WHAT DOES ASTEROID MINING LOOK LIKE?

SABIBA HOSSAIN

Asteroids are truly a wonder. First, they brought iron to Earth that later dictated the course of humanity. Then, they swiped off dinosaurs to pave paths for us. Now, it's our time to pay back with gratitude.

For that, we should traverse to our friends in the asteroid belt and extract the treasures out of them. As alluring as it sounds, experts opine that asteroid mining has some drawbacks, some of which are as deadly as the extinction of the human race.

Asteroids are rocky, metallic bodies that orbit the sun but are too small to be defined as planets. They are rich in rare-earth metals like gold and platinum. Mining asteroids could bring revolutionary changes in science, technology, society, and the economy. It could even solve fuel issues in terms of interplanetary travels. The knowledge asteroids will bring, along with the riches, is too tempting to give up.

Hence, the race between space agencies to excavate asteroids from space has already begun.

Sure, it sounds straight-out-of-science-fiction-type marvellous when hearing the proposition, but how long-headed is it?

For starters, asteroid mining could create the most wealth chasm we have ever imagined. Asteroid mining needs expensive tools and intricate technologies, so only the richest will get to invest and reap the benefits. The inflation of rare earth metals will change the direction of
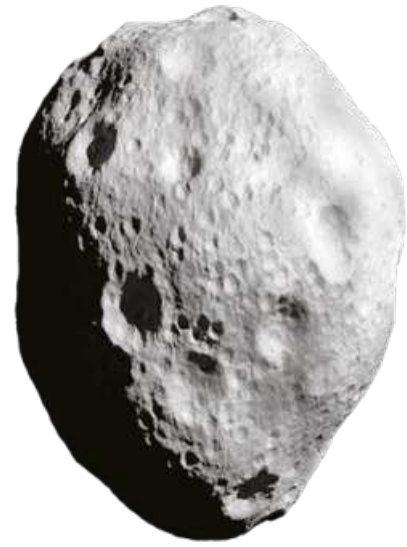
the economy drastically. Therefore, an economic monopoly by developed nations over underdeveloped ones is bound to happen.

Next up, environmental risks. To propel commercial asteroid mining, space travel will become a regular thing. This will accelerate the emission of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases, triggering global warming. Debris shed

in the mining process could create interference to satellites' functionality or destroy them altogether.

The third problem is feasibility. The entirety of an asteroid isn't a resource. In order to administer feasible mining, available asteroids need to be mapped so that we can determine which asteroid to mine and which ones to leave to prevent waste of energy and assets. The cataloguing is yet to begin due to our current technological limits.

Inconsiderate actions in asteroid mining could lead us to our own destruction. Tempering with an asteroid could affect its velocity, and in the worst-case scenario, it could come directly at us, cleaning our existence just like the dinosaurs before us.

Asteroid mining is an opportunity for us to explore. With proper implementation of the theory, we could bring revolutions and write new histories.

According to the present-day scenario, asteroid mining will be conducted by billionaires, which will give birth to the problems discussed above. To reap the benefits of asteroids for everyone on Earth, necessary acts need to be proposed and made.

To put it succinctly, awareness regarding the dangers of asteroid mining should be raised before it becomes too late.

Sabiba Hossain is a Hufflepuff who plans on going into hibernation every winter but never succeeds. Send her fantasy book recommendations at fb.com/Sabibastro

Why Do YouTubers Stop Making Videos?

ARYAH JAMIL

We've all grown up on YouTube. Whether it's cooking or commentary, you get to know your favourite creators and form parasocial relationships with them.

You watch them grow little by little each week till they have millions following them. However, consistency is rare.

Over time, they upload videos less frequently, the quality takes a hit for the worse, and they feel rushed. From uploading videos every week, they slowly fade until they upload once a few months. Why?

They may just be taking a break for their mental health. Fame takes a toll on people. Creating fresh content round the clock can be exhausting. It could also be burnout.

Pewdiepie took a break and said, "I wanted to say it in advance because I made up my mind. I'm tired. I'm feeling very tired."

The line between their private lives and the content they create become blurred. Creators market themselves. The more the intimate the content, the greater the number of clicks.

The YouTuber could also be working on bigger projects or may have chosen to prioritise quality over quantity, given their growing follower base.

An ongoing trend seems to be creators diverting to smaller second channels. They leave their main channels and work on small channels.

The answer to that is a long convoluted one. While it may seem redundant to "restart," looking at the beginning of YouTube may bring about some clarity. When you observe some of the oldest creators like Lilly Singh, Ryan Higa, and Smosh, you may notice that they all started creating content for fun and for friends to see. The videos didn't have budgets or pressure of productivity. However, they soon became brands and had followings of millions, a

[sad Pewdiepie noises]

lot of which they may have been unprepared for.

For a lot of creators, this pressure isn't what they initially signed up for. Or maybe, they find themselves not being able to keep up with the rigid schedules.

So it is natural to see more vlog or gaming channels putting up content consistently where the creators don't have scripted content and the content focuses on the creator's regular life and activities.

The part of the audience who migrate

from the main channel to a second channel is the part that is most loyal to the YouTuber. The creators get to relax and take it slow and the subscribers get to enjoy their favourites be their authentic selves, the ones they fell in love watching at the beginning.

D'Angelo Wallace is a brilliant example of this. The YouTube sensation posts long researched video essays on his main channel and shorter more casual opinion based videos on his second channel.

We could compare the second YouTube channel to spam Instagram accounts or *finstas*. An account just for your friends, somewhere you can be yourself. The same logic applies to creators just on a larger scale because most creators are just looking for intimacy and the sense of community they had when they just started out.

Aryah Jamil is mediocre at everything except laughing at their own jokes Tell her to stop talking at jamil.aryah@gmail.com

The True Face of AR Filters

NASHRAH HAQUE & RASHA JAMEEL

Who here remembers Snapchat's infamous "flower crown" filter from 2015? A show of hands, please.

Everyone with a smartphone simply couldn't get enough of it… until there was a new augmented reality (AR) filter to top the flower crown's popularity. And then came another. And yet another, leading up to the massive collections of AR filters that are presently available on every other social networking application.

Facebook eventually caught up with Snapchat's AR technology in 2017, with the release of Camera Effects on the former's platform. By 2019, AR filters had evolved from being a product from personal use to being an essential tool in promotional strategies.

Blogger Maisha Basharat Zakaria (@ youknow_hue) discussed creating her first AR facial filter saying, "I came up with the thought of creating my own filter with a very clear purpose in mind. I wanted everyone to try and see how it'd be if I were to paint on them, with

PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

the virtual face paint in question being the software which I used to create the filter. It was a way for me to reach out to my followers and give something back to them. My AR filter helped people connect with my work better, ultimately working out as a great promotional strategy for me."

Sharing her thoughts on AR facial filters, blogger Sharfin Islam (@atinyreader) said, "The very first facial filter I created proved to be rather difficult in the making. But the experience taught me about the kind of creativity that goes into producing such facial filters that virtually mimic face art."

In the present day, brands have come to lean further and further towards AR to help boost sales after surveys revealed that consumers are more likely to respond positively to marketing campaigns which are conducted via AR technology. Unfortunately, amidst its widespread commercialisation, the impact has been

substantially negative with respect to cosmetics and physical appearance.

AR filters and photo-editing tools are having a substantial impact on our self-image and shifting beauty standards across the world as customers are becoming increasingly drawn towards AR-based advertising which tend to offer a more immersive and overall customised experience compared to traditional adverts.

After the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the popularity of AR technology took a slightly different turn in terms of communication. Social networking companies adapted to the state of social disconnection across the globe, by making use of AR face filters to encourage social media-oriented interactions. The netizens welcomed the opportunity of being able to convene Zoom meetings from the comfort of their homes, with the only formal mandate being dressing from the waist up.

But when it comes to staring at our own faces the entire time, what effect does such an action have on our self-esteem?

Rather than focusing on the other person in online meetings, we often find ourselves fixated on our own appearance and the lighting, obsessing over the camera angle and getting distracted with the act of continually comparing our appearances to that of others. Enter AR filters. With one tap, the user can revamp both their appearance as well as their surroundings.

Sounds like a bit of a necessity on paper, but the reality behind the prolonged usage of such a technology is a rather murky affair.

The AR facial filters let you see what your face would've looked like if it were more conventionally attractive: if it had smoother skin, bigger eyes, and fuller lips, planting the illusion of "beautifi-

cation" in your head. Thus begins your unhealthy obsession with AR filters.

Pharmaceutical Sciences major Eliza Sadia Zahin spoke about her current state of dependency on AR filters, saying, "These days I feel like anyone looks better only when an AR filter has been applied to them. I've grown accustomed to thinking of AR filters as absolute necessities everytime I take a photo of myself. I understand that it's an unhealthy habit, but I don't know how to snap out of it."

Frequent usage of AR facial filters can gradually result in the user falling out of touch with their actual physical appearance, since they grow dependent on the filters providing them with an instant AR makeover. Once a user becomes accustomed to seeing a conventionally-attractive, albeit unrealistic, version of themselves on the screen, the transition back to reality is unpleasant to say the least. All of this social media perfection is seeping out of our phones and into our actual lives.

You're not alone if you're feeling more anxious than normal about your physical appearance during these trying times. More individuals are thinking to themselves, "I want to look like that," and going to tremendous measures to achieve their goals.

The fallout from such incidents can be highly harmful to a person's mental health, especially their sense of body image.

Mixed-media artist Syeda Salwa Azam voiced her concerns, saying, "For digital artists, AR filters make for yet another creative avenue to be explored. But the toxicity begins when we're more focused on altering our appearance rather than creating actual art. Now it's all about having an unrealistic physical appearance."

It seems that how people believe they

appear on the exterior determines their whole value and how they feel about themselves on the inside, which AR filters affect in detrimental ways, with people's insecurities manifesting as body dysmorphic disorder.

"I stopped using AR filters entirely because whenever I did it made me depressed. It made me want to look more like my filtered self and hindered my self-confidence a lot," shared 18-year-old Afra Islam.

The internet has evolved from "a place to be" to "a place to become", and it's imperative to recognise the difference. As the frequency of face-to-face contact decreases and our time spent scrolling online increases, it is more vital than ever to be wary of our mental health.

As digital natives, we are constantly bombarded with options to analyse one's looks and fixate on one's flaws. When you use social media filters to edit a photo of yourself, you may believe you've produced a better-looking version of yourself. Evading unrealistic beauty standards is easier said than done. The ultimate goal is to be able to take them with a grain of salt, and acknowledge AR filters for what they are: augmented reality.

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