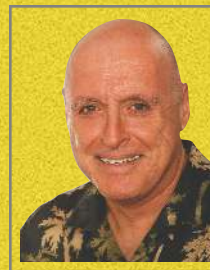


THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



1093 The Social Dilemma: They Want to Own You

They worked at Facebook, Instagram, Google, YouTube, Pinterest, Twitter, and many were in highly important and influential positions. They thought they were reinventing the world in a positive manner. They no longer feel that way and in 2020, came together to participate in a documentary called *The Social Dilemma*. Now now available on Netflix. if you haven't already, you need to watch it with your family. Social media will impact the rest of your life in ways you don't want, and in ways you'll feel helpless to avoid. Most people have no idea of the threat we face. I'm Jerry Roberts and though there isn't enough time to get into a lot of detail in this space, my goal is to scare you enough so that you'll watch the program. We'll dive in, next, on the The Extra Point.

What's this about. Big tech is getting more powerful. People are addicted to their devices, and mental health issues are tearing our society apart.

Depression is at an all-time high. The pressure to be connected is massive, and the cost is high. Internet bullying is everywhere. Fake news. Misinformation and disinformation. Elections have been hacked. Our social fabric is eroding.

Think back. When all this began, we had People from Guam, and Myspace. It was so innocent then.

In the program, an investor said that in the early days of Silicon Valley, it was simple. Companies made products which they sold to customers. The last 10 years, the biggest companies have become unimaginably rich selling their users. As the saying goes, you either buy the product, or you are the product.

It's about grabbing for your attention and keeping you on the platform, viewing images and videos, how long you see those things, making posts, and click on links. And each

time you do any of those things they track your activity. A lot of advertisers are interested in each one of those things you do. The ads you see in your newsfeed are there for a reason. It's not by accident. You have signaled that you have interest in something, and they can sell that information.

Free software and free services aren't free. We get them freely, then these companies deposit little pieces of software on our computers and phones called cookies, and our every online move is logged, developing a profile of who we are and what we like.

Businesses love this because like never before, they can target their ads to only the people who are guaranteed — through evidence of their actions — to want their product or service.

To do this, they need tons of data, and that's why they track us incessantly. They are trading in human futures, our futures. What we'll want, and what we'll buy.

When we're in a down mood, do we seek out different things than when we're happy? How can they capitalize on that? What's your personality type and what do people with that personality type buy? The computers and their algorithms are more and more sophisticated, and they make better predictions about our future behavior. Our future behavior is being sold.

It isn't just what we'll buy. The algorithms can predict what videos or stories we'll want to watch next, and suggest them.

Whatever your politics may be, you'll see more things that portray your beliefs in a positive light, while the opposition can be seen less favorably. The same news can be fed in different ways to each side, to appease their individual politics.
(Con't.)

And you'll never be wrong. Social media is dripping in confirmation bias. Whatever you believe, it will reaffirm those positions because that keeps you there longer.

Do you ever wonder how that person who used to be your friend can be so wrong on things these days? Well, he/she is being fed the same confirming crapola you are, just from the other perspective.

The Facebooks of the world use the same tricks as magicians and illusionists. They know our vulnerabilities, and how to capitalize on them.

It's about persuasion married up to behavior modification. They program us at a level we do not understand, to take certain actions when given the proper stimulus. You and your family are nothing more than lab experiments.

Buckle up, we haven't even scratched the surface yet. Facebook discovered they could use this technology, including visual cues on pages, to get more people to vote in elections. Do you think they might be able to influence how those people voted? Has Facebook, in some way, or in a large way, decided the outcomes in national political races?

They know that they can influence real world emotions and behavior, without ever triggering the user's awareness. This isn't fantasy. It's fact, and *The Social Dilemma* describes it in detail.

The goal, stated by the former VP of Growth at Facebook, is to manipulate you as fast as possible, get you to take action, and give you that Dopamine hit that satisfies you and keeps you coming back for more. It's a drug. The former president of Facebook said this is exactly what is going on, that Mark Zuckerberg and all the other key players clearly understood what they were doing — and they did it anyway.

They have created an addiction-based and manipulation-based technologies environment. These are their words, not mine.

For kids, the most vulnerable, it's not just about addiction and behavior modification, it gets into their sense of self-worth and identity. They doctor a selfie image until they think it's perfect, then post it. In minutes, maybe seconds, the

feedback starts, and that may send them emotionally soaring or plummeting.

That can lead to depression, anxiety, and worse, much worse. You won't believe how this all relates to suicide. The numbers connecting social media to suicide are flat staggering. I'm going to stop here. This just covers the first 40 minutes of *The Social Dilemma*. There are another 55 minutes to go.

Watch this show with your children, especially teenagers. They'll hate it, I'm sure of that. They'll complain that you're overreacting. They'll say it's a problem for others, but not for them.

Talk about it, and work with them to establish limits. What will work in your favor is that almost all of the participants in the program are young, they've worked for these companies, and they lay out what's really going on in a way anyone can understand. The level of manipulation will hopefully make your kids very angry.

Some people are abandoning social media. For the reasons highlighted in this alarming documentary.

If you stay, reduce your time with social media, and click fewer links. Be aware of what you're watching, and what you're posting, and how that impacts the kind of things they feed you.

You can have a presence on social media, but you and your family have to become aware of how you're being used. It won't get better until we get smarter, and demand changes. It starts with watching this program. *The Social Dilemma*, now on Netflix. Thanks for your attention. We went longer than usual today, but we needed that. We'll get back to our normal programming tomorrow.

Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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For information on training and consulting services with Jerry Roberts, please click this link: guamtraining.com

