

Our society has evolved into an interesting place. We are moving into an age where more and more of our lives are being woven with threads of wire and data. Computers are changing everything, from how we work and play, to how we communicate and share. At this moment, we are only beginning to understand how all of this technology is affecting our lives, and how it is slowly changing us; shaping us into beings that we cannot yet comprehend. There are so many forms of media that computers manage for us now; photos, movies, music, and books. When combined with the internet, we are allowed to more easily share all of these memories and ideas.

The internet itself is the main force driving all of these societal changes. These ease of transfer and access to all kinds of information has changed how we have changed our lives. Twenty-five years ago, if you wanted to send photos from your home in Phoenix to a friend in Ireland, it could take weeks for the mail to arrive, and on top of that, the expenses would be hard to bear for some. Move to the modern day, and those same photos are delivered in a matter of seconds and minutes, not days and weeks. The way we handle music and movies, transfer medical and intelligence data, express opinion and uncover lies, talk between friend and family, or as an anonymous figure amongst a forum of thousands, it has all changed the way society behaves and reacts to things.

One of the things that we are trying to understand in the Digital Culture study area is how exactly we are going to adapt and use these technologies in our every day lives. With the rising popularity of tools like [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Youtube](#), and [DeviantArt](#), we are given the ability to show exactly how much of our lives can be seen and understood by others, but considering that some of these tools are only a few years old, we are, in a sense, still learning exactly how we are supposed to use these tools and properly balance them with how we live. There is a certain level of responsibility that we are still learning, too. How much is too much information? At what point does updating a Facebook page

or twitter become addicting? When do these technologies and tools start controlling us, instead?

The amount of personal data that can be mined from a person's public profile on one of the sites listed above is staggering. It is sometimes too easy to figure out where these people work, where they live, and even when they are out of the house. But what if there is a purposeful intention to show almost everything that one individual does on a day to day basis? What if this person wanted us shadowing everywhere they go and everything they do?

This was the intent and basis of [Orison](#), a tool developed by Daragh Byrne that organized hundreds of personal photos, tweets, and thousands of SenseCam photos. The idea behind the SenseCam is interesting in its own regard. This small camera is worn at chest level and snaps a small photo at set intervals, essentially recording Daragh's life as he moves between work, home, and other activities. In a world where constant twitter updates were hard enough to follow, now we have a visual record for one man's life.

One of our assignments this year was to use Orison, the tool that organized and displayed the collection of photos and information, and create a story using those photos. What seemed like a simple project at first really turned into something profound once it was looked deeper into. We weren't just stringing pictures together to tell a story. We were actually given the ability to take someone's recorded life and reorganize it all in any way that we saw fit. Never before have we been given such an opportunity to take control of someone's life like this and manipulate the truth.

However, none of the projects tried to create a negative image in any fashion. Many had specific themes, or retold stories of certain outings and adventures. Even the more abstract projects strung together photos that linked, or shared color values, or created a small story. Overall, everything was upbeat and happy, but I think that everyone working on the project was more amazed about being able to use such a tool, and what it could develop into later on.

The Orison project is a good example to show just in what direction social media is headed. It is hard to image that in the future, technology like the one seen in the Orison project will be freely available to everyone. It is staggering to imagine what effects this will have on social development and interaction. Will tools like Facebook and Twitter become integrated with technology like this? Will things get to a point where it won't be necessary for people to physically update things themselves; their computers will be automatically updating for them? Things like location, the food one eats, the people one meets, the movies they go see and the things that they are all reading, at what point will there be too much information?

We as a society are still pretty new with handling our life on the internet. It tends to be that whenever we are introduced to an amazing and new technology, it can take ten to twenty years for us to find the proper balance between things. Right now, technology is developing faster than we can keep pace with at times. Every year there is something new to use and tinker around with. The real test lies in how we use these tool to convey the image that we want to other people.

The first three assignments of Media Editing introduced us to tools and ways were we can take information already available to us (photos, videos, audio, etc) and change their meaning entirely with placement, transitions, and editing. We were also shown how exactly we interact with tools and each other in the last three assignments. From the build of out social networks, to the look and function of the tools we use to interface with them, even down to taking and breaking down someone's life, taking pieces and reordering them to tell a different story.

We've only just begun to better understand our evolving digital lives, and this course opened up new ways of thinking and many more questions that need answers.