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01

Reflecting on Itaewon: How to Portray Visual Data of a Traumatic Event

Heeyoun RYU

UIC, Yonsei University

On the 31st of October, the Korea Communications Commission (KCC) required the deletion of 11 videos revealing unfiltered shots of the Itaewon crowd crush that took place two days before. The KCC referred to article 8-2 of the Regulations on Information and Communication, which prohibits the distribution of content revealing physical and/or mental pain that causes extreme repulsion or distress [1] These videos and images were broadcasted via official news sources and indiscriminately disseminated throughout social media. Authorities from the KCC and mental health experts expressed concern for the possible secondary damage to the deceased and their bereaved families, as well as the trauma to the public due to excessive exposure [2]

KCC's statement that promoted the ethics of media reporting is related to human rights regarding the privacy and dignity of the victims [3] Unfiltered footage of dead bodies, suffering during the crowd crush, and scenes where emergency services performed CPR violate the privacy of the people captured on video. The negligence of human rights also leaves unspeakable scars on the close family members and friends of the deceased. Not only do these indiscriminate videos and photos wrong those directly related to the crisis, but they also trigger mental health issues in the public. Experts, such Dr Alison Holman, professor of



SENSITIVE CONTENT

This object contains sensitive content which some people may find offensive or disturbing

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psychological science at the University of California Irvine, explain that repeated exposure to these images could cause symptoms of post-traumatic stress, such as recurring vivid imagery of the scenes and stimulation of survivor's guilt [3]. Furthermore, the unfiltered footage circulating was closely related to the inappropriate comments that the authorities were also aiming to identify and expunge.[4]

According to Puente's article, during a crisis, the role of media is imperative in providing updated and urgent information within a short period of time. He mentions the term "television marathon" where there is "a continuous stream of information for hours or even days" after a catastrophe [5]. In such situations where the supply of information on the scenes and aftermath of disasters is urgent, it is more pressing for a detailed examination on released visual data to see whether they adhere to the guidelines of privacy and dignity, especially since disasters inherently carry the notion of a natural or unnatural breach of human rights. How frequently the shocking or provocative visual data is being replayed as well as the level of the extremity of these visual images must also be carefully considered in relation to the viewers' mental health. Dr Holman also suggests showing a warning sign before the delivery of information. The caution message would let viewers know beforehand that the graphic images may cause negative impacts. This gives people a choice of whether they want to view the upcoming videos or not [3]. Thus, it can be concluded that the media's method of providing information is as important as the content, and particularly in the case of traumatic events.

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02

Do Digital Natives Have Digital Abilities?

Sereimony SEK

Department of Computer Science, Yonsei University



The term “Digital Natives” initially arose in a 2001 paper by American author Marc Prensky on how technology has had a profound impact on students. [1]. He described Digital natives as those who were born after the year 1980 and after the invention of digital technology. These include the Gen Y and Millennials (1981-1994) and the Gen Z (1997 to present). They grow up with various digital devices, including smart phones, tablets, social media and internet services such as Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Youtube, Netflix, video games, etc. Their online and offline lives are intertwined and they are assumed to have great proficiency with new digital technologies naturally.

In contrast, Marc Prensky also mentioned the term “Digital Immigrants” in the same paper which refers to those born before digital natives, but still have to adapt to the digital world later in their lives [1]. Instead of social media and video games, technologies such as radio, television, newspaper, books and magazines were more prominent in their era. Although, digital immigrants are known to be less “digitally illiterate” than digital natives, they were the ones who invented the technology that digital natives are using nowadays. That

is why, some people are referring to the term “digital natives” as “myths”.

One research showed that all digital natives owned mobile devices while that percentage was only 30% for digital immigrants [2]. For laptops, the gap is closer but the percentage of digital natives is still higher with 66.4% and 60.9% for digital immigrants. However, digital immigrants own more of other digital tools such as personal computers and digital cameras. From this, we can see that digital natives have more exposure to the recent digital tools and have higher frequency usage of this. As a result, one may presume that these digital natives have important digital abilities that they have picked up through the usage of digital tools and programs.

On the other hand, studies have also proven that this might not always be the case especially when they were forced to study remotely during COVID19 pandemic. Many students were unable to immediately apply their digital skills into their studies. In a survey done in Portugal, 83.5% of the students said that they have enough equipment (computers and space) for online learning, but 75.8% of them said that they were not satisfied with it. One student mentioned that this style of learning is complicated and even though it can mean more resources, it is difficult [4].

With all things considered, it is understandable that many people perceive digital natives to be internet and tech savvy because they have earlier and more exposure to smartphones and the internet much earlier than digital immigrants. While they might understand memes, the concept of online fame and Snapchat counts, they might not be as fluent in technology as people thought them to be. Therefore, it is important for educators specially to educate them on the usage of technology and design school curriculum that is suitable for them.

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Cryptocurrency: Stablecoins and Their Potential in Unstable Economies

Jiri HAVEL

Department of Economics (MA Candidate), Yonsei University



In a recent article published at Freething, the author Devon Zuegel, a writer and software engineer, discusses the evidence of cryptocurrency use in Argentina [1]. This article gives just one example of how cryptocurrency can bring more stability to unstable economies, but there have been many reports in the last few years about the surge in use of cryptocurrency use in other countries like Venezuela or Central African Republic [2] [3].

The common characteristics of countries whose citizens increasingly use cryptocurrencies are periods of high inflation, low institutional quality, and little trust in the government and the banking sector. One may describe this set of factors as the perfect breeding ground for the use of alternative mediums of exchange such as cryptocurrency.

In her article, Devon Zuegel explains that the Argentinian government has been unsuccessful in establishing compliance with its taxes, resulting in printing more money to fund its activities and causing persistent inflation. Due to the deterioration of the domestic currency, a rising number of Argentinians begin experimenting with cryptocurrencies from which the so-called “stablecoins” have received a lot of attention.

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Stablecoins are cryptocurrencies whose value is fixed to something. Among the most popular such stablecoins are the USD-T and the USD-C which are both fixed to the value of U.S. dollar. There are many other stablecoins fixed to commodities such as gold or oil but those fixed to the U.S. dollar are by far the most popular. For most crypto enthusiasts in advanced countries, stablecoins are “boring” as they defy the decentralized nature and do not appreciate. However, for people from unstable countries such as Argentina, stablecoins have paved the way to a relatively stable medium of exchange which is both convenient to use and safe from the venal governments of those countries.

Can the unstable economies such as Argentina become the stronghold of stablecoins? Can stable cryptocurrencies give the people of Argentina a more reliable way to save for retirement and pay for goods and services? Those questions are difficult to answer at this point. There are, however, some weaknesses of stablecoins. Since they are fixed to a certain currency or a commodity, stablecoins need to be centralized. The value of this cryptocurrency is not determined by the laws of supply and demand, and there is a need for an authority that can sell or buy any value of the cryptocurrency at any time. Consequently, one risk arising from this institutionalization is such that the central authority may not have the capacity to satisfy the buy and sell orders during volatile periods. Another risk is that the central authority may turn against its users and misappropriate their funds which is a reoccurring problem in the crypto business.

Nevertheless, according to some interviews that Devon Zuegel has carried out in Argentina, there is a growing sentiment in favor of stablecoins which is well captured by one Argentinian cryptocurrency user who says: “I would rather have a digital asset whose price goes up and down than a currency whose only real trend is down.”

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Decidim: Open-source Digital Democracy

Santiago Augusto SILVA

Department of Human Environmental Sciences, Yonsei University

Founded on February of 2019, Decidim is an initiative that aims to reprogram democracy with its free digital platform for citizen participation. Decidim offers to any organization or public institutions a free customizable platform that allows participants to self-organize themselves democratically at every scale. It is currently used by cities such as New York (USA), Helsinki (FIN), Ciudad del Mexico (MEX), Kakogawa (JAP), Belém (BRA), and Barcelona (ESP) where everything has started. In fact, any group of people can use it, whether it is an NGO, university, trade union, cooperative, or even a neighborhood association [1].

The platform offers several features to be used as arenas for democratic processes. For example, if a city wants to use the Decidim platform to create a space where its citizens can participate in online elections, participatory budgeting, collaborative writing of a regulation or norm, or the design of an urban space or the production of a public policy plan, the platform offers a feature called “Participatory Processes” that allow the management of these initiatives within the platform. Another feature is the “Digital Assemblies”, which allows users to set up periodic decision-making councils, list and geolocate their meetings, and participate in them. “Consultations” is another feature that allows referendums to be coordinated, kick-start discussions, and get voting results published via an electronic voting system. Lastly, there is “Initiatives”, which lets



participants collaborate on initiatives, define their trajectory and goals, gather endorsements, discuss, debate, and set up meeting points where signatures can be collected from attendees or debates can be opened to other members of the organization [2].

Decidim being a participatory initiative, cannot be summarized to a simple framework for cities and organizations to create their participatory spaces. Participation itself happens in the core of the platform, since its creators allow user-participants to manage and intervene in all layers of its structure, from its contents to its code. In contrast to typical corporate social networks, where users have little say over coding, rules of use, or data regulations, this model is even more user-driven [3]. Due to Metadecidim, the Decidim community that manages the Decidim project in all its dimensions, this is possible. Metadecidim is a community that collaborates in the design of the platform and the project's development, together, people around the world that use Decidim, from the citizens that participate in their own communities to the public workers that manage the platform, can design and develop new features and also report bugs for continuous improvement of the platform [4].

Online participation platforms, which have developed as cutting-edge technologies that allow citizens to participate in decision-making processes, are currently helping Digital Democracy gain traction. Through these tools, users can submit proposals and participate in discussions by presenting arguments for and against them as well as for and against other people's arguments [5]. Decidim is a great example of how a simple and open-source initiative can be beneficial to different communities. With the same software being used around the world, for different causes on different scales. This transformation of democracy is making it more possible for people to be closer to the decision-making process and actually print in these dynamics their own view.

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Barun ICT Research Center, Yonsei University
50 Yonsei-ro, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul 03722, Korea
+82-2-2123-6694 | www.barunict.org

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