Long Essay Prompt

How much information is too much? Do we need to know the caloric content of all food we eat? Should we want to know if we are genetically predisposed to a certain disease? And how much should we evaluate information we find online, from news stories to the personal details of friends and family? Information about the food we eat, risks we face, and people we encounter can make us happy or miserable. At times we seek out such information, while other times we avoid it. Continuous news cycles and regular updates from social media also add to our daily information consumption. How should we value such information? While there are broad trends toward "the right to know", transparency, and online sharing, are there limits to such trends? Why or why not? How can we do a better job of evaluating and consuming information in our daily lives?

(Please take a holistic approach to address the key themes of this prompt; do not feel the need to address each question individually.)

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Paris Li

In this digital age, everyone is bombarded with countless information, regardless of real or fake. Hence, unavoidably, we often get exhausted due to this enormous amount of news. Yet, the standard of 'too much information' is different for everyone. Some personal trainers may be aware of the calorie content of every bite of food they eat. On the other hand, many people do not care about nutritional values! So, I believe the key to determine whether information is excessive, is simply the values we uphold. It is impossible to draw a clear line.

Nevertheless, it is always vital to hold reservations on and carefully evaluate information online, particularly that about our health. For instance, during the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, there are scientifically unproven methods on the internet on how to protect ourselves from the virus, such as a dietary therapies that were extensively spread in social media. Some people may blindly follow this false information and become misled. In the above case, people may even harm their health without knowing the risks behind! Therefore, it is undoubtedly a must to investigate the trustworthiness of information.

To assess information, it is widely acknowledged that critical thinking is essential. One simple way is to comprehensively research the issue, such as viewing it from various sources. With different writers, it is described from different stances and perspectives, in which some may sound contradictory. Other than that, we have to differentiate whether the sources are reliable. Everyone can express their opinions freely online, but their expertise on the topic is uncertain because of anonymity. Thus, we have to be aware of the professional qualifications of the authors. Lastly, never forget to analyse information ourselves. Despite paying attention to the credibility of multiple sources, it is of utmost importance for us to not forget that fake news are purposely to trick people, and we should really think deeply and rationally about the issue.

Some people may argue that it is too exhausting to examine everything we receive and it is undeniable that it is correct. Therefore, to prevent being overloaded due to such great amount of information, methods like digital detox and media censorship can be adopted. With all the enjoyments from smartphones, people nowadays hold their electronic devices every single moment. Thus, a popular trend 'digital detox' emerged recently, claiming that people should refrain from using digital gadgets so that they can avoid being overwhelmed owing to all the

updates from social media. We can temporarily stay away from the virtual world. Besides, governments can censor information to some extent, so as to limit the amount of information. Additionally, censorship also protects us from seeing gory and illegal content. Can you imagine seeing bloody pictures of deaths online? Obviously this causes serious damage to people's mind, or even leads to trauma.

In conclusion, in the rapidly changing world with cutting-edge technologies, we should be alert about online information and practice critical thinking. All in all, our well-being is the most important.

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Rose Soo

With the rapid development of information technology in recent years, the globalization and cyberization of information has become an indispensable part of urbanite's life. In the Information Age, the appearance of news, internet and social media bolster the free flow of information. We can receive different information from multitudinous sources. However, it has become an omnipresent phenomenon that people rely on information while they don't know whether it is accurate and trustworthy. Subsequently, advanced information technology not only helps us to be informed, but also brings us some detriment.

Have you ever thought that we are consuming too much information? Nowadays, there is no doubt that information is of paramount importance for us owing to its convenience. As reflected by the International Business Machines Corporation post, we create 2.5 quintillion bytes of data every day. It shows that the problem of information overload is aggravated day by day. We upload and receive a multitude of information everyday ranging from relatives and friends to the network, but is it all information is serviceable to us? Absolutely not! From my perspective, the definition of information overload is that too much information is misleading and makes us miserable.

Regarding adopting information, some information can make us happy or miserable, for instance, the food we eat, risks we face, and people we encounter. Facing the continuous news cycles and regular updates from social media, sometimes we adopt it, while other times we avoid it. It is well known that many information online are not professional. Moreover, some online information are exaggerated so as to attract people's attention. These information not only can't help you alleviate the problem, but also deteriorate your situation. The authenticity of information must be emphasized. It is recommended that all information online should be for a reference and should not be used inordinately. If we blindly believe the information, we will just become more anxious and cause some unnecessary concerns.

Apart from this, we shouldn't circulate too much information on social media, like personal information. Many people nowadays like to share their lives online, but they always neglect the detriment of identity theft. They put their personal information such as phone number, age, address etc on the information box of social media. It is dangerous for them to be hunted by the cybercriminal and jump into the insurmountable obstacle. When we upload photos or information online, we ought to consider it thoroughly and thoughtfully to combat cybercrime. It is vitally important to increase people's awareness about the bane of information. There is a desperate need for us to lay emphasis on it to eradicate the

shortcomings of information.

To mitigate the effects of over-consuming information, we ought to cultivate information literacy in order to do a better job of evaluating and consuming information in our daily lives. Information literacy is the capability to identify, locate and access appropriate sources of information to meet the information needs. The broad trends toward "the right to know", transparency, and online sharing have no limits, so we can't search various information freely. Using the information online, we must polish our critical thinking skill and be more vigilant to evaluate it more carefully by searching and comparing the information at different platforms in order to make a informed decision.

In the new millennium, the flourishing development of the information age helps us maintain a high level of life convenience. Nevertheless, while we are enjoying the achievements of information development, we should make a concerted effort to ensure that we are not highly susceptible to the reliance of information.

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Viann Li

As our society becomes more and more technologically advanced, everyone is attached to a smartphone or other electronic devices. We are also addicted to the Internet, social media, as well as the information we could find in the virtual world. Some of us will lock ourselves up in a room and sit in front of screens 24/7. It seems that we cannot detach ourselves from screens while we are shopping or eating. People who are addicted to their gadgets are crowned with the name 'the Phubbies'. When it is common for everyone to immerse themselves in the online world, there is a risk of receiving too much information.
Apart from the Internet, we still have many channels to obtain different kinds of information. Traditional printed media like newspaper, magazines and journals, it is where we get to know current affairs, academic knowledge and gossip. All information is easily accessible, educational and entertaining.

Similarly, the Internet can also be accessed anytime anywhere. The scale and speed of information exchange is beyond our imagination and such information overload may lead to headaches. Most importantly, information explosion makes us vulnerable to false information and conspiracy. We need to be very careful not to be misled by false information. We should reduce our average screen time to avoid receiving too much unnecessary information.
We do have the rights to know and the freedom to check out what we are interested in, but we have to bear the consequences. Transparency is important but we have to respect people's privacy too. Everyone has his or her own bottom line. If you feel uneasy to inquire something, you should avoid taking a step further and putting yourself at risks.
There are many ways to avoid false information and information overload. First, try to get rid of your computer, smartphone or any other gadgets for a few hours per day, and make sure you have disabled all notifications. Just take time to do nothing and relax your body and mind. You can also practise mindfulness which gives you a chance to reboot and charge your mental batteries. This therapy helps you to think more clearly.

Second, you should be more selective and prioritize your information. Like when someone texts you or when you get an email, evaluate the urgency for you to respond. The step helps you save a lot more time for something more important and detach yourself from the

Internet for a while. Also, a spam filter is also useful to eradicate unnecessary information. After experiencing a day without information overload, you have built up strategies to deal with unnecessary information. Make it a daily practice. You can list out the top few tasks you have to tackle the next day so as to plan and prioritize the things you have to do. It helps you manage your time better as you will not waste your time overthinking your flow of work. It helps you keep information under control.

Overall, obtaining information is essential to keep up with what is happening in the world. We should use the Internet wisely and always be careful of the accuracy and authenticity of the information we got. It would be a good idea to fact-check and only obtain information from reliable resources.

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Akira Shimamura

My take on life is that it should evoke ebullience and should be enjoyed. By the same token, information consumption should be undertaken for the sake of happiness, and in my opinion, any information that provokes discomfort, frustration or sorrow is too much Information.

Caloric content of the foods we consume and our genetic predispositions are just two out of innumerable excessive data so common in this world. However, have you ever paused your caloric calculation and gene contemplation to ponder the fact that even without all the scientific know-how we possess nowadays, those of olden times had fared better in their lives? Indeed, the obese population is larger than ever and diabetes remains incurable. This goes to show that information does not necessarily prompt due action. Instead, it simply generates perturbation and impedes the enjoyment of our lives (a meal of bran, beans and broccoli is hardly an appetizing one!).

That is why I believe that in these cases of health and life, ignorance is bliss, and it can help ward off unnecessary worries and stress. Besides, it is oftentimes not information but rather the correct mindset and habits that we lack. As for study or research, I believe that there is no such thing as 'too much information', only too little knowledge.

The abundance of data does not solely exist in the physical world, however, because with Internet users' personal details and global news at our fingertips, "information overload" has established itself as a prevalent psychological anomaly. To save our minds from "overload", we should ask ourselves while sifting through the veritable sea of online data, "Does this concern me? Would I ever bother reading about this if the Internet hadn't existed?" No. Many of us would not; oftentimes we are just accumulating information for the sake of accumulating, as ants do. There is no value, purpose or essence in that, for value of information arises from relevance and adherence to truth, not sheer amount. Therefore, just as bees extract honey from pollen, we should select only the cream of the crop: details of our family and friends, not that of random strangers; significant global news, not dubious celebrity gossip. Consequently, we can enjoy lives of connectedness to our kin and the world.

Aside from information consumption, information disclosure is also an issue debated heatedly. I think this topic relates to ethics, morals and integrity, so I believe that the ethical bottom line would be the limit to these trends. Anything corrupt or illicit about governments,

companies or other organizations should be revealed for the sake of "transparency"; we have "the right to know". However, anything personal should not be disclosed because privacy is a human right, per se.

We are not computers that know to do nothing more than collecting, analyzing and archiving information; we are humans —— humans with life, relationships and emotions. As such, we should choose to evaluate and consume information which facilitates lives of felicity and connectedness to our kith and the world.