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TEXT 1

WHEN TOO MUCH NEWS IS BAD NEWS: IS THE WAY WE CONSUME NEWS DETRIMENTAL TO OUR HEALTH?

1 Humans are curious and social creatures by nature. The news helps us make sense of the world around us and connects us with our communities (local, national, and international). So, it is no wonder we are drawn to it.

2 Objective, legitimate news also keeps us informed, empowering us with knowledge to make balanced decisions.

3 But the way we consume news has been profoundly altered by media developments. As news outlets have adapted to media trends, the way people watch, read, and listen to news has changed. And these changes are not without consequences.

4 The increase of online news, particularly when presented via social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, has affected how we access and consume our news.

5 When news was delivered via traditional one-way outlets such as television and radio, we were passive receivers. But on social media platforms, we are active consumers. We sculpt and cultivate our news through immediate feedback, such as reacts or shares.

6 There's evidence this might not be especially good for us.

7 Amid an unfolding crisis such as a pandemic, news presented via one-way outlets might be less damaging than news consumed online. In early months of COVID-19, researchers found news consumed online and via social media was associated with increased depression, anxiety, and stress. The effects were not as bad when news was consumed via traditional media such as television and newspapers. This, however, is not limited to the pandemic.

8 In an average week, more news consumers source their news online (53%) than via print (25%). But perhaps surprisingly, television is still the most popular mode of news consumption. This year, 63% of the people polled said they watched television news in an average week. Nevertheless, we are far more actively engaged with our news than we once were.

9 Access to news is also radically different. The ability to consume news 24/7, via an almost endless variety of sources, has prompted experts to encourage us to moderate our news consumption. During times of crisis, we are more drawn to news. In fact, our consumption of news significantly increased in 2020. The percentage of heavy news consumers (people who consume news more than once a day) increased to 70% during the COVID-19 pandemic peak.

10 Unfortunately, the impact of news on our well-being is also particularly salient during a time of crisis. Multiple studies have found the more we consume news during or after a tragedy, crisis, or natural disaster, the more likely we are to develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

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11 Why are we so interested in bad news, anyway?

12 University of Queensland psychologist, Roy F. Baumeister and his colleagues have noted bad is stronger than good. Humans have a "negativity bias", whereby we pay more attention to negative information than positive.

13 Journalists are said to capitalise on our negative bias to capture our attention. Some news sources have learned this lesson the hard way. When a city reporter from an online Russian news website decided only to report good news for a day, they lost two thirds of their readers.

14 The problem is this negativity bias in the news can make the world appear worse than it truly is. The repeated presentation of information can create cognitive distortions, meaning we are likely to interpret newsworthy problems, like violent crime, as more prevalent than they really are. This negativity bias might also explain the tendency to focus on 'doom and gloom' stories on social media, referred to as doomscrolling.

15 Research published this year showed that when we perceive the daily news as negative, we can feel less positive overall. So, it is no wonder, increased news consumption can impact our well-being. Those who use social media largely for news, instead of social networking, show increased anxiety and depression. These results highlight the importance of being strategic about how you use social media, particularly during times of crisis.

16 So, how can we then take control of our news consumption? First, it is important to be aware your news consumption via different sources can look very different. Traditional media tends to focus on the facts, whereas stories, rumours, and human-interest pieces are prioritised on social media.

17 Empower yourself with the knowledge that, as humans, we are subject to bias. The media and those producing the news know this. These biases, which make us wonderfully human, also make us wonderfully biased to the information we receive. Our biases mean we are more likely to be impacted by negative news and more likely to believe what we see as more prevalent than it truly is.

18 That is certainly not to say no news is good news. News is powerful and helps us stay connected and informed. But in a world where we are surrounded by news 24/7, it is important we are aware of our cognitive biases and the distortions they create.

19 Let us take control of our news consumption rather than allowing it to control us.

[Adapted from: <https://theconversation.com/when-too-much-news-is-bad-news-is-the-way-we-consume-news-detrimental-to-our-health-146568>]

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TEXT 2

Winning is not about your starting point!

South Africans are world-class. We persevere to overcome our challenges, and make the most of our talent, skill, and abilities. If I was able to make it out of a challenging start (bullying, lack of self-confidence, modest beginnings) then each one of us has the same potential.

I was able to succeed thanks to the support of my family, my team, and my country.

I have aligned myself with a social media campaign such as #Lane8, which aims to inspire South Africans to strive for greatness and to overcome hardships no matter their challenge or starting point in life.

Because ultimately, no matter how long or hard the journey may seem, it can be a story of courage, hope and triumph, delivered by a vision that only you can sense.

Your character can allow you to sense the way forward, not as some distant goal but as a horizon that is visible to only yourself.

You inspire me to be great, and I hope that I can do the same for you.

[Adapted from: <https://www.goodthingsguy.com/opinion/wayde-van-niekerk-winning-is-not-about-your-starting-point/>]

TEXT 3

#Lane8

Despite two strong runs in the qualifying heats of the 400 metres, Wayde's final finishing time would see him placed in lane 8 – the very outside lane of the track.

No Olympic competitor had ever won from this position.

The challenges of racing from lane 8 are difficult to overstate. Staggered well ahead of the rest of their competitors, this sprinter has no one to chase, and no-one to follow. It is a run that tests your inner resolve, your reserves of physical and mental stamina, and your courage.

[Adapted from: <https://www.audi.co.za/za/web/en/audi-lane-8.html>]

TEXT 4

Despite the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics 2020 to 2021 (and Wayde testing positive for the coronavirus) the 28-year-old said there were positives for him as he sought to reach his peak once more, as he was before the freak injury in 2017.

"I am hungrier than before," he said, "I can go way better than what I have in 100 m and 200 m, that's where my mind was before the injury and that's where my mind is at for the future."

[Adapted from: <https://www.olympicchannel.com/en/stories/news/detail/wayde-van-niekerk-wins-gala-dei-castelli/>]

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TEXT 5

[Source: <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/amnesty_international_the_thrill_of_victory_2>]

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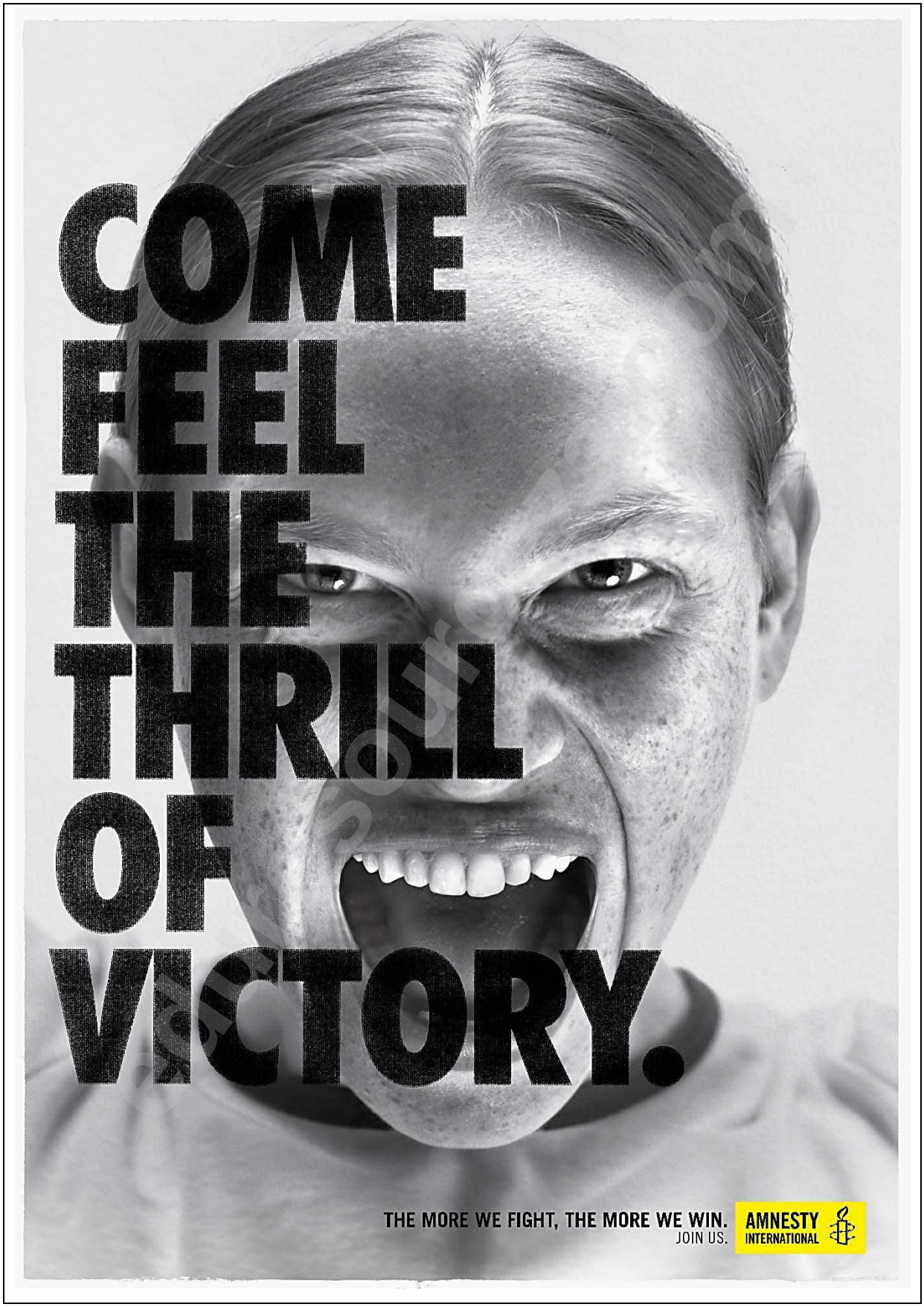
TEXT 6



[Source: <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/amnesty_international_the_thrill_of_victory_3>]

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TEXT 7

[Source: <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/amnesty_international_the_thrill_of_victory_1>]

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TEXT 8

This may just look like moss to you, but to us, it's the antidote for a society that's moving far too fast. It's amazing as it takes its time, up to ten years in fact, to grow. All the while breaking down rocks and soil, repelling extra moisture and helping to make the environment better for other plants to grow. It carries the forest on its back, so please, don't step all over it. Moss has been doing its thing since the dawn of time. Moss antedates humanity's boot prints and we must keep it that way. Stay on marked trails.

Conservation starts small.

COLORADO PARKS • WILDLIFE

LIVE LIFE OUTSIDE

[Adapted from: <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/colorado_parks_and_wildlife_conservation_starts_small>]

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