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4 / 27 / 09

MW: 3:30-4:45

Blackout Weekend

On Saturday, April 18th and Sunday, April 19th, I never consumed any media. On any other normal weekend, I would have woken up, turned on my laptop to surf the internet, read my textbooks to keep up with my school classes, listened to a CD in my car on the way to work, and watched a television show before heading to bed. However, this weekend felt “empty.” I never gave myself the chance to check my HotMail, CSULB WebMail, MySpace, FaceBook, HotSchedules, and BeachBoard accounts. I did not pick up a book to read or even listen to one song. I also could not watch Mad TV on Saturday night and my favorite show, Desperate Housewives on Sunday night. Instead, throughout both days, I went to the pool in my neighborhood, tanned in my backyard, walked my dog around the block, did laundry in my garage, and baked in my kitchen. It was an unusually laid-back two days out of the week—something that I am not very used to.

My reaction to not being able to consume any media during that weekend was not pleasant at all. This assignment was by far, the hardest one of the semester for me. It felt like I was having a “media-withdrawal!” On various accounts in the span of those 48 hours, I had many uncomfortable urges to consume different types of media forms that I would have on any other day. We are all somewhat addicted to media in our own unique ways, but for me, this truly showed when I kept wanting to go online, especially with the purpose of checking my email. After the two days of no media exposure had already passed, I had about 25 incoming messages in my inbox. I was overwhelmed! Normally, I check my email at least once a day (usually several times), so I found it extremely difficult to skip one day, alone. I also wanted to go over a couple chapters in several of my textbooks to stay up-to-date with my courses, but I would not open any of them. This caused me to cram in some reading in a short amount of time the following week. The fact that I had an exam a few days later made the experience even worse, because my grade could have been drastically affected. I needed to study by printing the study guide online and noting endless terms in the book—two things I was not able to accomplish that weekend. Although music is a huge part of my life, I was not affected much by not being able to listen to it, since I only listen to about one song on my very short drive to work, anyway. Furthermore, I try my best to set aside some time to watch TV at night, but this weekend proved otherwise. I felt like I was missing something important, especially since my favorite show was not a rerun this week. I had to watch the episode online several days later to stay in the know.

The actual impact of media in my daily life is huge. I use it every single day, without fail. Without media around, I would go insane! I have a new-found respect for people who lived in early history. Right now, I could not imagine living a life without the internet, books, music, and TV. When I analyze the pros of a world without media, I can see that people would be very relaxed and more likely to communicate face-to-face in order to have real intimate relationships. On the other hand, the cons reveal that humanity would be so ill-informed about worldly news and individual necessities, that no one would have immediate knowledge of certain newsworthy events and personal aspects. We would all have to travel to obtain important information.

This exercise has greatly affected my perception of the media and its effects. This was a very eye-opening project that helped me analyze the effect that media can have on myself and that without it, I would feel very-much uneducated in today’s upbeat society.