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TOGGLE

A publication of The Daily Star

WEEKEND LIVING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Dealing with COVID-19 burnout

Maruti 800 and the flying stuntman – PG 4

Endangered species fighting back with tech – PG 6

Google warns its users of Covid-19 online scams

VERONICA GOMES

With a substantial increase in work from home practices, there has been a notable rise in the frequency of cyber-crimes and scams. While the world has seen a 40% spike in data usage globally, the FBI has reported that the number of cyber-crimes have quadrupled, almost 667% according to Barracuda Networks, during the pandemic. Subsequently, Gmail has received over 18 million hoax emails about Covid-19 reaching their servers, 99.9% of which have been reportedly kept from reaching its users through Google's extensive usage of machine learning tools.

As further precautionary measures, Google launched a page on its Safety Centre solely dedicated towards educating users about avoiding Covid-19 online scams. At the start of the page, it provides a brief description of their aim to keep their users safe and aware. As you scroll down, the page provides 5 common types of scams prevalent in these times. They include frauds who- pose as health organisations like the WHO, offer to sell fake essentials like hand sanitisers and masks, pose as government

personnel claiming to issue tax updates, offering financial assistance while stealing critical financial information and requesting donations in the name of NGOs. Further down the page, Google gives you several tips on how to avoid aforementioned instances.

The page urges its users to be aware of differences between fake and real messages, further asking them to get information only from official websites of organisations like the WHO. They are urged to be cautious of requests for personal information like login details and passwords and financial information like bank details and pin numbers, voicing how the likelihood of verified entities asking for such information is very slim. Moreover, users are asked to donate directly through the websites of NGOs instead of doing so through emails and subsequent unverified links. Additionally, they are asked to double check links and email addresses, search whether they've been reported and to ensure usage of Google's 2-step verification. The page ends with a downloadable link to a summarised tip sheet which users can share with their friends and family to help avoid Covid-19 online scams.

SOURCE: **GOOGLE SAFETY CENTRE**

NEW CAR THIS WEEK

When Lamborghini launched the Huracan Evo in January, it was an answer to the longtime fan demand for a new, rear-wheel-drive Lamborghini. The new Spyder solves another long-existing issue, namely the lack of headspace. The new car comes with a cloth top that you can put down in 17 seconds, allowing you to sit upright and hear the glorious roar of the 5.2-liter V10 outputting 610 HP and 413 lb-ft of torque. It also comes built-in with Google Alexa, letting you can scream "Alexa, call emergency!" as you experience the 3.2 seconds of 0 to 100 km/h acceleration for the first time. If you wish to see the car in person, an AR model of it is available on the Lamborgini website. Just make sure to have an iOS device.

TechBits

Google's Duo video chat app gets a family mode

Google Duo

Uber considering using its Real-Time ID Check to verify drivers are wearing masks

Zoom acquires security startup Keybase

zoom · Keybase

Xiaomi, Samsung and others to resume smartphone production in India

YouTube TV expands its ad formats and measurement to TVs

TV

EDITOR'S NOTE

Filling in big shoes for a week

Not that I'm complaining about my modest creative shoes, playing the role of an editor for a week has been one of the most thrilling roller coaster rides of my life.

Just like the movie "The Hunger Games", one of us would be chosen for the position each week. Nomrota was the first one selected. Shout out to the brave soul for surviving the battleground, or how our boss likes to call it, "team building exercise". I was Katniss Everdeen in this challenge as I voluntarily gave my name for running the publication the next week.

SPOILER ALERT: I survived.

Being the boss meant calling in big meetings. With big meetings came big responsibilities. Having to play both the good cop as well as the bad cop has its challenges, especially when more than half of the workforce is older than you. On the other hand, I had never experienced so much freedom in my work and validation from my bosses as I did this week. Ronny bhaiya saying yes to all my crazy ideas, Nahaly apu being there for me through every step, Rahbar bhaiya coming up with the most brilliant topics and Zarif bhaiya? Let's just say the Fourth Horseman was there in spirit.

Here's to more weeks of dressing up as the boss and learning the ropes.

P.S. When will "The Hunger Games 2" release?

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- Toggle feature writer, student, Spongebob fangirl

TOGGLE

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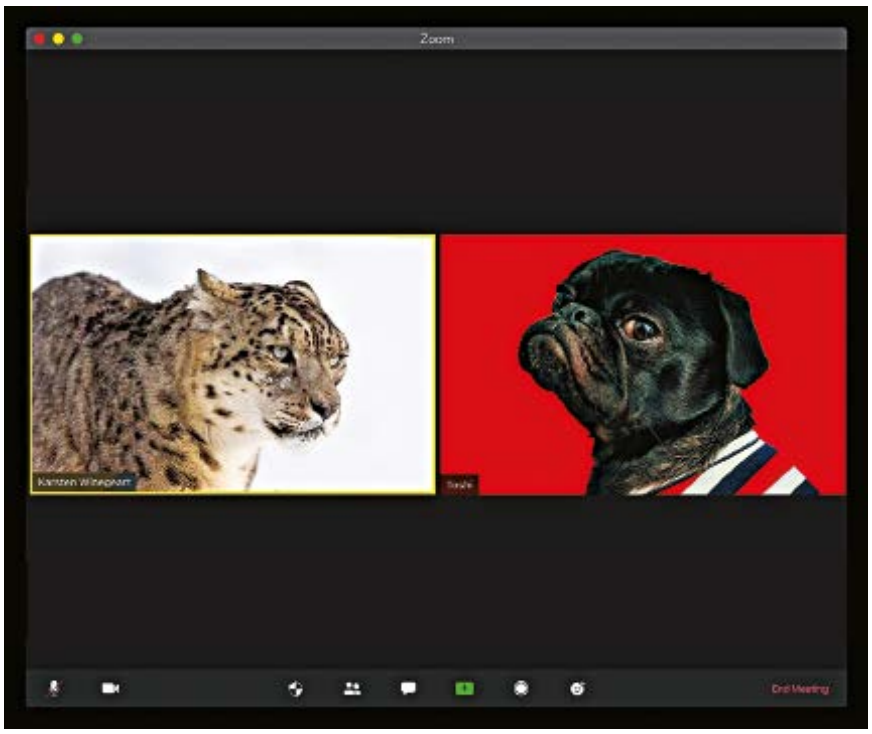
Presenting in Zoom like a pro

MOHAMMAD AREFIN CHOWDHURY

It is always challenging to create presentations that have the right mix of both visually appealing and informative content. This challenge coupled with the new practice of presenting online from home makes it even more difficult to keep the audience engaged. Since most online meetings take place via Zoom, this article has some tips and tricks to help you effectively navigate your presentations online.



GETTING THE RIGHT GADGETS FOR THE JOB

To start off, you need to ensure that you have all the right set of gadgets at your disposal. Smartphones are not the go-to devices for presenting slides. We recommend that you use a desktop or a laptop. The most important gadget you need here is your headphone as you will be speaking throughout the presentation. The microphone needs to be loud and clear to ensure a smooth experience for the audience. If you plan on using the annotations in Zoom to draw and highlight certain points, a touch screen is always helpful. And it is wise to have a strong router for an uninterrupted connection. If you plan on sharing video, a good webcam always helps.

KNOWING YOUR FEATURES AND SHORTCUTS

Next, you need to utilize the in-built features of your presentation software and Zoom to craft an effective presentation. If you use a lot of animations, transitions and videos, you should turn on the options for sharing computer sound and optimizing full-screen video clips from the more tab with three dots located at the top right corner of the options. If you keep your video on, click the upward-facing arrow beside this option. Then, visit video settings to unlock multiple features to up your video sharing game. If your room is not as tidy as you would like it to be, you can use virtual backgrounds or custom pictures from your PC. Some professionals use their company logo in a clean background. You will also find the list of keyboard shortcuts here which allows to quickly toggle certain functions like switching camera, muting and unmuting yourself and many more.

MASTERING THE VIRTUAL PRESENTATION

It is always good to have some interactive sections in your slides to keep the audience hooked. Otherwise, people might start other tasks without paying attention or even fall asleep while staying connected to the meeting. And it is always wise to use data to boost the credibility of your information. The slides need to be clutter-free with clean backgrounds. It should not contain lists of long sentences and a lot of images. If you do not have the time to make your own templates, you can access multiple free ones from Google and other sources which are visually appealing. The flow of the presentation needs to be coherent and a story based presentation is always more memorable. The annotations can be used to draw and highlight certain items in real-time to give the audience an immersive experience.

The flying stuntman of Netrokona

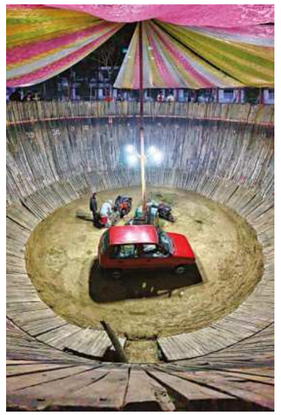
ZARIF FAIAZ

You're standing on a raised wooden platform that's meant to be a gallery, with hundreds of others who are cheering and applauding, for they are about to witness a stunt unlike any they've ever seen before. In front of you lies a steep vertical runway made of wood, almost perpendicular, that ends in the ground below where an old Maruti 800 and a contraption of a motorcycle is parked. The clock's ticking. The applaud gets louder, as a man in a brown jacket and a faded jean, walks in through a trapdoor below and stands in the middle. The crowd goes silent. The show's about to begin. Welcome to the game of danger.

THE WALL OF DEATH

In other parts of the world, it's known by many names; the wall of death, metrodome, silodrome or the well of death. Our protagonist Rashed and his merry band of showrunners, however, prefer to call theirs "The game of danger".

Their stunt, like the wall of death stunts all over the world, is a carnival roadshow featuring a barrel-shaped wooden cylinder made of wooden planks, inside which motorcyclists and drivers, and in our case, Rashed, ride along the vertical walls and perform stunts, held in place by friction and centrifugal force. For those, who have never seen such a stunt up close, it's indeed a show of a lifetime.



RASHED, THE DAREDEVIL

Rashed's "The game of Danger" travels all over the country, performing in carnivals big and small in local towns and villages. I caught him by chance while I was on a weekend getaway in Netrokona, searching for some sort of local nightlife when I came upon this carnival where they were performing. A ticket price of 20 takas was money well spent considering the stunts I witnessed that night.

Rashed, our stuntman, started at the bottom with his motorcycle. After two rounds, he started ascending, first on an initial ramped section and then on to riding vertically once he attained enough speed. Twice, thrice, he kept going on in a circle. The makeshift wooden floor beneath our feet trembling. And just when I thought it couldn't get any better, he lets go of the handlebar. Loud awe from the crowd followed by louder cheers. He wouldn't stop there. He decides to pull up his legs and sit in a crossed position while riding vertically on the ramps! The stunt went on for 3-4 minutes until he slowed down and went back to the ground. He got down from the bike and waved at the crowd. A round of applause. It was time for the car.

Just as with the bike, he started going slowly with the car, first on an initial ramp, then on the vertical ones. The wooden platforms started to tremble heavily now with the car running over them. A couple of rounds like that for 2-3 minutes until he decides to finally call it off and go down. Obviously, he gets down from the car to a hero's welcome; loud cheers and claps.

HOW THE STUNT WORKS

The physics of the trick lies in centripetal and centrifugal forces; the forces that act on an object when moving in a circular path. With enough speed, significant forces are generated and the centripetal force acts on the motorcycle of the car inward and centrifugal, outward. Together they balance out each other and keeps them in their position and stops them from falling.

At the apex, riders often experience "greying-out", an impermanent loss of vision and sometimes, vertigo.

A FLYING DREAM

I caught up with Rashed two months later, while I was writing this article amid a countrywide lockdown. Tracking him down with the phone number which he displays in large and bold fonts outside his stage wasn't exactly rocket science. He told me that in his 20 years of career as a carnival stuntman, this was the first time someone had reached out to him to write about his stunts. An honour I was glad to bestow upon myself. According to him, he started performing stunts when he was 15 and he learned it from his father, who was a stuntman at BFDC. At a young age, he had to start earning and education was a luxury he couldn't afford at that time. But he has no regrets, for he does the things he loves the most; putting up a good show and travel all over the country. When asked if he knows how exactly the stunt works, he says that he does not really know the science behind it in technical terms, but he knows his tricks and that God watches over him.

Before I put the phone down, I asked him if he ever wishes to become a professional stuntman in the movies like his father, to which he replied, quite dramatically, "No. I wish to become a hero".

(PHOTOS: ZARIF FAIAZ)

Burnouts during a Pandemic: Where do we focus?

SAIM AHMED SHIFAT

The WHO defines burnout as a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed and is characterized by three dimensions viz; feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced professional efficacy. Although millions of people are now in lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak, burnouts are still very much around. However, things are a bit different this time. Many of us are suddenly finding ourselves without jobs, those who are lucky enough to retain their jobs now have to do so while juggling several additional dilemmas — Is it safe to go out for groceries? How much food should I buy? How do I stay in shape indoors? How do I build and maintain a healthy routine for the kids now that they are indoors and don't go to school? Can I hug them occasionally or should I maintain distance for everyone's safety?

While facing away from all these decisions and dilemmas, we run into a plethora of social media content telling us how to get the best out of us, how to stay productive indoors, how it is the best idea to throw ourselves into that unfinished project as we finally have the time and can stay within our households longer than we generally are. As a result, many of us are feeling exhausted as burnouts have morphed into something more household during this pandemic. Now, let's talk about the factors at play causing such burnouts.

The Decision Fatigue

We now have to make more decisions during an average day than we used to. And most of them have to be changed and modified daily depending on the situation of a pandemic, the likes of which we have not faced ever. Many of us are not used to this level of psychological stress. It might be difficult to prioritize our daily tasks with so many factors as to our health, education, and employment out of our control. It is tough to cope with a new house-setup that is functioning as a sanctuary, classroom and office. Hence, it is quite normal if anyone is still trying to figure out how to structure the daily routine and prioritize tasks. The decision fatigue, coupled with the additional pressure we are putting on ourselves to find the smartest and safest choice while taking every decision can lead to a morphed household-burnout.

Stress of Unwinding

Dealing with too many decisions is not new for many people. While dealing with some emotional exhaustion and anxiety is expected during such a crisis, the problem for many lies in the fact that they can't rely on the usual coping mechanisms — going to the gym, taking an art class etc — as they used to due to the current situation. At this stage, trying to find and adopt a new activity might make things worse for many. While trying to cope with this new reality, many are getting more stressed doing things they do not actually love but think is necessary. Those social media posts about boosting productivity and making every second in quarantine count are not for everybody and we should only act on those if that is what we actually find to be stress-relieving and peaceful for us. The approach needs to be individualized.

The Way Out

According to Rubaiya Khan, a psychosocial counsellor, "We can follow three simple steps — Awareness, Accept and Allow — to save ourselves from being overwhelmed by everything going on around us. Staying aware is important however it is also necessary to make sure that the sources are reliable. We are living with unknown fear constantly, which can make us anxious. It is important to accept this fear. It is normal to feel anxious and no one is alone in this. And lastly, we need to allow ourselves to heal, feel safe and unwind".

She further added that it is not necessary to become the most productive person out there and is okay to let go. However, it is important to maintain a routine in order to stay fit mentally and physically. It can be exercising, cooking, watching movies, listening to music or anything that brings us joy. If not anything else, we can always go for that childhood hobby that we could never make time for. The approach has to be very individualized and can't be only based on online content or word-of-mouth influence.

This too shall Pass

Many of us are currently in financial fears, concerned about older parents, disappointed about cancelled plans, and at a loss about what the future holds. While it is usual to get engulfed in all these things, it is always a more peaceful option to look at the bigger picture. Coming out of the pandemic, we will have better abilities to manage and cope with changing situations at work or home. According to experts, things are going to get much easier for us while going about our normal lives because we will have accomplished something very challenging.

Staying sane is more important than "getting things done". It is unrealistic to expect that we can perform above and beyond just because we have abundant time at home. Staying indoors itself is doing a lot for the community. And with every day we do that, we get one day closer to the other side of this pandemic.

Endangered species fight back humans with human technology

OROBI BAKHTIAR

Technology and animal conservation make an unlikely pair but given the rate at which animals are disappearing from our planet, it seems that we have done too much damage. Tech experts all over the world are fighting the good fight for animal conservation. Here are some of the most effective ideas we have seen that put technology to work for endangered species:

SMART COLLARS

With the help of GPS and accelerometer technology, biologists will have smart collars to track not only a wild animal's location but also their hunting areas, migration patterns and much more. Researchers are claiming this technology will help humans predict animal behavior and reduce human-animal conflicts, revolutionizing the way we interact with and manage wildlife. By keeping track of these animals, we can help conserve their species by avoiding human traffic in those areas and banning poachers from entering.

PINGERS

Overfishing and unsafe fishing practices have been causing the cetacean populations to drop rapidly in the past decade. Cetaceans are sea-dwelling animals such as whales and dolphins. A pinger is a hi-tech device fishers are now attaching to fishing nets that emits a sonic pulse. Cetaceans are hypersensitive to these pulses in the water and therefore can avoid he commercial fishing nets. This small but effective change can help save hundreds of dolphins and whales from ending up in nets around the world.

3-D PRINTING

From elephant tusks to rhino horns, poachers have been hunting these animals for years and selling them for thousands of dollars in the black market. This black market is depleting rhino and elephant population around the globe. To tackle this issue, a biotechnology company in San Francisco has developed a synthetic rhino horn, which is in fact, purer than the actual one. Using keratin and DNA from the animals, these horns will be sold to the market, undercutting the black market price. Poachers looking to make serious cash will soon be out of work.

DNA BARCODES

The International Barcode of Life project is assigning a barcode to each individual species unique DNA to protect them from illegal poaching or over-hunting. From fish-mongers' stalls to the distribution of an endangered species, the new database may be able to save species and keep a watch on our food supplies. Already over 100,000 species have been barcoded in over 25 countries to help build up the database, and the project expects that by the end of the first phase, over a million species will be part of the Barcode of Life Data System. By keeping track of animal products in such a way, we can help enforce laws about the selling and trade of certain species, and therefore save that species from extinction.

DRONES

Drones are already playing a huge role in technological advances around the world. In the wildlife-rich African country of Kenya, drones are accompanying teams of sniffer dogs and armed patrol with a thermal camera to help teams to stop poachers. Drones have the advantage of being undetected and therefore can catch poachers on camera. National parks are currently being equipped with these drones to map deforestation and keep count of the endangered species.

Celebrate the annual Endangered Species Day today and help us raise awareness about the endangered species in the world. We've hidden several of the endangered animals throughout the issue. See how many you can find. 9 aside from the pictures in this article.

Clue: It's not just the big picture.
Answers next week.

Are contact-tracing apps an effective solution to COVID-19 crisis?

JINAT JAHAN KHAN

One of the recent solutions to combating the Covid-19 pandemic is the use of contact-tracing apps. The method of contact tracing is quite known for its use in the outbreaks of contagious diseases, but apps for this process is something new to people. Smartphones can track down the people who may have been exposed to coronavirus. But this proposal is criticized in a sense that it may harm people's privacy and use their personal information.

WHAT IS CONTACT TRACING?

Contact tracing is an important component of the overall strategy to control infectious diseases or any outbreak of a contagious disease. For epidemiologic investigation and active surveillance, it is a much-needed technique. A typical method of contact tracing is like detective work where trained staff interview patients with a contagious disease to find out the people with whom they may have met recently. A next step of this strategy is to inform those people to take precautions and to quarantine themselves to prevent the exposure of the disease any further. It's a time-tested investigation method that is already used successfully to fight the outbreaks of diseases like Ebola, measles, and HIV.

However, the traditional process is laborious. Interviewing infectious patients takes a lot of time and it's hard to remember whom we've recently met. And proper training is also needed for the staff.

HOW DO CONTACT-TRACING APPS WORK?

A contact-tracing app lets people know if they have been met someone who later turns out to be COVID-19 positive. It can pinpoint who actually needs to be in quarantine and who doesn't. The main purpose of these apps is to track down people and alert them to be in self-isolation faster than the traditional methods allow. There are different contact-tracing apps intended to tackle COVID-19.

NHS COVID-19 APP AND COVIDSAFE

The UK's contact-tracing app 'NHS COVID-19 app' is primarily available for NHS staff on the Isle of Wight. Later, it'll be available all over the UK if it's proved to be effective. One needs to install this app from Google or Apple stores and enable the Bluetooth and add postcode. When two people meet, their smartphones will exchange a 'key' through Bluetooth signals to identify the individuals. If a person diagnosed with COVID-19 enters his latest status in the app, it'll ask him to upload the previous 14 days' Bluetooth keys to the cloud. This data will be shared with a health service database and the people he's been in contact with will be notified urging them to isolate themselves.

CovidSafe is the app launched by the Australian Government to trace the people with COVID-19 and warn others. It is almost like the NHS COVID-19 app. Install, put your name (or pseudonym), age, postcode and phone number, and enable the Bluetooth. Using Bluetooth signals, it also notifies the users when it's needed. One problem arises with how Google and Apple restrict Bluetooth usage by apps in iOS and Android. Developers cannot constantly broadcast Bluetooth signals. If the phone is locked there will be no signal, something but iOS and the latest versions of Android manage. Google and Android can rewrite these rules but UK prefers to do this on their own meaning their apps may not be that effective without bringing in the two tech giants.

APPLE-GOOLE CONTACT-TRACING TOOL

Google and Apple have been developing a contact-tracing tool since April that is based on Bluetooth signals or 'keys'. However, it'll not collect users' GPS location data. To protect patients' anonymity, it'll notify others but won't provide real-time alerts. Users can adjust their settings to decide whether they want to receive COVID-19 notifications or not. People need to opt-in to share their COVID-19 status and the government can't extract information against their will. However, users can get notifications that include official information provided by government health authorities. The first version of the tool is already out and this will let health agencies build contact-tracing apps.

In addition, Germany, Ireland, Belgium, US, France, South Korea, Singapore have also developed or are also developing contact-tracing apps.

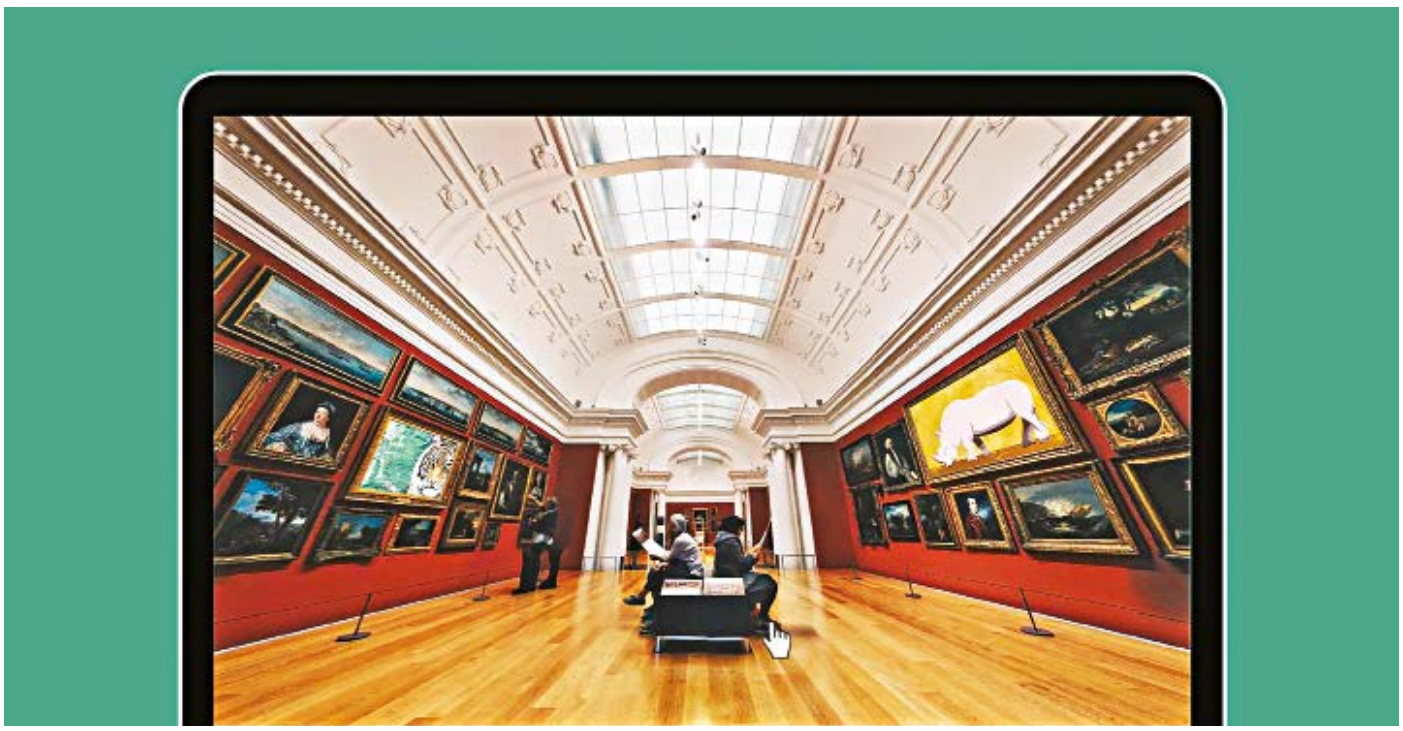
ARE THESE SAFE AND USEFUL?

As Bluetooth is not quite secure, its signals can be harvested and imitated by any attacker and so users can be misled. This system claims that they don't harm people's privacy as they have minimum data about the users. The data could still be used for nefarious purposes if someone got those. And not to forget, de-anonymizing is actually an entire domain of study in data science now. Even if we believe that all the data is kept safe by the companies, there is another concern about the authenticity of the information. As users put limited data about themselves, the other users could be confused whether they might have been exposed to COVID-19 or not. This can lead to false alerts.

It's still hard to claim whether contact-tracing apps are useful or not. There are risks, but benefits may outweigh them.

The good, bad and ugly of virtual museum tours

SADMAN SAKIB PANTHO



Museums stand testament to the vast history of this world. Spectacles housed in these establishments are the raw materials for the research and studies we now find in books and on the internet. And they communicate to the viewers in ways not possible through other media. Yet today, it is the internet that has brought the museums of the world to our screens. To commemorate the International Museum Day, let us look into how we can visit museums from our homes.

Google Arts and Culture is a platform that has documented over 2000 museums and places of cultural and historical significance from around the world. The webpage for each museum in this platform consists of a section with a slideshow of stories about the histories and other important facts relevant to the museum. There is also a catalogue of all the existing artefacts and exhibits, but these only provide the photos and the details. They cannot replicate the experience of walking through a museum. Perhaps for that very reason, Google incorporated the functionalities of their Street View application to allow the viewers to take a 360-degree virtual walk through the different hallways of the museums.

Google Street View will allow you to view museums' exhibits as if you were standing in front of them but at a price. The entire gimmick is not user friendly at all and often renders blurry portions. Chances are, you will become either dizzy or fed-up while clicking the arrow icons that appear on the floor to advance forward. The smartphone app of Google Arts and Culture allegedly provides you with a better experience, but we were unable to access it because currently, a bug is preventing users around the world from even viewing the front page.

Moreover, you will find yourself missing the crowd inside the museum. There is something about the nuance of experiencing decades worth of history among a crowd that will let you focus all your attention on what is in front of you. It simply can't be replicated at home, and the fact that most of the virtual tours in Google's platform don't have an audio guide does not help. An exception would be the original YouTube video footage of Israel's Holocaust Museum *Yad Vashem*, which users can access through the museum's Google Arts & Culture exhibits.

There are a number of museums that have released virtual tours on YouTube. Japan's *Ghibli Museum*, *Mitaka* is the latest addition to that list. But the videos are painfully short, offer brief looks, and are just too much of a tease.

The British Museum, *the Louvre*, and *the Vatican Museum* have their own, dedicated virtual tours. The British Museum's one is more of a fancy way of looking at the artefacts rather than actually touring a museum. The Louvre and Vatican Museum virtual tours have a 360-degree functionality that is much more improved than Google's one. The Vatican Museum is an incredible sight to behold, but you'll need to have a fast and stable internet connection for a seamless experience. Perhaps the most complete experience is provided by the tour of the Louvre. You can not only easily navigate, but the details about the exhibits will pop-up right beside them at your command.

Although virtual museum tours won't give you the perfect experience, it is wonderful to see how technology today is allowing us to access such marvellous sights from the comfort of our homes. These tours give us something to appreciate in these troubled times and bring a bit more colour into our lives.