial ecosystem.

The occasional use of the 'Work from Home' notion became the new normal for the business sector, with the inception of technology. At the same time, a complete transfiguration has been perceived in the teaching methodologies of the educational institutes as the notion of 'Homeschooling' was adopted for the first time. The teachers who didn't have much exposure to technology, unravelled the brilliance and expertise of technological advancements as they shuffled through difficulties in comprehending its unimaginable speed. It was an eye-opener for every individual who found themselves technologically slow. They managed to explore a considerable amount of its finesse.

The online grocery market witnessed a tremendous hike during the pandemic due to the soaring demand amongst consumers. Families, especially children, and older people preferred to place their grocery orders online. This, in turn, has resulted in a significant increase in the number of new users on the online grocery apps. The provision given to choose a preferred time slot for delivery plus a reduced delivery fee for orders above a specified amount is attracting more and more customers towards online delivery business models. Similarly, this was an opportunity for online shopping apps such as Amazon and Flipkart to expand their business and improve their efficiency to win more customers.

As the lockdown compelled people to stay indoors, with the restriction on physical and social interaction, people got more prone to stress and anxiety leading to augmentation on mental health conditions. To alleviate its seriousness, a majority of them occupied themselves with exploring their abandoned hobbies such as art, while another portion got engrossed in gaming platforms. Thus, these platforms witnessed substantial growth in their user base. This has resulted in a significant spike in the gaming sector's sales and the duration for which the games are being played.

COVID-19 has made us realize how meaningful human interactions are for making things work. The pandemic has severely impacted labour-intensive sectors such as food, retail, logistics, and manufacturing businesses. COVID-19 has resulted in a strong push to implement the usage of robots and also to speed up robotics research thus contributing to the technological accolades.

Apart from these, contact tracing apps like Aarogya Setu have aided in tracking the COVID-19 spread. Technology has also helped in educating people about the entire situation and reminding them to take the necessary precautions. Telecom operators such as BSNL, Jio,

Airtel, etc. have used caller tunes for spreading awareness about the pandemic. Also, the latest development of facial recognition technology has helped in identifying people accurately even when they are wearing a mask. These digital innovations facilitated by the COVID-19 has played a major role in discovering the unlimited potential of technology.

COVID-19 has shown that advances in technology have helped to handle the pandemic in an effective, structured, and mature way. A lesson learned from the pandemic has been to remain vigilant well in advance at both individual and collective levels against any crisis. Progress in technology is evolving steadily and it will inevitably continue to develop tremendously. We as humans need to respond and adapt more quickly to technological changes and continue to invest in developing technological structures for better resilience. With technology, the sky is the limit. Every new technological advancement has the potential to improve the way we respond to and fight this coronavirus outbreak.
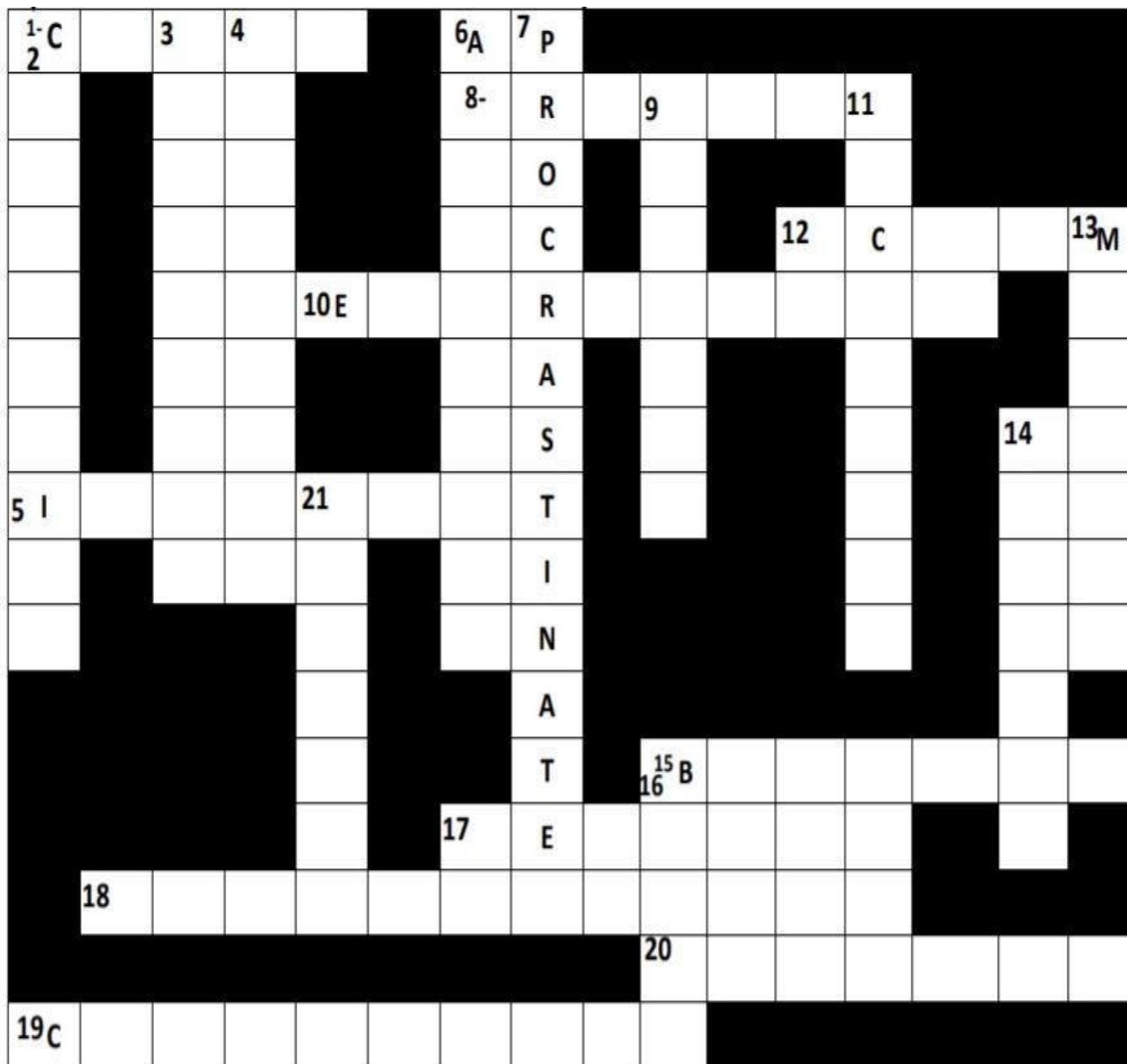
M. Meena
Political Science Honours, First Year

CROSSWORD 1

Fill in the crossword using the hints given. The digits in the bracket show the number of alphabets in the word. One has been done for you:

1- C / 2		3	4		■	6 A	7 P	■						
	■			■		8-	R		9			11	■	
	■			■			O	■		■			■	
	■			■			C	■		■	12	C		13 M
	■		10 E				R						■	
	■		■				A	■		■			■	
	■		■				S			■		14		
5 I			21				T			■				
	■				■		I	■		■				
	■	■			■		N	■		■				
■	■	■					A			■		■	■	
■	■	■		■			T	15 B / 16						
■	■			■	17		E				■			
■	18										■			
■	■	■						20						
19 C									■					

7. To put off intentionally the doing of something in WFH that should be done (13)

ACROSS:	DOWN:
1. Bullying through means of spamming or defamation on the web. **(5)**	2. Setting up a fake online profile to trick people, usually to get money out of them. **(10)**
5. Global System **(8)**	3. The amount of data that can be transferred through your internet connection. **(9)**
8. The visitors on a website and the number of pages that they visit. **(7)**	4. Someone who searches the Internet for references of themselves. **(9)**
10. The mathematical scrambling of data for privacy. **(10)**	6. Files sent in mail **(10)**
12. A standard followed by most content authoring software **(5)**	11. The practice of spending leisure time at home , surfing the net, in preference to going out **(9)**
15. Digital currency **(7)**	9. The learning which switches the lecture / instructional element of learning away from the face to face environment. **(7)**
17. A seminar or workshop in which the facilitator and participants view the same screen at the same time **(7)**	13. Malicious software designed by hackers. **(7)**
18. Learners participate in an online learning course at different times is .... learning **(12)**	14. Content developed for the use of relatively large user base across multiple organisations. **(7)**
19. Instructional software delivered on a computer **(10)**	16. Streaming, rather than waiting for scheduled showings **(5)**
20. Platform that processes payments for online purchases.**(7)**	21. Device connecting computers and other devices to the Internet. **(6)**

THE VIRTUAL WORLD

2020 began as a normal year in India. But soon the deadly Covid - 19 virus spread out from China to all over the world. This not only shook the entire economic sector but also the educational sector with the social relationships. Then the monster of the "virtual world" came to rule the whole world. The educational institutions tried to continue the teaching processes via online mode, through different apps. The concept "Work from Home" grew immensely and became a daily use term nowadays. Google launched various applications to aid the working masses as well as the students. Google meet, Zoom, Google classroom, etc. created a revolution in the fields of education and economy. E - commerce has risen drastically. Our social relationships became virtual ones.

(According to recent data collected, subjected to verification.) Dated- 29 December 2020
This digital surge has some positive effects and some negative ones. This virtual media helped us to reach out to the world in times of needs and emergencies, during this pandemic. Moreover, it increased the production of e-gadgets and helped to increase the national GDP somewhat. The negative sides also cannot be denied. Phishing, distributing child pornographies, are the current crimes which are on the increase, through various apps, that many people are not aware of. Virus invasion occurred both physically and virtually viz., both in humans and electronic gadgets. Despite all these, "2020" marked a steep rise in the use of digital media. The digital surge in 2020 helped many businesses to grow and made human beings more advanced in the progress of life. We can say that life became faster and some relationships became "so-so". Everything in daily life became internet oriented.

In 2021 also we can expect a digital based world. We can modify our lifestyles in respect to the constantly changing world. Our morals, values and work ethics could be bended according to changes in need. We should be more flexible in accepting the good change. Human life is now at risk of being exposed to various diseases also, resulting from constant exposure to the radio waves and rays from e-gadgets. Eyes, ears, body posture are all vulnerable to danger. We should emphasise on the betterment of digital life in all aspects after this pandemic is over.

Sinjini Bose,
Psychology Honours, First year

DEALING WITH THE GLOBAL CRISIS DIGITALLY

Shruti Kumari Lohani

Economics Honours, First Year

THE JOURNEY FROM "GOOD-TO-HAVE" TO "MUST-HAVE"

With people confined to their homes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown in the country, Digital has emerged as the primary source to access content, along with Television. Digital has become one of the most significant options for users in the lockdown period. Whether it's social media sites like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, or OTT applications like Netflix, HotStar or Amazon Prime, more and more people are consuming digital content. The pandemic has undoubtedly influenced the technology industry and has served as a catalyst for change for the economy, society and, in general, all business groups. An unforeseen consequence of this is that businesses have now begun to understand the advantages of speeding up or increasing their investment in digital transformation. The pandemic has greatly increased the speed of digital business adoption. What used to be called 'good to have' has suddenly become 'must-have' and is being picked up for adoption in a very fast way. Enterprises have understood that they need to plan to become more robust and to make processes run with less dependency on individuals. Tech companies stand to benefit from this transition, as the crisis has reinforced "the importance of digital". The current situation has made automation a prerequisite. Corporates holding online meetings and hospitals amplifying their telemedicine solution to provide remote consultations to patients are just some of the improvements seen over the last few months that have led to increased investment activity in the field.

India's digital sector is accelerating faster than ever before, as the coronavirus pandemic pushes companies across all industries to speed up online customer solutions, resulting in a flurry of high-profile investment deals. Last year, Indian e-commerce firm Flipkart raised an additional $1.2 billion in funding, led by its majority owner, U.S. retail giant Walmart, with the goal of getting "next 200 million shoppers online." Google also announced plans to invest $10 billion in India over the next few years in a virtual event attended by tech giant chief executive Sundar Pichai and Indian government officials. The money will finance Google's digitisation initiative for small businesses, the company said, as well as low-cost internet solutions and artificial intelligence for sectors such as agriculture, education and healthcare. This was followed by Google investing $4.5 billion into Jio Platforms, the digital unit of Reliance Industries, which is controlled by Mukesh Ambani. This move would increase access for hundreds of millions of people in India who do not own a smartphone. It is the pandemic that leads to transformation

and the transformation leading to a bright future for investors to come in and form a presence in India.

As a result, the business prospects are immense. There are now 574 million active Internet users in India, a rise of 24 per cent from 2019, according to data from the research firm Kantar. India's government is eager to ramp up the use of technology in the country. The Government of India is eager to step up the use of technology in the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Digital India initiative – one of the government's flagship campaigns, has taken more government services online and built digital infrastructure as the country seeks to further improve access to the Internet. To accelerate the digital transition, the government launched an application to monitor Covid-19 infections and a website for online coronavirus consultations with physicians. However, tighter foreign direct investment rules and ongoing border tensions between China and India could in the near term have an effect on the flow of technology from China. Chinese investors have been an important source of start-up funds, and some of India's biggest online companies, including Paytm, Big Basket and Zomato, have all raised capital from China. In 2019, Chinese investors ploughed $4.6 billion to Indian start-ups – 12 times the amount spent four years earlier, according to analytics company Global Data.

As the online sector accelerates, a more pressing issue is the need for India to introduce a data security and privacy regime. The country has a proposed law on data protection that has yet to be passed through the legislative process. The more we get through this digital platform, the more important it is for the country to have robust and detailed legislation. So, therefore, I think personally that is the need of the hour.

Archita Samaddar
BA General , First year.

DIGITALIZATION DURING THE GLOBAL CRISIS

The Global crisis we call COVID-19 made the world known about "mask necessity"," lockdown", "social distancing" and live through it. The Pandemic undoubtedly has impacted our being, but mostly it's how we have responded to the crisis in a way none ever wondered. With around 106,840,979 cases currently reported, the outbreak in from the initial days witnessed surge (which according to the Cambridge dictionary means a sudden and great change) in digitisation. With closed doors and no contact to the world, technology proved itself our window to the wider horizon. The scenario in India was no different; starting right from the Janata-Curfew till date with the Farmers protests there led spike in social media activity across channels virtually. The digital connectivity now stands as a necessity. A way to move on with life, a possibility by which the crisis had been averted to a less disastrous one. The mobilization of money and resources to which responded to Covid-19 with such swiftness was indeed extraordinary.

The outbreak of the pandemic and the lockdown chain associated with it made all people digitally bound giving rise to huge changes in online behaviour, impacting digital trends across the world. A study by iProspect, which took into consideration data from January as the Pre COVID-19 period and compared it with data of recent weeks revealed important changes in digital trends from different industries, platforms & reports. The impact digitalisation has cannot be categorised, but we can certainly look into the white and grey matters as experienced or witnessed. Fitness, haircut, beauty and various trends take over social media while we continue to maintain social distance. People continue to search for DIY masks, sanitisers, and go ga-ga over the updates by the celebrated personalities at the same time shopping with Amazon, Grofers and Big Basket during the lockdown. As a great source of entertainment and time pass it also provided genuine guidance and took care of matters of well being like talking about certain hush hush topics of mental health and its importance. Some worked for their passion while others gave a kick start to their career during the sit-at-home period.

We find networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube & Instagram, fight misinformation regarding Coronavirus by redirecting all COVID-19 related queries to credible sources only and updating creator guidelines. With around 80% of the planets population nearly 4.9 billion active users in social media, the rates have seen a considerable increase during the COVID-19 and further pushed up the digital surge. As the time spent in such media platform increased so increased the exposure to false updates, certain dominant groups have taken control over the

information sphere, where digitalisation impacted misguiding masses. Here, its important to mention the circulation of weird, irrelevant forward messages through WhatsApp which definitely is a part of our daily experiences. It is important to know that what the masses are consuming in the digital spectrum with all COVID-19 related searches as the most popular one's on search engines, exceeding searches about other news, politics, Facebook, Amazon, Netflix or even porn has rather shown ratios like never before.

Trends like #TogetherApart has fuelled unexpected demand for online services and essential commodities such as personal care, hygiene, baby care, ready to eat, mosquito repellents, mobile wallets, etc. Online medical care, medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, health-related industries, education, payment, media & OTT witnessed a surge in demand and acceptance. Connected TV has a massive spike in viewership. 67% rise in visitors to the connected TV app with 31% increase in watch time in turn sparking the heights of digitalisation. It felt like being close with family people were connected virtually than actually making real relationships work. The digitalisation affected human behaviour, being inside their comfortable spaces for too long masses tend to grow a fear and awkwardness towards human interaction. We are into too much typing and less talking. Keeping this statement in mind one might add that, it seems like we want to do more than just connect through messaging and text — we want to see one another. This has given a big boost to apps that used to linger in relative obscurity, like Google's video chatting application, Duo, and WhatsApp video calls, Telegram, skype which allows groups of friends to join a single video chat and play games together.

The pandemic has created crisis for health and security eating up jobs of millions, already with the growing technology man for was getting replaced by machines but according to world technology centres digital mode of working will soon replace the human working graph. India already fights unemployment everyday but seems like the pandemic has provided opportunities for tech-friendly people.

The digital connectivity paved way for many essential services, like e-health platforms, digital cash transfers and e-payment methods. A Research report published by CSIS states that despite of a higher rate of digitalization during Covid-19, including through work-from-home infrastructures, VPN networks, and collaboration tools such as video conferencing, the Internet of Things (IoT) itself is largely unaffected by Covid-19. IoT (The Internet of Things (IoT) is a well-defined scheme of interconnected computing tactics, digital, and mechanical devices possessing the capability of transmission of data over the defined network without having any human involvement at any level.) includes 1 trillion or more connected devices in the world today, spanning sectors and industries and representing the convergence between the physical

and digital worlds. Businesses and governments who have increased their reliance on the internet, IoT analytics, and digital devices during the crisis will maintain higher levels of digitalization after the pandemic retreats. One example is the increasing demand for digital portals in interactive health care, with some online services currently reporting a 500 to 600 percent increase in telehealth usage. Unlikely to return to its low-technology past, medium-to-high consumer demand for telehealth and virtual consultations will increase reliance on the methods of technological transmission.

With all these extended facilities come the risk of Privacy and Access through the surveillance technologies in response to the pandemic, including using GPS tracking to enforce compliance, collecting cell phone data from telecom companies to gauge the public health guidelines, and publicly providing confidential information regarding those infected with Covid19. Private companies have rapidly expanded the development of health surveillance technologies. Apple and Google are collaborating on a contact-tracing app that uses Bluetooth to determine others' past proximity to infected individuals' days or weeks prior to their diagnosis. India has launched an app known as Arogya Setu with similar functions. What's alarming is according to the Privacy International's Tracking the Global response to Covid-19 more than 90% of the population digitally linked are under expanded surveillance beyond public health, including efforts to create immunity passports and attempts by law enforcement to use contact-tracing apps in investigations. Amnesty International questions the fact that surveillance as way to tackle COVID-19. Beyond the pandemic these may outlast the crisis and could define what surveillance in a post COVID-19 world would be. The abuse of power should not be the new normal.

The COVID-19 boosted the digital payments in India which the Indian demonetisation failed to establish. The essential services that continued to do business during the nation-wide close down with help of doorstep deliveries and digital transactions. A report from FIS Consumer Usage of Digital Banking and Contactless Payments Surges in India During Pandemic, finds around 68% of Indian consumers are using online or mobile banking to conduct financial transactions with around 48% ensuring to use contactless payment in the post COVID-19 with help of apps like UPI, BHIM etc. The COO of NPCI stated that "Digitisation has revolutionised every single aspect of life and onboarding has risen substantially. There has been gradual migration from cash to digital payments both offline and online," Digital Banking with help of the wide connectivity will be a game changer for enhancing customer satisfaction post-COVID being the way of banking foe millions. However, the digitalisation has caused a fertile area for cyber-crimes and increasing risk and attacks on financial firms. According to Business Today

's report of February 2021, cyberattacks against the financial sector surged by 238% between February and April of 2020. Cybercrime trends, digital safety amidst COVID-19 pandemic is greatly concerning, between March and April 2020, India has witnessed a staggering 86% increase in cyber-attacks. According to the UN Special Rapporteur, women are both disproportionately targeted by online violence and suffer disproportionately serious consequences as a result.

The offices and schools have all moved into our basements and living rooms. Nothing has a more profound impact on online activity than this change. School assignments are being handed out on Google Classroom. Work-from-home extends meetings on Zoom, Google Hangouts and Microsoft Teams. The digital acceleration in adoption of online education has been great, with instant transformation from offline to online mode of teaching and learning. `The IIT's take up the digital routes quickly however, realisation soon dawns among the authorities about the Digital disparity. Connectivity has not yet reached its zenith in India with a minimum of 10% of the ratio still without e connections. It's quite unfortunate that access to digital infrastructure and connectivity remains severely limited in the world's poorest countries, which are eligible for grants and concessional lending from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA). While mobile coverage has expanded rapidly on a global level, IDA countries still lag far behind, with mobile internet penetration rates of 20.4 percent at the end of 2019, compared to 62.5 percent for other countries.

Keeping these facts and ratios in mind the Government of India with help of the State governments have made education online a possibility for villages with poorest connectivity. Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, the state with the highest literacy rate in India, has added another feather in its hat amid all challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, conducting over 6,000 online classes in which more than 43 lakh students from pre-primary standard to Class 12 attended. The digital classes all over the country is being telecasted on the national channels or regional infotainment channels. The E-education has potentially reduced tuition, it made education affordable for some sections with help of free learning classes just with the top-up expenses. The pandemic has proven that the education has no limit with such effective responses the future education system is greatly looking for continuation of e mode of acquiring knowledge and learning.

The world is greatly impacted by COVID-19 and so by the increase in digitalisation in the daily chores. We can fairly state that the introduction to all digital way of life, with Digitisation coming to forefront with print media laid back with problems like digital divide and fragmentation surfacing, the personalised health care facilities as, almost half of the people

undergoing treatment during lockdown using some form of telemedicine. Equal attention to physical and Mental health attracts masses. According to researchers, sustaining the ability to see one's own doctor through telehealth may be critical to making telehealth a permanent part of routine health care. There is a wide expectation that telehealth will continue after the pandemic ends. The focused attention on internet has led the ecosystem to breath with less consumption of papers extracted from trees.

In conclusion, the digital surge during the pandemic will have a long-term impact, making the masses more mobilised and live online. We are moving ahead with AI robots as physical working force, with pre-school pupils learning to operate gadgets and pencil comes in hands later. With a wider focus in digital skills and its application across all aspects of life, constructing a digital inclusive environment for one and all.

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COMMUNICATING DIGITALLY

Sriya Dhameja

Geography Honours, Second Year

OUTBREAK OF THE PANDEMIC LEADING TO DIGITAL SURGE

Covid-19 Pandemic had its outbreak in India notably from March onwards. After this massive outbreak, all kinds of social gathering was declared illegal and brought with the temporary closure of academic institutions as well as offices, industries. Only a few organisations were left to operate at that point of time. This brought about a lockdown continuing for months. The concept of "Work from Home" came into effect. Office workers managed to work from home to complete their pending work during the pandemic. Every individual stepped into a world of "New Normal". Students were introduced to the classes held online via Zoom and Google Meet.

Since the new evolution of electronics including mobile phones, individuals have been introduced to widespread technologies. We walked far ahead with the propagation of 4G speed internet connection easing the gathering of worldwide information and access to several other modes of communication. Until then, not all can grasp those technicalities but after the emergence of this pandemic everyone got accustomed to these technologies, remarkably beginning the "Digital Surge". Starting from the academics, Students were newly introduced to the online mode of education by several Online mode applications like Zoom and Google Meet. They have several features common to the things we are usually accustomed to in physical classes thus, making the knowledge far more understandable and up to date. Besides Google Classrooms also help Students and teachers to upload assignments, study materials and also updates for classes making the things far easier to get handy. It is also possible to conduct Online Exams in order to assess the knowledge gathered. Coming to the work of the office, office workers can have their audio, visual conferences by several means, working from home, completing deadlines on time.

Having a look on online payments it marked a swell of 42% Indians making online payments during Covid-19 lockdown. Due to the rising fears of this pandemic, physical transaction almost crashed and the digital payments in India have witnessed an exponential spike in lockdown. According to the survey conducted during lockdown, of 42000 respondents by consulting firm local Circles have reported that there was a top use of cases for digital payments and Paytm and Google Pay. Top government sources said mobile internet usage had increased

only by around 10% on average since the start of the lockdown and as per the report of small telecom circles seeing higher growth at 15%.

Many dedicated researchers gave reports of big jumps in digital activity, especially in countries that have seen the strictest lockdowns, significant increases in social media use, with video calling taking centre stage. Besides there was accelerating adoption of ecommerce, particularly for grocery shopping, an increase in the amount of time spent playing video games and watching esports.

Even though there are several things made possible by online mode, still there remain areas which add to the list of drawbacks and lagging behind. There were some scams, security breaches in terms of the online mode leading to the increasing vulnerability of the common people to certain cybercrimes and hacking. The people living in poverty suffered the most adversities of the digital surge. According to the reports, they reveal that about 69% of people are living in poverty and that about 48% of the offline population wanted proper access to the Internet for the worldwide events over the recent months. A notably higher proportion of the people, lying in the age groups ranging from approximately 18 to 36 years, were not granted proper access to the Internet. As some sections of people are not getting internet, they are facing social exclusion and hinders access to public services which are provided digitally. This can lead to the feelings of isolation, inadequacy or loneliness. Being offline may limit career mobility as there is difficulty in applying for jobs online and a lack of digital skills development can inhibit the potential for career mobility once a role. According to the other research notes, there was an adverse impact on the business sectors which caused trickling down to major sectors of the Indian Economy with manufacturing, auto, retail, and hospitality bearing the brunt of the pandemic. This in turn has affected fast growing digital payments which are closely linked to the aforementioned sectors. Shut shops, travel bans and reduced discretionary spends by consumers are further negatively impacting digital payments. Digital payments volume declines are seen in airlines, tourism, hospitality, hotels, entertainment, e-commerce (non-essentials) and restaurants, among other sectors. Pandemic even led to the higher dependency on the online food apps, due to the fear of contamination affecting the restaurants badly.

The Covid-19 crisis is an unprecedented one in the history of mankind and caught the entire world by a big unpleasant surprise. The major challenge is being able to maintain the norms of social distancing. The digital surge might have a huge impact in the near future. There are

certain collaboration tools that the organisations need to identify, evaluate and have the right mix of online collaboration tools for both employees and partners to be able to work remotely. The digital reset of the Indian economy has actively involved almost every aspect of life. Almost every Indian now has the digitally authenticated Aadhar Identification number. The connection of Aadhaar with bank accounts and mobile phones increased the dependency more on digital banking. Not only that, to effectively track and monitor the spread of COVID-19. India's National Informatics Centre created the Arogya Setu app, which has been downloaded more than 127 million times, helping people to detect the virus within a huge circumference. Arogya Setu and other allied initiatives like National e- Health Authority and new tele-medicine guidelines are coalescing towards a National Health Stack which is aimed to be completed by 2022. Even though the dependency on the online pharmacy apps was prevailing, due to this Pandemic the dependency grew much higher. Coming to the education sectors , where due to this pandemic , there was a huge shift from the physical classes to the online classes, the most parts of the globe , were wondering whether the adoption of online learning will continue to persist post-pandemic , how such a shift would impact the worldwide education sector .

The drastic change in the world therefore would have a huge effect in the present and future ahead. Besides, the Countries in the new digital era would very much lead to the proliferation of the sectors dependency in the online mode.

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THE PARADIGM SHIFT TOWARDS DIGITALISATION

The Covid 19 pandemic has led to an inevitable surge in the use of digital technologies due to the social distancing norms and nationwide lockdowns. People and organisations all over the world have had to adjust to new ways of work and life. We explore possible scenarios of the digital surge issues that arise.

An increase in the digitalization is leading firms and educational institutions to shift to work-from-home (WFH). Blockchain technology will become important and will entail research on design and regulations. Gig workers and gig economy is likely to increase in scale, raising questions of work allocation, collaboration, motivation and aspects of work overload and presenteeism.

Workplace monitoring and techno stress issues will become prominent with an increase in digital presence. Online fraud is likely to grow, along with research on managing security. The regulation of the internet, a key source, will be crucial post-pandemic.

Digital money too assumes importance in crisis situations and research will address their adoption, consequences and mode. Aspects of surveillance and privacy gain importance with increased digital usage.

As the use of video and audio conferencing tools increases significantly organisations will ramp up their technology infrastructure to account for the surge. This will led to increased investment in band width expansion, network equipment and software that leverages cloud services. With employees becoming acclimatized to the idea of work from home, meeting and transacting online, firms will shift to work from home as a norm rather than an exception. This is being adopted by many firms which have the digital infrastructure in placenta handle the required load and bandwidth.

Education is another domain in which there is dramatic shift to the online mode of transacting. Since the beginning of the lockdown, schools, colleges and universities around the world have shifted their classes to video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google Meet. Some institutions are now shifting entirely to the online mode fort the forthcoming academic year, with the exceptions of sessions that require a physical presence.

The gig economy is driven by online platforms that hire workers on an ad hoc, short contract and mostly informal basis. Well-known examples of these include Uber and Airbnb globally and Ola and Swiggy in India. During the lockdown, workers employed by these platforms have

suffered heavily; as the demand for their services, taxi rides or skill work has disappeared. Further, since these workers had no guaranteed salaries, their income dropped dramatically.

In the post pandemic scenario, there is likely to be, in the short term, a slow return of gig economy workers, as manufacturing and service firms return to their old activities. However, we anticipate that in the longer term as the work from home and gig work has received attention in IS research, through topics in telecommuting, digital nomads and virtual teams. One key issue is that of work allocation and collaboration, across and inside teams, and across projects. This issue will face a rise in scale and importance in the post – pandemic world, as the number of WFH and gig workers increase. Research may focus on aspects of the design of work norms, work contracts, trust building and team building amongst others.

Pragyadeepta Dasgupta
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THE DIGITAL SURGE
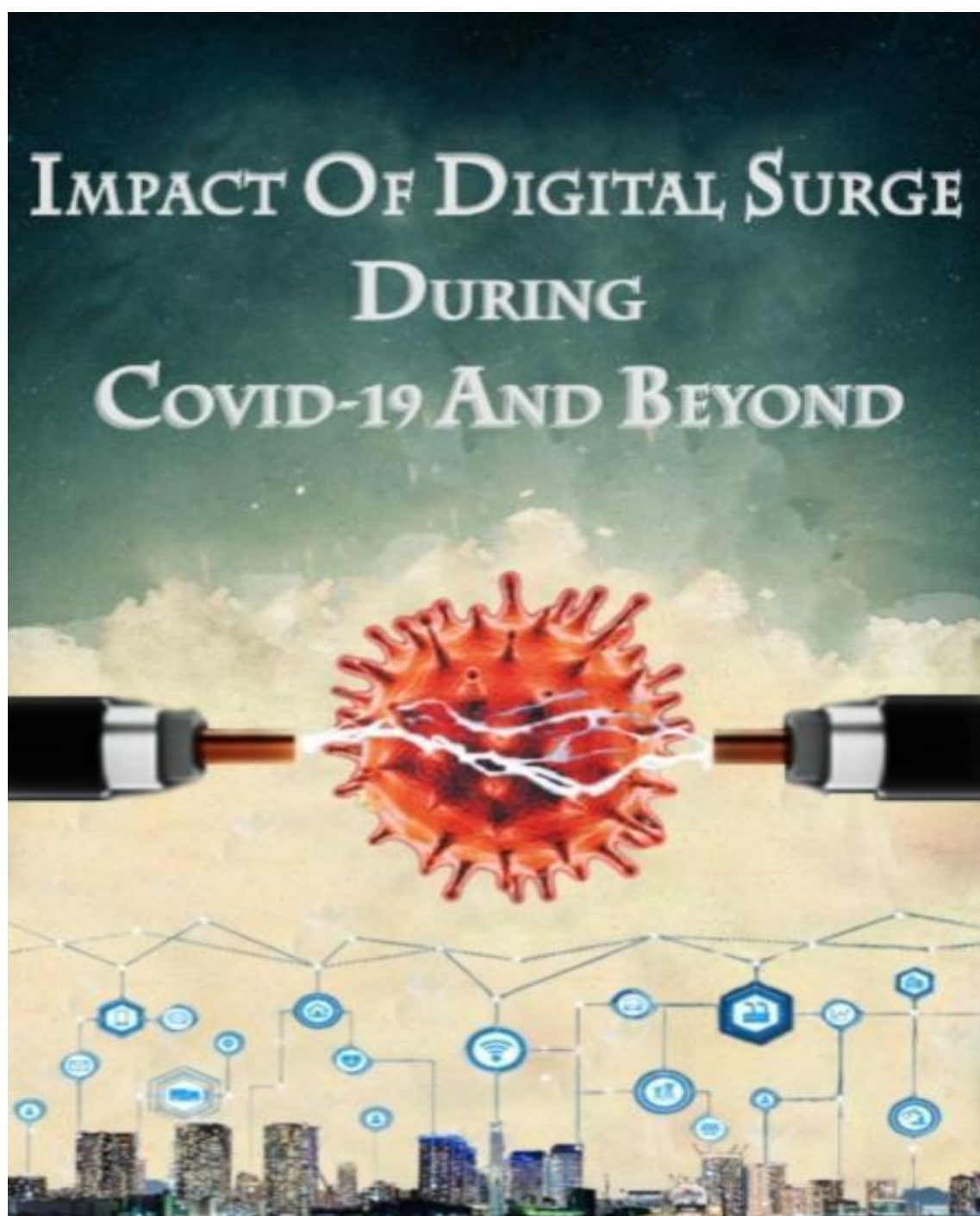
Pritha Deb

Economics Honours, First Year

IMPACT OF DIGITAL SURGE ON CHILDREN

Children of today have been surrounded by digital technology since their birth. However, children of today are not equally equipped for their technology rich future: various kinds of digital divides still prevail in the society and affect the young generation and their digital futures. Schools and education of children should undergo an extensive digital transformation to be able to meet the needs of the young generation and their digitalized future. The COVID-19 pandemic has suddenly and abruptly forced schools and education indeed to engage in such a transformation. In this study we examine the digital transformation initiated by the COVID-19 pandemic in the basic education of the young generation, the variety of digital divides emerging and reinforced, and the possible barriers reported along the way. We argue that information management research should better acknowledge children, their digitalized everyday life and their basic education as significant areas of concern. We should understand them as well as allow them to shape the education we offer in the context of higher education, but we should also aim at influencing the basic education of the young generation – for the purpose of equipping them with important skills and competencies for their digital futures but also for the purpose of arousing their interest in this important field, maybe even as a career option.

1. Digitalized everyday life of the young generation

Children of today have been surrounded by digital technology since their birth; ever since, their everyday life and practices have been entwined with social media, smart phone, tablet, and Internet use. Digital technology has been thoroughly embedded with how they live and learn. They have started interacting with digital technology already as toddlers if not even earlier, and their adult life will for sure be thoroughly embedded and intimately intertwined with digital technology.

2. Tales on digital transformation of basic education pushed forward by COVID-19 pandemic

We have carried out exploratory empirical research addressing digital transformation of education caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of basic education in Finland and in the context of special education in India, by interviewing teachers and personnel involved in educational administration. In Finland, we have interviewed teachers and representatives of educational administration in the City of Oulu, while in India we have interviewed special education teachers working with individuals with special needs in private or integrated public schools. Next, we briefly discuss our initial empirical findings.

The COVID-19 pandemic initiated an extensive, sudden and dramatic digital transformation in the society. The pandemic forced us to take an extraordinary digital leap in our everyday life and practices, including our children and their education. In a flash, their education was transformed from a traditional classroom practice to a remote, digitalized one. Suddenly, an entire generation of children had to start managing and mastering with digital tools to participate in their compulsory basic education. This required significant adjustments not only from children and their teachers, but also from their families, school administration and the entire society. Teachers and schools had to take the lead in this sudden, unexpected digital transformation of children's basic education, without being well prepared for it. Even if digitalization in education has been a hot topic already for ages within different disciplines and digital tools are extensively already utilized in schools, teachers, schools and educational administration have been poorly prepared for acting as leaders and change agents in digital transformation.

Reet Rikhraj
BA General, First year

CROSSWORD 2
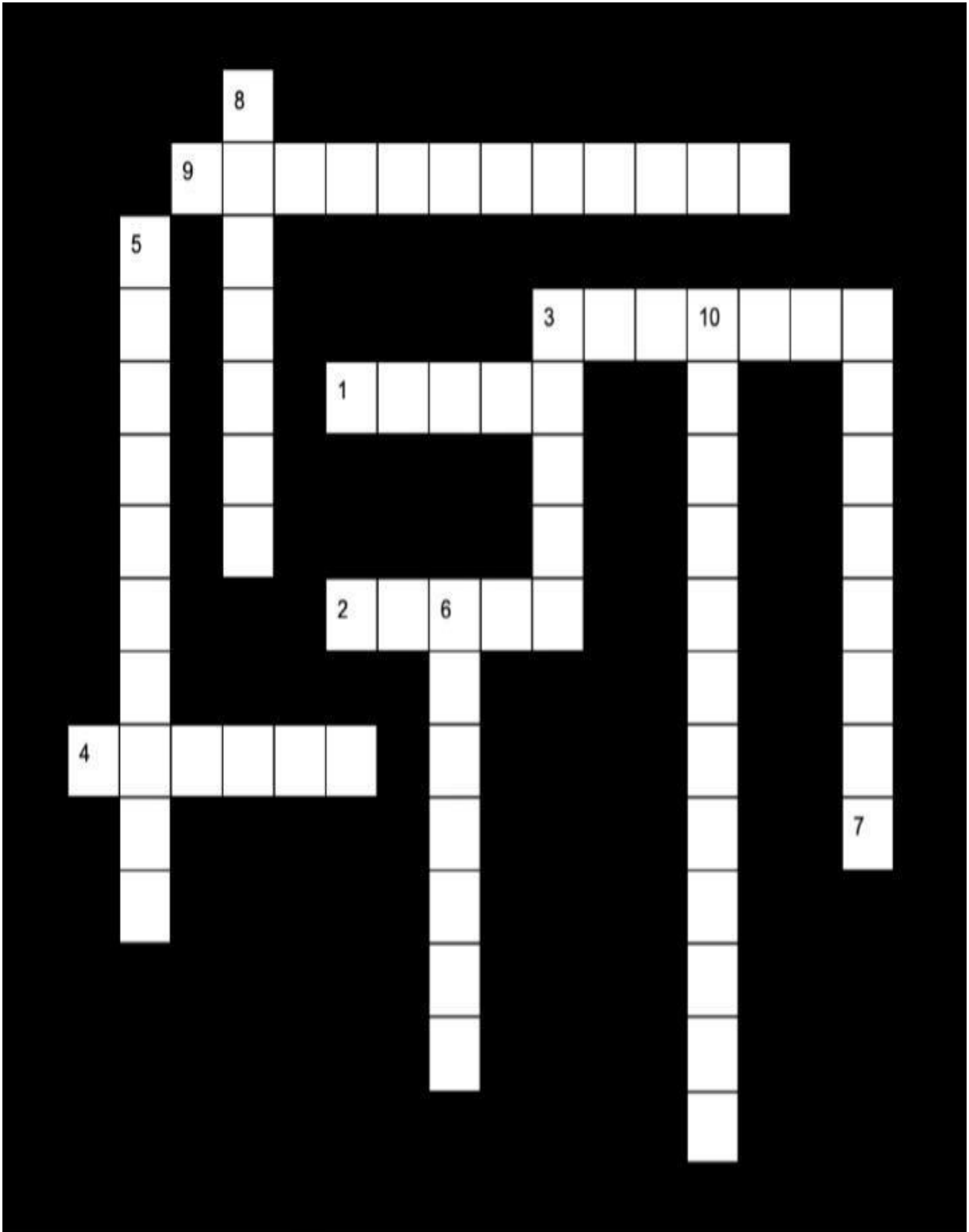
Clues

1. The most common COVID-19 symptom

2. The city where COVID-19 originated

3. "Corona" in coronavirus means

4. An effective hand sanitizer contains at least this percentage of alcohol

5. Staying away from other people when one has been exposed to coronavirus is called this

6. A limited geographical area where a large number of people are affected by COVID-19

7. A restriction policy issued by the government to ensure people remain at home

8. Name of India's first indegenous COVID-19 vaccine

9. A mode of employment that is carried out online and from the employee's residence is called this

10. People who are affected by COVID-19 but show no symptoms are called this

Answers

1. Fever
2. Wuhan
3. Crown
4. Sixty
5. Quarantine
6. Hotspot
7. Lockdown
8. COVAXIN
9. Work from Home
10. Asymptomatic

DIGITALISED WORLD

Priyanka Karmakar

Political Science Honours, First Year

COVID- 19 AND SOCIAL MEDIA

COVID-19 has created a global stir and ushered in a medical emergency in the form of a pandemic that has impacted almost all the countries across the globe. Humanity as a whole seems to be under a severe existential threat. In India, COVID-19 had accelerated the digitisation process across industries, and technology service providers saw a jump of 30% digital transformation deals since the pandemic's outbreak, industry body NASSCOM and McKinsey & Co. said in a joint report.

During this crisis, social media has gone from being an entertaining extra to a fully integrated part of nearly every aspect of our daily lives, thus revolutionizing the way we communicate, interact and socialize. As a result, it has created a huge impact on the social fabric of our society and the nature of social relationships.

Recent statistics suggest that there are more than three billion active social media users and the number is growing by 9% annually. This makes social networking sites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter some of the most influential contexts regarding diffusion of information. In the modern digitalized world, social media has 'given a voice to the people'. However, the debate about whether social media is cultivating global collaboration and facilitating a pursuit for a better world, or instead cultivating polarization and fragmentation is just beginning.

The year 2020 was crucial for Facebook and Twitter, testing the social networks' abilities to curb hate speech and misinformation. The companies rolled out several measures including labelling misleading tweets and introducing new tools to stop fake news.

Fake news, rumours, morphed images, click-baits, motivated stories, hate speech etc. spread virally through platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, etc. among 35 crore internet users in India.

The tech giants were criticised globally for failing to stop misinformation on their platforms, especially with respect to the U.S. Election and COVID-19 pandemic. In India too, the companies received criticism of different kinds. During the COVID-19 pandemic, closed messaging services were used to spread inaccurate information.

In spite of all the hue and cry, the social media also:

•   Facilitated political and economic empowerment of youth.

- Acted as a transformational tool for education,
- Provides a platform for marginalised communities to fight for their rights.
- Helps in women empowerment and bridging gender divide.
- Provided a social support system for elderly population
- Provides a platform for collective social action and facilitates cultural integration.
- Facilitates better governance and health care management.

Social media platforms have become 'COVID-19 helplines' to combat the second wave in India. Several people resorted to social media by posting urgent requirements on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Users flooded these platforms with appeals for urgent needs through posts, retweets, shares and story uploads to help distressed citizens in several cities across the country. Several users had also taken to social media to commend the solidarity and promptness among citizens.

Ultimately the pros and cons of social media depend on how someone uses it. If used right, social media can be a powerful tool for change and communication. Used the wrong way and social media can cause some major damage as was seen during the Arab Spring in which a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions spread across much of the Arab world in the early 2010s.

While social media can help us connect better to friends and family, it is amazing how reading comments and watching online content can present a new perspective as well. Breaking the stereotypes and changing mind-sets is one of social media's wins.

Shweta Tiwari
Political Science Honours, Third year

ANSWER KEY TO WORD SEARCH

²¹C	Y	³B	⁴E	R		⁶A	⁷P						
A		A	G		⁸T	R	A	⁹F	F	I	¹¹C		
T		N	O		T	O		L			O		
F		D	S		A	C		I		¹²S	C	O	R	¹³M
I		W	U	¹⁰E	N	C	R	Y	P	T	I	O	N		A
S		I	R		H	A		P			O				L
H		D	F		M	S		E			N		¹⁴G	W
⁵I	N	T	E	²¹R	N	E	T		D		I		E	A
N		H	R	O	N	I					N		N	R
G			U	T	N						G		E	E
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			E			T		¹⁵/¹⁶B	I	T	C	O	I	N
			R		¹⁷W	E	B	I	N	A	R		C
	¹⁸A	S	Y	N	C	H	R	O	N	O	U	S	
							²⁰G	A	T	E	W	A	Y
¹⁹C	O	U	R	S	E	W	A	R	E				

Samriddhi Basu

English Honours, First Year

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD 2
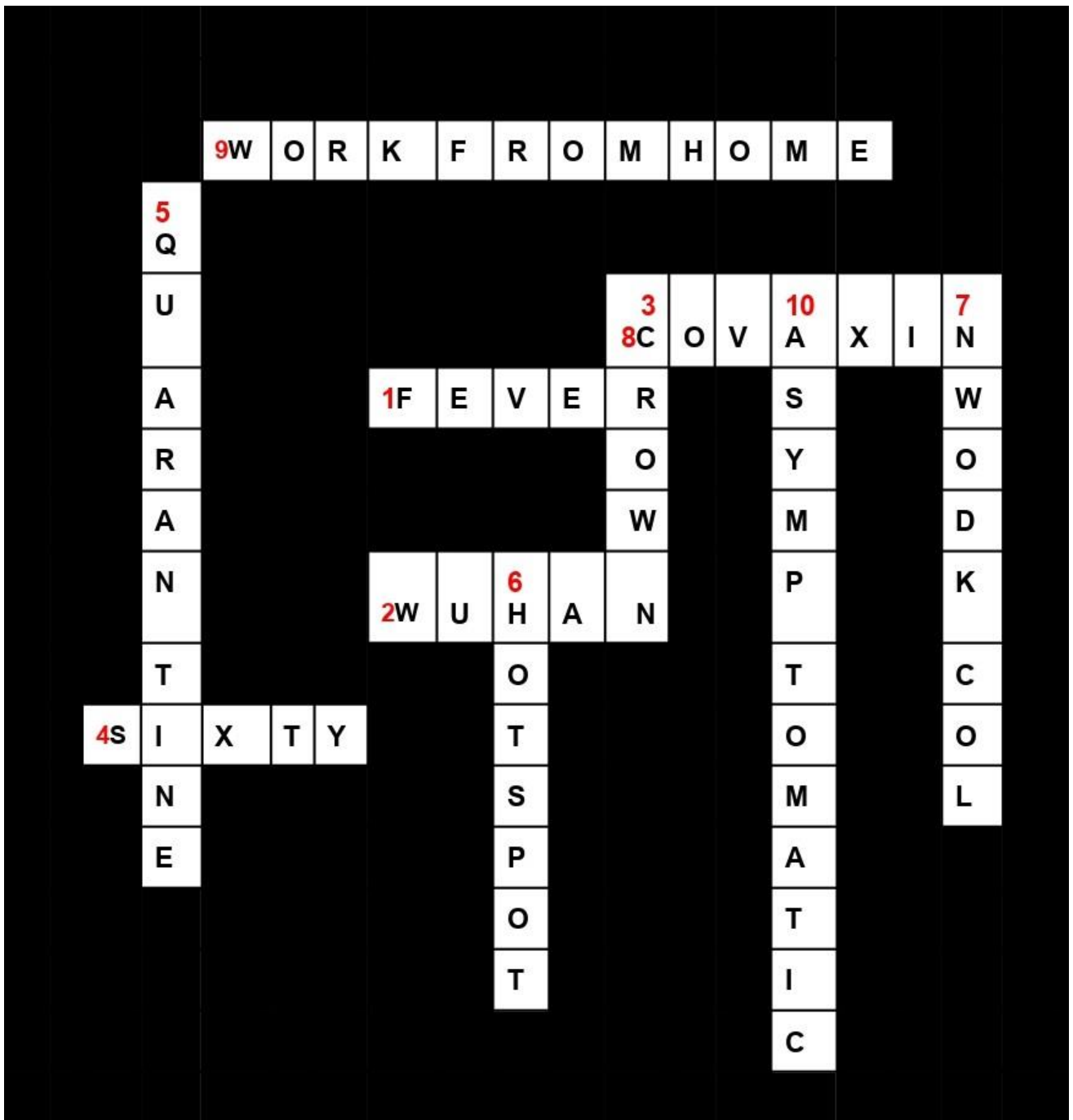
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