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## Passage No. 101

**Direction: Study the following information carefully and answer the question given below.**

A few months after Donald Trump took over as the President of the U.S. in 2017, Michiko Kakutani stepped down as the chief book reviewer at The New York Times to devote herself to studying the post-truth, divisive political era that his election marked. Or, as she writes in the book her inquiry has now yielded, *The Death of Truth*: “How did truth and reason become such endangered species, and what does their impending demise portend for our public discourse and the future of our politics and governance? That is the purpose of this book.” Her inquiry is multilayered, with insights that echo worldwide as institutions and expertise are undermined, but it is useful to pause at her reference to “systemic problems with how people get their information and how they’ve come to think in increasingly partisan terms”.

Filter bubbles created by algorithms and social media are crucial here, with their capacity to create echo chambers so that one world view is repeatedly conveyed to the exclusion of all else. For instance, Kakutani cites a 2017 Harvard study which found that in the 19 months leading up to election-day in 2016, pro-Trump audiences were reliant on an “insulated knowledge community”, with “social media as a backbone to transmit a hyper-partisan perspective to the world”. This creates a fertile ground for what a Trump aide later called “alternative facts”, so that such “facts” are not just being floated, but also used to contest reportage in the mainstream media.

Kakutani’s important study has a rather specific context. But even away from the ideological fight in the U.S. and elsewhere — and perhaps even away from the danger of **concocted** stories gaining credence by virtue of having been forwarded, shared, liked, and re-tweeted — each one of us would benefit from an appraisal of how we get information and how we read it.

A lot of it is through social media, including links to news stories, many of them put out by news media itself. Jaron Lanier’s *Ten Arguments For Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now* is a **riveting** call for self-preservation. Lanier, an Internet and virtual reality pioneer, lists some of the gains to be made by doing so: “To free yourself, to be more authentic, to be less addicted, to be less manipulated, to be less paranoid.....” There is, he suggests, no good way to be on social media and retain a free mind. In fact, among the reasons (all very convincing, and urgent) are that “social media is undermining truth”, “making what you say meaningless”, “making you unhappy”, and “making politics impossible”.

Lanier also says that social media is destroying your capacity for empathy: “When we’re all seeing different, private worlds, then our cues to one another become meaningless.” Anxiety is easy to whip up. It’s like the childhood prank where one kid rattles the rest by gazing at the sky, so that everyone else gets anxious and keeps looking up, he explains. Soon, I suppose, the children snap out of it. But with filter bubbles, the anxiety keeps getting reinforced. He cites the American example of a man reacting to

a conspiracy theory, targeted at Hillary Clinton, that a pizza place in Washington was running a child-abuse racket by firing shots at the site. In India, we could substitute as examples the horrific lynchings in recent months based on viral WhatsApp messages about kidnappers being on the prowl to harvest children's organs.

But even as he attempts to persuade readers to get off social media, one person at a time till Silicon Valley gets the message, Lanier emphasizes that this should not mean a rejection of the Internet. And whether you are brave enough to get off social media or not, do heed this advice to keep your sanity and ensure the integrity and cohesion of your information gathering: "You can still get news online. Read news websites directly (instead of getting news through personalized feeds), especially sites that hire investigative reporters. Get a feel for the editorial voice of each site, which is only available when you go direct."

It's tough to delete one's accounts, admits Lanier, in the face of addiction and the network-effect lock. But advice from physicist Alan Lightman may help break the addiction to being constantly online. In his slim book, *In Praise of Wasting Time*, he suggests some society-wide moves to roll back "the destruction of our inner selves via the wired world". He recommends a daily ten-minute period of silence in schools, an "introspective intensive" course in university, a "quiet room" at workplaces that are mandatorily free of devices for employees to retreat to, an "unplugged" (i.e. free of phones, computers, etc.) hour at home, and "screen-free zones" in public areas. Sounds also like advice for saving time.

Questions:

**1. Which among the following is true regarding the opinion expressed in the passage about reading news stories from various online sources?**

- A. The readers should use their discretion regarding the information provided in any source of news.
- B. The readers should only go through the websites of such organizations which also publish any newspaper in the printed edition.
- C. The readers should go to the website of any publishing house directly rather than through any personalized tab of news items as chosen by the social media.
- D. The newspapers should not be used as a media of distribution but they should be used to intimate the authenticity of news.
- E. None of the above

**2. Which among the following is not true according to the given passage?**

- I. The victory of Donald Trump in the US Presidential elections is mainly due to the social media engineering of facts.
- II. It is necessary that the readers are alert whenever they are going through any news since using personal discretion is very important.
- III. Leaving the social media is an example of depression and isolation from the society that is very much harmful.

- A. Only III      B. Both I and II      C. Both II and III      D. Only II      E. All I, II and III

**3. Which among the following has / have been suggested as possible solution(s) to tackle the internet addiction prevalent in human beings today?**

I. The academic curriculum should be changed and courses focusing on introspection of oneself should be there in the course materials.

II. The employers should arrange for areas within the premises where employees can just recreate with each other without the help of any device or technology.

III. In the public space, the administration should make sure that there is no device working in a particular area.

A. Only II      B. Only III      C. Both I and III      D. Both I and II      E. All I, II and III

**4. Which among the following perfectly describes the main objective of the book written by Michiko Kakutani as described in the passage?**

A. She wanted to display the lack of knowledge among people of the modern era especially in case of political discourse

B. She wanted to take care of the US Economy by bringing out the real reasons of the economic slowdown in 2008

C. She wanted to explore further an era where there is nothing called absolute truth and it needs to be established with proper logic

D. She wanted to explore the new-age politics with alternative facts and also the creation of popular support at the cost of reasoning and logic

E. None of the above

**5. Which among the following is not a harmful effect of social media that has been highlighted in the passage?**

A. It can create a filter bubble and you may be insulated from all the other sources of information for a long time.

B. It can create public opinion for or against something or somebody easily by circulation of alternative facts.

C. It can help in connecting with people but adequate care needs to be taken to avoid any wrong company.

D. Both A and B

E. All the above

6. Which among the following is similar in meaning to the word 'Concocted' as used in the passage?

- A. Intended    B. Discovered    C. Fabricated    D. Ingenuous    E. None of the above

Correct Answers:

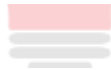
1	2	3	4	5	6
C	C	D	C	C	C

Explanations:

1. Refer to, “You can still get news online. Read news websites directly (instead of getting news through personalized feeds), especially sites that hire investigative reporters. Get a feel for the editorial voice of each site, which is only available when you go direct.”

It makes this clear that the opinion expressed in the passage recommends that news should not be read through personalized feeds of the social media but it should be read directly from the website of the publishing house of the newspaper.

This makes option C as the correct choice among the given options.



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2. Statement I is true. Refer to, “For instance, Kakutani cites a 2017 Harvard study which found that in the 19 months leading up to election-day in 2016, pro-Trump audiences were reliant on an “insulated knowledge community”, with “social media as a backbone to transmit a hyper-partisan perspective to the world”.

It clearly implies that the supporters of Donald Trump relied on selected literature to go through at the cost of ignorance to any other theory.

Statement II is not correct since nowhere in the passage it is referred that personal discretion should be exercised whenever you are going through any news item. Rather it talks about managing the sources and also staying away from the internet and virtual world.

Statement III is also not correct since the passage strongly agrees with the idea that social media should be abandoned so that you can remain sane and normal.

This makes option C the right choice among the given options.

3. Refer to, “He recommends a daily ten-minute period of silence in schools, an “introspective intensive” course in university, a “quiet room” at workplaces that are mandatorily free of devices for employees to retreat to, an “unplugged” (i.e. free of phones, computers, etc.) hour at home, and “screen-free zones” in public areas. Sounds also like advice for saving time.”

Now, among the given solutions, the ideas of space in the office for interaction among the employees and the course on personal introspection are there, as suggested in the passage. But it is not feasible to make a public space completely free from all kinds of devices but they can be made screen-free, as suggested in the passage. This eliminates statement III.

This makes option D the right choice among the given options.

4. Refer to, “Or, as she writes in the book her inquiry has now yielded, The Death of Truth: “How did truth and reason become such endangered species, and what does their impending demise portend for our public discourse and the future of our politics and governance? That is the purpose of this book.”

Hence, it is clear that her book mainly focused on the political discourse of the modern times where logic and reason were endangered species. It is mainly about fact creation and circulation among people by various means to create popular opinion about something or somebody

This makes option C the right choice among the given options.

5. Refer to, **“Filter bubbles created by algorithms and social media are crucial here, with their capacity to create echo chambers so that one world view is repeatedly conveyed to the exclusion of all else.”**

Hence, Statement A is correct in the context of the passage.

Again, refer to, **“Harvard study which found that in the 19 months leading up to election-day in 2016, pro-Trump audiences were reliant on an “insulated knowledge community”, with “social media as a backbone to transmit a hyper-partisan perspective to the world”. This creates a fertile ground for what a Trump aide later called “alternative facts”, so that such “facts” are not just being floated, but also used to contest reportage in the mainstream media.”**

This makes Statement B also true regarding the harmful effect of social media on the people and also the political discourse.

However, there is no reference to the effect of social media as stated in C, in the passage and therefore, it is not a harmful effect of social media as described in the passage  
This makes option C the right choice among the given options.

6. The given word '**concocted**' has been used in the sense that through the use of social media many fabricated stories are getting circulated thereby creating an alternative public opinion at the cost of the truth.

Among the given options, *intended* and *discovered* imply planned and found something unexpectedly. *Fabricated* implies *inventing something in order to deceive somebody* and *ingenuous* implies a person who is very simple and unsuspecting

So, only **fabricated** is similar in meaning to the given word.

This makes option C the right choice among the given options.



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