

INTERNET MEMORY

“Communicating scientific issues with people behind the screen makes it harder to develop a relationship of trust and confidence with your audience.”

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You post They View

Like and comment

Are you aware that a few scrolls down your social media account might be enough for one to find a suitable weapon to disarm you and possibly ruin your life?

But that is not the only thing going on in your account. Your account stores your data as well as some of your viewers for the post. As soon as you put something on the internet, you have already archived it for future reference

Sharing our lives and minds with our friends on social media is not a problem. So what really is the problem?

Remember the internet will archive everything you upload...

Post like a brand. What exactly do you want people to know about you?

Why does information travels faster on the internet?

Social connections can be illustrated using a graph. Where each vertex represents an individual you connected to. Without the internet, our social graph can be small and at some point disconnected. However, with social media, our communication graph is interconnected and denser.

This makes it easier for information to travel down to a person far without any intermediate medium. Your account name is the key to most of your online data.

Bv: Thembellihle Dlamini

AFRICAN GONG
The Pan-African Network for the Popularization of Science & Technology and Science Communication

With internet devices and data becoming common in some household commodities in Africa, young people’s access to social media has increased. Sharing life stories, opinions, and graphics with family and friends has become a norm. At the same time, due to the internet’s ability to archive such information uploaded, people with bad intentions, such as internet bullies, haters, stalkers and hackers, can retrieve and use such information against them - something that most social media users in Africa are not aware of. The science communication project - **Internet Memory** - designed by **Thembellihle Rose Dlamini**, aimed to raise awareness to Facebook users (between the ages of 15 to 30 years) to be cautious of what they post online as it might end up negatively affecting them in the future. She launched her project on the 18th of November 2021 by uploading various posters on the Facebook platform for the participants to read and engage with. The posters’ contents focused on participants’ social media use, potential dangers and information transmission.

While Thembellihle’s project was a success and impacted those who participated, she noted that the experience of delivering the project was an eye-opener. When she conceptualised her project, she thought delivering it through social media platforms would be easy since people are mostly found online nowadays. However, she learned that communicating scientific issues with people behind the screen makes it harder to develop a relationship of trust and confidence with one’s audience. Most participants were afraid to actively engage in the project for fear of their private information being publicised, while others would challenge her motive for the project.

Thembellihle is currently a Master’s Student in Quantum Mechanics at AIMS South Africa. She indicated that the experience of planning and delivering her project has inspired her to practice science communication more through writing blogs to discuss her science journey and interesting topics making use of non-technical language with less scientific jargon and simpler diagrams.