

Of de-extinct ‘dire wolves’ and the importance of science communication

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On March 5, 2025, the current president of the United States made a claim about ‘wasteful government funding’ being spent on making mice transgender: a baffling claim to anyone with the patience and reservation to think about it. As proof, the White House’s official website released information about *transgenic* mice, i.e. mice that have been artificially infused with genes from a different organism — undergoing hormone therapy as part

some high-concept theory. Science is moving further and further away from the realm of easy accessibility and, to make matters worse, scientists in their ivory towers rarely offer help. The language of science is one that is heavy with jargon, and rarely communicates well to anyone not well-versed in that field to begin with. Knowledge, thus, remains trapped in a bubble. But what makes matters worse is that this leaves knowledge open to be co-opted and warped to sell to the media and, by extension,

misleading way.

The unifying factor for both the dire wolf and the transgender mice situations lies solely in how science, scientific development and study, and the accrued knowledge acquired through careful and laborious research have become a hotbed for misleading mass media coverage. Marketers, advertisers, and politicians are experts in the art of ‘communication’ — the fact that the thing they’re communicating may be misleading is of no consequence to them. This is precisely why communicating science — the intricacies of it — by those well-versed in the science is crucial. Now more than ever, the heavy jargon of science needs to be made more comprehensible by storytellers and writers alike. The responsibility is simple, but it has crucial implications. Otherwise, we risk otherising everyone who isn’t aware of the niche work presented within conferences and paywalled research journals.

The communication aspect of science is a skill that requires concentrated effort to ensure that the message is clear and safe from blemishes. This much we understand of the responsibility of science communication. But there is an additional factor at play here. While the niche factor of science makes it difficult to communicate, the financial barriers of academia act as a fortress, concealing any and all knowledge generated within their journals. Take *Nature* — the world’s leading science journal — which costs upwards of EUR 185 for a year’s subscription. No part of this money, or really any money paid to journals, ends up in the scientists’ pockets. The publishers take all, and thus they continue charging exorbitant prices for crucial scientific knowledge.

Communication is a concept built around the idea of collaboration. When science is made inaccessible, either by the politics of academia or by simply being too niche, it alienates itself. Science has a duty to exist for the sake of a society that asks for help. Science communication builds trust between the scientific world and those who seek to benefit from it.

The problem now remains in the fact that our political systems seem to thrive in the dearth of proper communication of science between scientists and non-scientists. To tackle this, an effort must be made head-on. Communities of scientists and teachers have a responsibility to establish the necessity of science communication to the youth. Youth organisations have a similar role to play, hosting workshops and establishing clubs that promote said activity. Even at a professional level, the importance of science communicators cannot be understated. Be it for the development of science itself or in how it is utilised, there is no denying that the current era is one that absolutely requires their presence.

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The life altering mundanity of adulthood

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As children, we all wanted to fast-track our childhood and become adults. We assumed adults had infinite money, could stay out or up as late as they wanted to, or never had to ask for permission for anything. They had freedom, autonomy, and fun. We couldn’t wait to be a part of it. However, now that I have entered my 20s, the rose-tinted glasses have come off. As we unfortunately step onto the throes of adulthood and grasp how taxing it truly is (pun intended), life is a series of concurring thoughts, constantly screaming: “No, this is not what I asked for! Give me a refund.”

As an adult, you’re constantly exhausted. You have no idea where your money goes. You’re not sure if you even want to know. After a certain point, your whole body hurts, all the time. You discover the value of a proper sleep schedule. You have to fight against all odds to have an emblem of a social life while also ensuring your social battery does not get depleted. And the list goes on.

Thus, as an ode to the chaotic ordeal which is adulthood, below are some moments that have shocked or will shock all new adults at some point with the realisation: ‘*Oh, I’m an adult now*’.

Watching your friends get married

Watching your dear friends, with whom you hold the fondest memories of being dumb, embarrassing, and chaotic together, getting married is a surreal experience. These are people we used to play with, shared our tiffins with, and always found just a call away. We were kids together. And now they’re starting a family, following different threads in life. Of course, it is



ILLUSTRATION: SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

a joy to witness. But the reality of it, of how far we have come, and how farther life is yet to take us, is always hard to accept.

Filing taxes for the first time

We were never really taught how to navigate the intricate web of taxation. While we all clearly remember that ‘the mitochondria is the powerhouse of the cell’, we are rarely given a clue about what entails the process of filing taxes in school.

As we grow up, we gradually get a glimpse of what taxes are, only to learn it is something the rich avoid to preserve their wealth while the rest are left to scramble. Hence, finally getting a proper look at the bureaucratic nightmare of taxes — with its vague eligibility criteria and rules, endless forms and errands — can be disconcerting.

Beginning to pay rent

The concept of home as a kid was unmarred — cosy and free of obligations. As you grow older and finally reach the age where you have to pay rent, you realise just how expensive it is to have a place just to rest and belong; that home actually has a price tag. Sure, it also instills a more solid sense of belonging and assurance, but the amount it takes away from your income each month also leaves you in a cold sweat which refuses to fully dry up.

Shopping for groceries and keeping inventory

As kids, core memories in grocery shops consisted of us whining to our mothers to get us a snack, only to get a reluctant “Fine” as a response. But as adults, a trip down the grocery aisle is organised and stressful. You almost always opt for the necessities, only going for a few occasional treats, but even then, the resulting bill results in hair loss. To make matters worse, realising that each grocery haul lasts only a handful of days just feels like a never-ending cruel joke.

Finding out that there is no room for excuses

The biggest thing about reaching adulthood is realising there’s no space to make excuses anymore, no space to stumble and learn. Adulthood does not offer the safety net that childhood did. Gone are the days of trial and error. You are always expected to keep it together. To have a plan, to be responsible.

You cannot act on a whim. You are always expected to keep your cool, especially with your parents because they are old now and so are you, somehow. You cannot do a single thing, such as missing out on sleep or eating too much junk food, without experiencing the consequences.

The world demands you know better, and you are expected to deliver.

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ILLUSTRATION: ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

of experiments for the treatment of Asthma, HIV, and even physical wounds. Of the claims made regarding transgender mice, no evidence was to be seen anywhere.

The conclusion, while crystal clear, leaves room for questions in my mind: Why is it that such an argument became a hot topic for people around the globe? Why was the lack of knowledge regarding science allowed to be weaponised for bigotry?

The inaccessibility of science has always been one of its biggest detractors. Today, whatever bleeding-edge technology exists typically functions to deliver answers regarding

the masses.

Take another example, one slightly more recent. The ‘de-extinct’ direwolves made headlines across the spectrum of news media. Everyone was too caught up in celebrating this incredible feat of science (or how adorable those pups look) to actually look into the science of *how* this was achieved. The pitch that was sold to these news outlets was that these were the same species of dire wolves that went extinct many years ago. However, the truth of these dire wolves being genetically modified variations of grey wolves was, while not hidden, kept at a distance from the limelight. It was only after the initial wave of excitement died out that people took to reading through the available data in order to come to a different conclusion: the science, while groundbreaking, was sold in a rather

Five digital platforms for journaling

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Whether you’re a seasoned journaling veteran or just thinking to start off, embracing digital platforms for bullet journaling can simplify your experience and keep you inspired. Here we have compiled five digital platforms that elevate the art of journaling into a convenient and paperless delight.

Day One

The Day One app is a virtual haven for journaling. It beautifully captures the essence of owning a physical journal while introducing dynamic features that surpass traditional mediums. Imagine seamlessly integrating videos, images, audio clips, weather updates, and even your location into your entries — bringing your memories to life with vibrant details.

Day One’s calendar view provides a captivating visual journey through your entries, with coloured dots marking each day’s musings. You can hover over a date and get a glimpse of your entry, inviting you to revisit past moments.

The ‘On This Day’ feature is a delightful touch, highlighting entries from previous years, offering a reflection on how your life has evolved. The app also tracks your journaling streak, which encourages regular writing and helps you maintain consistency.

GoodNotes

GoodNotes is a popular note-taking app that allows you to create and organise your journals digitally. It offers an extensive library of custom templates, handwriting recognition, and multimedia integration, making it convenient for bullet journaling purposes.

Moreover, the app facilitates users with a range of functional features including the ‘Lasso’ tool that enables precise selection and dragging of elements across templates. The ‘Shape’ tool is undeniably clever too. It smartly interprets your imperfect freehand strokes, transforming them into probable shapes and lines.

GoodNotes is available over iOS,



ILLUSTRATION: ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

iPadOS, Android, and Windows, making it compatible and user-friendly.

Journey

Journey is a secure and versatile journaling app that offers a sleek and inviting interface to chronicle your thoughts, memories, and personal growth. With seamless integration of photos and videos, mood tracking and location tagging, Journey enriches your journaling experience with a rich tapestry of multimedia.

Journey’s elegant design features a captivating calendar and timeline view, allowing you to effortlessly track your journaling progress and revisit past entries. The app’s cloud-based storage ensures your precious memories are safely backed up and readily accessible across all your devices. Its clean and distraction-free interface creates an ideal environment for consistent journaling, making it effortless to nurture your writing habit.

Daily Bean

Daily Bean is a minimalist tracking app

that embraces simplicity. Its intuitive design makes it easy to quickly capture your daily thoughts, moods, and experiences with just a few taps.

What truly sets Daily Bean apart is its focus on mood journaling. Each entry can be tagged with a variety of mood indicators, providing a visual snapshot of your emotional landscape over time. This insightful feature empowers you to identify patterns in your moods, gain a deeper understanding of your emotional well-being, and cultivate greater self-awareness.

The app’s design is a burst of charm, enveloping you in a warm and inviting atmosphere with its soft pastel hues, cutesy illustrations, and smooth, rounded elements. Journaling with Daily Bean feels like a warm hug, making the experience truly delightful.

Canva

For those seeking a more creative journaling experience, Canva is a popular choice. Widely known for its design capabilities, this graphic design

platform doubles as an excellent tool for digital journaling. With a vast array of templates, fonts, and stickers, it allows you to create personalised, visually appealing planners that reflect your unique style.

Canva’s intuitive design tools provide the creative freedom to curate your digital notebook pages exactly the way you want, without the hassle of purchasing or organising physical scrapbooking materials. It provides a digital canvas where you can explore your creativity without limitations and experiment with different aesthetics and styles to find what resonates with you the best.

Digital journaling adapts the traditional method into a sleek, tech-forward approach. With hundreds of amazing platforms available, each offering unique features and customisation options, there’s a tool for every style and preference. The possibilities are endless, allowing you to find the perfect digital space to undertake your journaling escapade.