

THE EMERGING IGNORANCE EPIDEMIC

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The abundance of entertainment has increased exponentially since the invention of the color TV. The amount of attention we can give during a day, has however not changed. Today there is an enormous amount of entertainment available on the Internet, and companies are competing to get our attention. This competition is becoming increasingly ruthless, as companies are becoming better at using our psychological weaknesses to get our attention^[1,2].

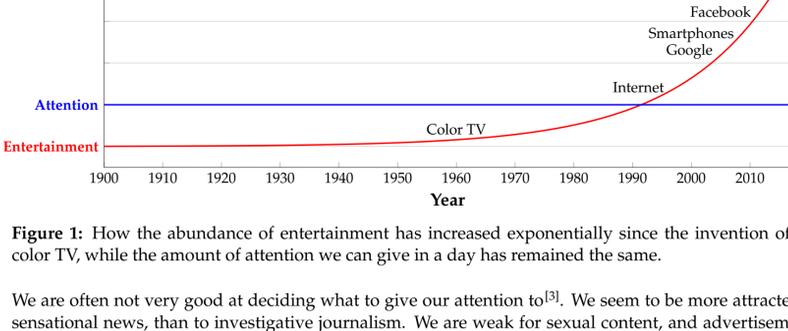


Figure 1: How the abundance of entertainment has increased exponentially since the invention of the color TV, while the amount of attention we can give in a day has remained the same.

We are often not very good at deciding what to give our attention to^[3]. We seem to be more attracted to sensational news, than to investigative journalism. We are weak for sexual content, and advertisements with false spectacular promises. We also seem to be more attracted to websites that confirm our biases. Most children seem to be more attracted to fun entertainment, than to educational entertainment, just like they usually are more attracted to tasty food, than to healthy food. There is unhealthy food in most supermarkets, and there is lots of noneducational entertainment on the Internet. Just like unhealthy food often tastes better, noneducational entertainment is also often more fun. This is because it requires more effort to make food both tasty and healthy, rather than to just make it tasty. In a similar fashion, it requires more effort to make entertainment both fun and educational, rather than to just make it fun. If children are free to choose themselves, they are likely to prefer food that tastes well and entertainment that is fun, without taking into consideration how healthy or educational it is. And as long as there is an overabundance of tasty unhealthy food and fun noneducational entertainment, children are more likely to prefer that.

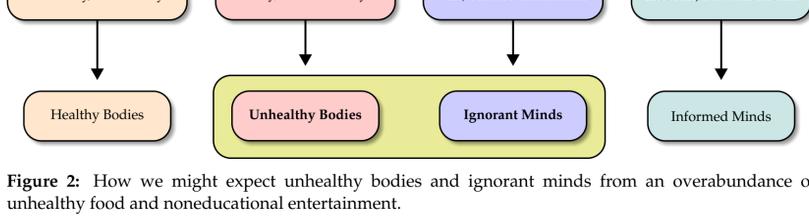


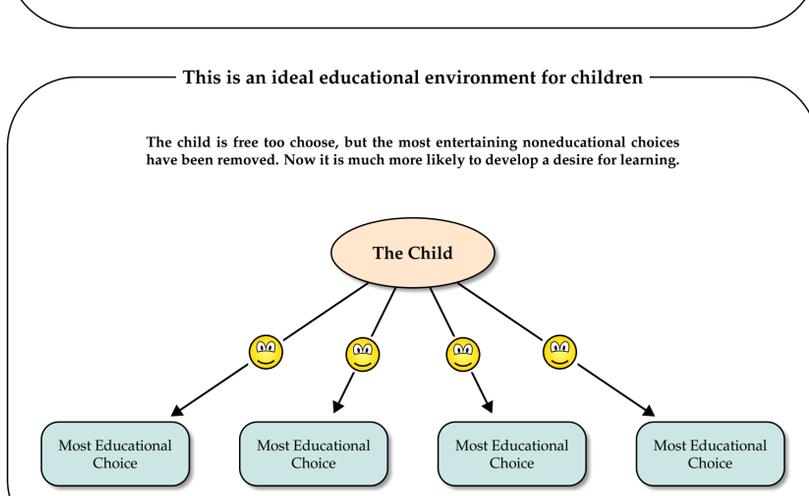
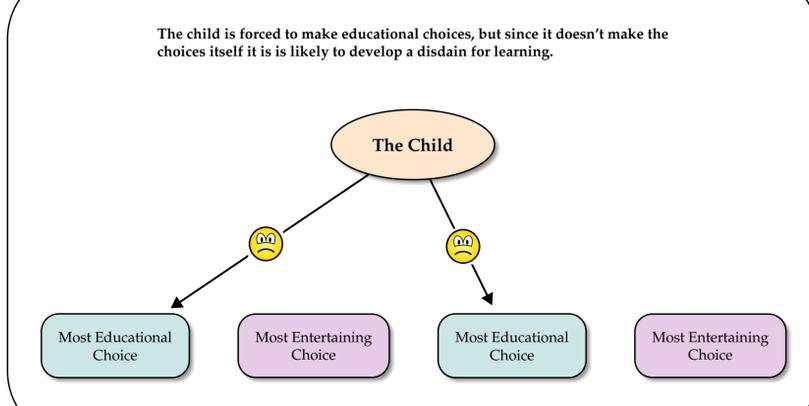
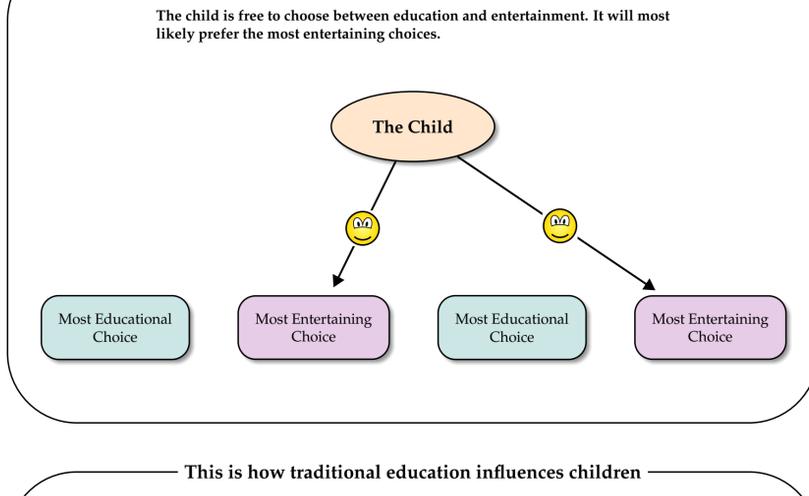
Figure 2: How we might expect unhealthy bodies and ignorant minds from an overabundance of unhealthy food and noneducational entertainment.

The developed world has enjoyed an overabundance of food longer than they have enjoyed an overabundance of entertainment. The obesity epidemic in the United States is well documented, since obesity is an easily measurable trait. Ignorance is however much more difficult to measure, and people don't necessarily agree upon what constitutes a general form of ignorance. The election of Donald Trump does seem to indicate that there might also be an emerging ignorance epidemic in the United States, which might be expected from an overabundance of sensational news and noneducational entertainment. The rise of right-wing populism in Europe, might also be related to increasing ignorance from an overabundance of sensational news and noneducational entertainment. Although Internet seems to have made us better at multitasking between different information sources, it also seems to have made us less good at reading long articles^[4]. In Twitter, people can only write 140 characters, which isn't enough for sophisticated arguments. So people rather communicate there with poorly explained claims, which is a perfect environment for people like Donald Trump. A study shows that although people born after 1993 are good at using search engines to find information, they don't have the necessary critical thinking skills and analytical skills to assess the validity of information they find online^[5].

Forcing our children to engage in educational entertainment is probably not going to work very well, since they might have friends that have access to more fun noneducational entertainment. And even if we get our own children to engage in educational entertainment, most people will probably not, and most of us live in democracies where also ignorant people are allowed to vote. In order to prevent our population from becoming more ignorant, we need to decrease the availability of sensational news and noneducational entertainment. They are however commodities of a multi-trillion dollar industry, which is not going to decrease the availability willingly. A completely new socioeconomic system is probably required to decrease the availability of unhealthy food and noneducational entertainment, and such a system is unlikely to emerge before the current socioeconomic system has collapsed completely. At that time, we might start to follow this blueprint for a progressive world democracy (PDF, HTML). Nevertheless, in the near foreseeable future, it seems like we just are going to see increasing levels of ignorance, and more presidents like Donald Trump.

AN IDEAL ENVIRONMENT FOR RAISING CHILDREN

While Internet has an overabundance of noneducational entertainment, children are forced to make educational choices in traditional education. Forcing children to make educational choices, can cause them to develop a disdain for learning. So we should rather remove the most entertaining noneducational choices, so that only educational choices are available.



More information about how to educate children in this way can be found here (PDF, HTML).

RAISING CHILDREN OFF THE GRID

In order to provide an ideal environment for children, it might be preferable to raise them off the grid in a secluded area, where there isn't any unhealthy food and noneducational entertainment available. The nourishment we give our children is important for how their bodies develop, while the entertainment we expose our children to is important for how their minds develop. Healthy nourishment is important for children to develop healthy bodies, while educational entertainment is helpful for children to develop informed minds.

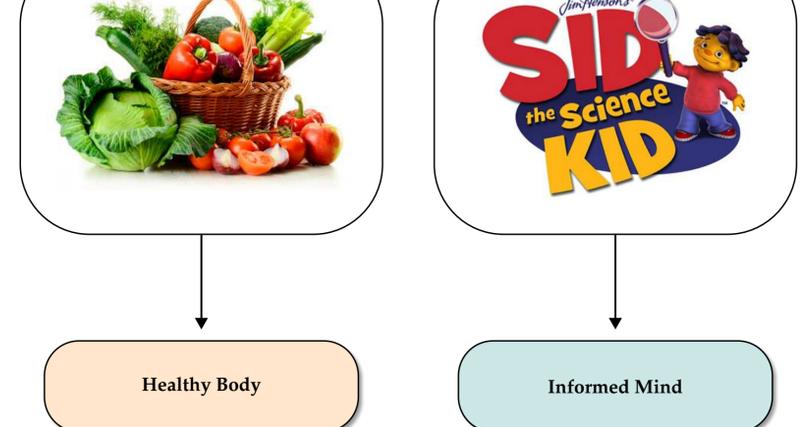


Figure 3: How healthy nourishment is important for developing a healthy body, while educational entertainment is helpful for developing an informed mind. More educational entertainment can be found here (PDF, HTML).

Children would be more likely to develop healthy bodies and informed minds, in an offline community where only health food and educational entertainment is made available. Such a community can be formed on the African continent. Large portions of the African continent is off the grid, and the African continent is a huge, with 30 370 000 km² of landmass. This is just a little bit less than how large the Soviet Union was combined with China or USA.

The Soviet Union	22 400 000 km ²	The Soviet Union	22 400 000 km ²
China	9 597 000 km ²	USA	9 834 000 km ²
Total	31 997 000 km²	Total	32 234 000 km²

Solar panels could be used to get electricity, while solar lenses could be used to distill unclean or salty water. With modern agricultural techniques, it wouldn't be a challenge to grow enough healthy food.



Some photos from the area encircled in red:



Bibliography

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