

Assignment 2: Mental Health

Your paper must be submitted as a pdf, MS word or rich text document. With the filename Lastname_Firstname_A2.xxx with your name and the appropriate file extension type.

1. Would you make an addictive app?

Scenario: A few years ago, you built an app called *CMS Go* that became very popular. People were flocking together to catch a wild Pancer, or to swap a rare Paco for a shiny Anya. It brought in enough money that you were not only able to quit your job, but to hire several of your former classmates. Unfortunately, the popularity of the app has waned in recent months. You've tried everything you can think of to get player back, but even your "Clash of POST" update didn't do much to improve profits. You're at the point where it looks like you're going to have to start laying off your employees, and given current trends, you'll be entirely broke within 6 months.

One of your employees (who didn't go to UTSC and thus never took CSCD03) comes to you and says that they've been looking at the finances, and noticed some trends. The vast majority of your users never paid you a penny. Approximately 10% of your users have paid you between \$1 and \$50, and that accounts for about half of your profits, but another 0.5% of users are contributing the other half. These people are paying hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars per month. It's a small group, but over time they are contributing a higher and higher percentage of your total income.

This same friend says that they've contacted an "app optimization" firm, who guarantees that they can restore your profits to their previous glory by "maximizing user gamification feedback", which appears to entail adding a lot of gambling style rewards. Their profit projections would mean that you won't have to fire anyone, but even their own data says that you would be increasingly relying on getting a small number of people "hooked" on your game in order to give you ever increasing payouts.

Question: Will you "optimize" your app? (Assume that the company is reputable and you believe that they will in fact be able to do what they claim). In 500 words or more explain and justify your decision.

2. The Psychological Effects of Technology

In class, we will hear about internet addiction, loneliness, and the effects of the tech sector on the mental health of both its employees and its consumers.

Your job is to find 2-3 pieces articles that make a clear argument about the psychological effects of modern technology (either one specific technology, a class of technology, or technology in general).

In 500-750 words, summarize the articles, and analyze them using the CRAAP test as discussed in the Research and Library Support presentation. You should clearly state whether or not you believe the articles are presenting good quality research and could be relied upon as a citation in a term paper.

If you are one of this week's presenters, the articles should not be on your specific information topic.