

Editorial

Reach out to out-of-touch politicians

You'll have to forgive us if our politicking gets a bit old. Fear not, Daily faithful — the end is near.

We don't blame you for not caring, we'd be awfully hypocritical if we did. It's not that you aren't concerned with what's happening to the country, it's just that we're not sure what we can do about it.

As a culture, we've been told our entire lives what precious little snowflakes we are and about the wonders of Democracy. Maybe it's that we've grown accustomed to the round-the-clock coverage of our political quagmire — nonstop partisan bickering with no end in sight.

We were just as jazzed to vote for Obama as the next person, that's for sure. In retrospect, the prospect of one man bringing change to the upper echelons of the political elite seems like a naive, almost grade-school notion, but back in 2008, we couldn't be stopped. Maybe it was the overwhelming discontent with the Bush policies on ... well ... everything ... but for a few measly months there, we were all doing it — we actually cared about the electoral process.

It's not that we don't care, it's just that politics have been so hyper-polarized lately we've become cynical about the process itself. In 2004, the only thing more difficult than voting to retain George W. Bush as commander-in-chief was voting for John Kerry to take the helm. In 2010, the same kind of indifference still exists.

Asking a complete stranger we've only met through debates and TV ads to represent popular sentiment on a national level is always a bit of a stretch. There's always been a substantial generation gap between career politicians and the college demographic, but in the era of YouTube and smart phones, it's all the more apparent.

It's amusing, in a ha-ha funny sort of sense, to watch politician's attempts at rallying the youth vote. Thanks to social media slowly usurping the last vestiges of our residual humanity, you'll find most politicians on Facebook or Twitter. This says something about the sad state of interpersonal communication, but even more about just how out-of-touch your average politician is.

We have the sum of human knowledge at our fingertips on a daily basis, and odds are most of us can't name our Senator or Congressman. Do you have any idea who's running for Iowa Senate in your district? Do you care? Probably not.

Despite what John Q. Politician's Twitter feed says, our political hang-ups will probably continue to fall on deaf ears. We'll be told to shut up and enjoy our tuition hikes. We'll probably be told it could be a lot worse, never mind that it's increasing twice as fast as regular inflation. We'll have a laugh at the Proposition 19 vote, even if it passes, but most of us know the federal government isn't about to stand for that.

People that want change — real change — in politics are labeled "radicals" and cast aside. Ron Paul has become the model candidate for a modern-day grassroots political movement, largely thanks to the Internet, yet was still given "fringe" treatment during the Republican debates.

It's out of our hands, folks. "Business as usual" might become a pejorative term during an election year, but politics has a long way to go before we can expect anything less.

This is where you come in, the youth. If you aren't happy with where we are headed, do what you can to change it. The first and foremost thing you should do is vote.

The politicians didn't reach you. Maybe it's time for you to reach them.

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Media



TV companies need to think about their consumers when making decisions about what to put online. Graphic: Logan Gaedke/Iowa State Daily

Rethink TV strategy



By Rick.Hanton@iowastatedaily.com

21st century viewers expect instant access

News corporations and television studios need to stop trying to dictate what I watch and when I want to watch it.

It seems that the media industry is fighting the transition to digital media at every turn and has been doing so for more than a decade. Cable companies and news stations make big bucks by charging you for the 100-plus channels normally available on cable or satellite TV and then charging companies to advertise to you.

It makes sense that they don't want to give up their big paychecks as the world slowly realizes that structured television programming isn't necessary in today's digital age. But they need to realize that they must adapt to the new viewing environment or be left behind.

I know that, personally, I see very little difference between going online to play back an episode of my favorite shows and sitting on my couch and watching them on TV. Heck, if I wanted to watch the shows that stream from the Internet on my TV, there are a multitude of devices that will allow me to stream the shows to the TV from the Internet like the Roku box.

If I have a choice between paying \$80 and \$100 per month for cable television and paying \$50 per month for only Internet access, I would pick Internet-only hands down. I'm sure that considering the options, you would probably do the same. You could even throw in a subscription to Hulu Plus or Netflix for an extra \$10 or \$15 per month and still save money.

Years ago, it all began with the networks laying out their battle plans against consumers who could decide to make digital copies or backups of their digital media. Those battle plans turned into legislation known as

the Digital Millennium Copyright Act which criminalized any measures of circumventing digital privacy protection software, which they then proceeded to add to all digital media. So, while I can grab two VCRs and copy VHS tapes as much as I want, it is technically illegal for me to make similar copies digitally with DVDs or Blu-Ray disks.

Over time, media companies slowly allowed their creations to percolate online through Amazon, iTunes and Hulu, where they can still be carefully controlled — not by you, the purchaser, but by them, the creators. Should they decide to no longer let you re-download the content or should they no longer support that service after you lose your copy, there is no getting it back — a good reason to still buy physical disks.

You may also run into the issue that some services like iTunes won't let you display the shows or movies you paid for if you are not using devices with High-bandwidth Digital Copy Protection, another DMCA lockdown for digital media.

The latest salvo in this battle happened the other day when News Corp, the owner of Fox Networks, forced Hulu to remove Fox content from Hulu, but only for customers of Cablevision, a large East Coast cable telecom company.

Why would News Corp want to selectively remove the content flowing to users of one utility provider? To show Cablevision it meant business, as the two companies negotiated over the increased rates that News Corp wants from cable companies for the Fox Networks channels.

Hours later News Corp turned back on the Fox shows on Hulu as it changed tactics in the battle for higher fees, but it demonstrated that a service we consider "free" or "ad-supported" on the Internet is really only free as long as our Internet service provider is paid up with the right people.

My other problem with the current digital distribution model is that while Hulu

and broadcasters' websites — Fox.com, CBS.com, etc. — let me watch TV programs online, some shows appear for online viewing while others don't, and some shows appear the next day while others take more than a week. Yes, maybe I was busy during the one hour that "House" was on last night and missed the new episode, but then I am forced to wait a week to catch the episode?

This just seems like a massive annoyance and from what I see online, it is based on the fact that cable and broadcast TV companies are paying a premium for the fact that you can only see each episode on TV for a week before it appears on the Internet. Then, of course after giving the networks this exclusive right, the producers complain when people share the episode online over video-sharing services because the producers provided no ad-supported alternatives.

It seems like those show producers are digging their own graves by not listening to their end-customers.

If the problem is money, I think the producers, networks and cable companies need to figure out how to make the amount of money they feel like they need online or take a pay cut. They are just going to alienate viewers by blocking access to shows online while complaining about viewers who download illegal digital copies of their shows when given no other legal option.

I think a lot of people would be happy to watch ad-supported versions of their favorite shows online rather than pirate ad-less content from a file-sharing service on the other side of the world, but with no options to catch up on their favorite show, they simply take the only option available. I hope the media companies grow up and realize that times are changing and generation Y is not tied down to its old scheduled programming model.

Working against us will only hurt them in the long run.

Random

Everything you care about



By RJ.Green@iowastatedaily.com

Vuvuzelas, AXE, televangelism, and much more

I think the likelihood of you becoming eskimo brothers with someone you know increases exponentially each year you're in college together.

I typed that last sentence for the sole purpose of having a few hundred people look up what an eskimo brother was.

California is in the throes of the worst whooping cough outbreak in 60 years. Part of that blame is going to Jenny McCarthy being an idiot and throwing a fit about the mercury level of the antiseptic that used to be used in vaccines — Thiomersal.

Apparently posing on the cover of Playboy doesn't make you privy to the knowledge that the trace amounts of ethylmercury found in Thiomersal is chemically different from the methylmercury found in fish, which is toxic in huge doses, but still not responsible for autism.

Then there's the part where the author of the study linking Thiomersal to autism rates fiddled with the data, but let's forget that part.

I guess if you'd rather have your child drown in their own snot based on your opinion of junk science, that's awesome. I don't go to school or know about these things.

RJ's one-word movie review of the week — "Jackass 3D": Wieners.

This thing about hard hits in the NFL is antithetical to football. I can understand the helmet-to-helmet contact being frowned upon, and concussions suck, but hitting hard is part of the game.

If you want to slow the game down, get rid of the pads. Holding would be blatantly obvious, everyone would have to wrap their tackles and nobody would pull half the crap they'd try decked out in gear.

I still think hockey is probably the most badass of the big organized sports. The amount of coordination alone is commendable, but the fact that they're doing it all on ice skates is ridiculous. Most of those guys don't even wear face guards. They might as well put spikes on the pads and set the goals on fire, and maybe put alligators somewhere?

The best part about that last sentence is how tame their implementation into hockey seems compared to almost any other sport.

Although, if there is one sport that does need pads, it's soccer. Maxipads.

Did you watch the World Cup? You can try to hate on football, but at least they're trying to run into each other, not prancing around like a bunch of sissies in a contest to see who can pretend to fall

down first. I'll tell you where you can stick that vuv ... er ... vulva ... valvul ... vbzfrthbb ... I'M GOING TO BEAT YOU TO DEATH WITH IT IS WHAT I'M GONNA DO!

Vuvuzela.

RJ's one-sentence book review: If you haven't been sad lately, read Cormac McCarthy's "The Road."

AXE body fragrance dropped T.I. from promotional campaigns thanks to violating his probation stemming from federal weapon charges. Apparently, dudes in Ed Hardy shirts have strong opinions about these things, especially when it comes to deodorant.

I don't understand the rule about soccer kicks in American MMA. How is kicking someone in the face while they're on the ground worse than doing it while they're standing? I get the "no stomps" rule, but it'd definitely change the sprawl-and-brawl tactics.

The Japanese love the soccer kicks, and they don't ever cheer during the match. They also have a "no elbows" rule, not because of safety, but because they don't want cuts to stop fights.

Why? The Japanese are awesome, that's why.

North Korea is detonating a third atomic bomb — atomic as in "fission" — isn't that cute? The last test those

crazies did was 15 kilotons of TNT — the equivalent of the Hiroshima blast.

We blew up the first hydrogen bomb in 1952. We have single-shot nukes in the 1,500-kiloton range strapped to fighter jets, sure, but allow me to tell you the kind of awesome our grandparents spent their tax dollars on: Single-shot nukes are old and busted.

Our submarines carry missiles with MIRV warheads. These can rain up to 12 500-kiloton explosions, but we pinky-promised we'd only shoot five at a time in the latest nuke treaty. I condescend to our nuclear arms treaty, because MIRVs were our way of getting around the first treaties to reduce the number of missiles.

Go America.

There's a Facebook algorithm that doesn't show photos of your exes in that stupid memories thing you forgot existed on the top right-hand side of pages. Seriously.

Things exist thanks to the gullibility of people: herbal supplements, vitamin supplements, GNC, televangelism/Fox News — they're the same thing, astrology, this column, chiropractic, D.A.R.E., Scientology, political correctness, undergraduate science degrees, this column, half of all children, intelligent design, marriage, the TSA, Cracker Barrel, the recession and congress. Oh snap.