Supplemental Information. Satirical and Non-Satirical Texts

**Satirical Texts**

1. Consumer Spending

Report: Most Effective Marketing Technique Still Giving Out Little Versions Of Product

CAMBRIDGE, MA—Calling it far and away the best initiative businesses can undertake to boost sales and brand awareness, a report released this week by Harvard Business School has found the most effective marketing technique remains handing out little versions of products.

“Based on our research, there is simply no better way to attract and retain customers than giving away a product that is exactly like the one you’re trying to sell, only littler,” said lead researcher Neil Mukherjee, stressing that the method proved highly effective at promoting future product sales regardless of whether the complimentary items were little dish soaps, little paint swatches, or little chocolates.

“People will use up the little version quickly, because it’s so small. Then they’ll want the big version, and they’ll have to buy it, because the big version costs money. It’s pretty simple, really.”

The report also cautioned businesses against allowing any one person to take too many of the small versions of their products, as that was essentially the same as just giving away a big one for free.

2. Health Problems

Report: 750,000 Americans Die Each Year During First Attempt To Get Back In Shape

WASHINGTON—According to an alarming report published Monday in the Journal Of Applied Physiology, three quarters of a million Americans die annually during their first attempt to get back in shape.

“We found that, each year, about 225,000 out-of-shape Americans collapse and perish within the first three minutes of attempting to start jogging again, with most typically not making it to the end of their own block,” said study co-author Kathy Lyons, adding that a further 60,000 Americans who decide to improve their health by swimming laps succumb to overexertion every year and sink to the bottom of the pool and drown after just a few strokes.

“Perhaps most troubling, our data show that 60 percent of Americans who commit to regaining their former level of physical fitness by hiring a personal trainer at a gym drop dead almost instantly during their first abdominal crunch. And another 30 percent die while stretching before they even begin their workout.”

The study further noted that, of the Americans who managed to survive their first attempt at exercise in years, nine in 10 suffered from debilitating pain for the rest of their lives.

3. Stress

Study: Average Person’s Enjoyment Of Vacation Drops 36% For Each Additional Family Member Present

COLLEGE PARK, MD—Finding consistent results across all types and durations of vacation, from multi-week cruises to brief weekends spent camping, a report released Monday by the University of Maryland revealed that the average person’s enjoyment of their time away from work or school drops 36 percent for each additional family member present.

“We studied more than 3,000 vacationing subjects and found that their overall levels of relaxation and satisfaction dropped by more than a third for every parent, sibling, child, aunt, or uncle accompanying them,” said lead researcher Yvonne Ryan, warning that individuals who spent their vacation with three or more family members effectively neutralized any potential enjoyment they could have expected from such a break.

“While 36 percent represents the average amount that a relative reduces one’s enjoyment of a vacation, we found that certain family members have far greater adverse impacts on one’s pleasure, with elderly relatives and most in-laws reducing enjoyment levels by 50 percent or more.”

Ryan added, however, that such negative effects could largely be counteracted by a threefold increase in one’s normal alcohol consumption for each additional family member present.

4. Divorce

Study: More Couples Delaying Divorce Until Kids Old Enough To Remember Every Painful Detail

CHICAGO—In a new study published this week in The American Journal Of Sociology, researchers reported that parents throughout the United States are increasingly opting to delay divorce until their children are old enough to remember each and every traumatizing detail.

“What we found is that more and more couples are deliberately holding off on dissolving their unhappy marriages until their children are 9 or 10, the approximate age at which they’re cognitively capable of retaining every unbearably painful moment,” said study co-author Anna Dasgupta, adding that children at that stage of maturation will generally have the ability to recall for the rest of their lives the moment their dad told them he was moving out.

“And by not rushing the announcement, parents ensure that their children have accumulated at least some memories of happier times, such as Christmases and birthday parties when the whole family was together, which they will use as sources of self-torment in the broken homes of their adolescence.”

The study also noted that by postponing their divorce, parents helped ensure their children had sufficiently developed their sense of agency enough to blame themselves for everything.

5. American GDP/Manufacturing

Report: America Still World Leader In Manufacturing Excuses

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ—Revealing that Americans still excel in assembling all types of justifications, a report released Monday by researchers at Rutgers University confirmed that the United States remains the world’s unrivaled leader in manufacturing excuses.

“Our data shows that the American people are able to churn out millions of excuses every day, a rate five times faster than that of our closest international competitor,” said author Tom McCullough, who noted that the country continues to dominate in every excuse-manufacturing subsector, with Americans mass-producing rationalizations for everything from why they didn’t finish college to which of their colleagues should be blamed for them not receiving a promotion.

“Whether U.S. citizens are trying to get out of work, an upcoming party, or even a relationship, American excuses are still the envy of the industrialized world. Few countries can produce the same quality or quantity of pretexts, alibis, or half-assed explanations.”

McCullough added that the report probably could have been far better had his team been given more time and resources.

6. Gender Inequality

Study Finds Girls Outperforming Future Employers In School

NASHVILLE, TN—The results of a comprehensive multiyear study charting the educational achievement of children throughout the United States were released Friday, revealing that the nation’s girls are increasingly outperforming their future employers in all subjects.

“We looked at test scores from all 50 states and found that, across every demographic group, girls are consistently outscoring those who will someday have the power to hire and fire them,” said the study’s lead author, Jennifer Malone, of Vanderbilt University, who noted that the gap between female students and those who will hold 86 percent of top executive positions at the companies where they work emerges early in elementary school and continues to grow throughout high school, college, and graduate school.

“For years, girls have performed better than their future bosses in areas like writing and reading comprehension, but more recently, they’ve started to surpass them in STEM subjects as well. At the same time, those individuals who will one day pay their female classmates a fraction of the industry standard have fallen further behind.”

Malone added that if current trends in education continue, women will soon outnumber nearly all future tech workers, financial analysts, and government leaders at the nation’s universities by a two-to-one margin.

7. Vacation Habits

Going To Tops Of Things Still Favored By Nation's Tourists

NEW YORK—According to a report released Monday by the American Tourism Society, going to the tops of things is still the preferred activity among the nation's tourists.

"Although driving past things and swimming in things have both grown in popularity over the last decade, going to the tops of things still surpasses both by nearly 30 percent," said ATS president Kimberly Davis, who was careful to point out that the photographing of things was not included in the report, since the near constant occurrence of this activity makes its frequency impossible to calculate.

"In 2008, tourists remained committed to standing in long lines at the bottoms of things, paying upwards of $20 to gain access to the tops of those things, and then staring at other smaller, more distant things for a few minutes before descending, often to have funny pictures of themselves drawn incorporating the things in the background."

Davis added that, perhaps as a consequence of the declining economy, the purchasing of miniature representations of the things that tourists enjoy going to the tops of has dropped by 14 percent.

8. Civic Engagement

Report: Majority Of Nation’s Civic Engagement Centered Around Oppressing Other People

WASHINGTON—Providing insight into how American citizens participate in the political process, a report released Tuesday by the Pew Research Center revealed that the vast majority of civic engagement in the U.S. centers around oppressing other people.

“We found that Americans are fairly active in making their voices heard and engaging in the public sphere, typically in an effort to restrict the rights of those who look or behave differently from them,” said lead researcher Dana McNeil, who added that well over two-thirds of the nation’s rallies, petitions, and letter-writing campaigns were aimed at making life worse for a portion of the population of which the participants were not a part.

“Taking away the rights of other people was by far the most common subject of calls placed to congressional representatives, as well as the single greatest factor in predicting voter turnout. Indeed, when Americans join a citizens group or volunteer their time for a cause, more often than not, it’s to shout angrily at a specific group of people and call for their persecution.”

McNeil added that, at the very least, it was encouraging to see so many Americans using the democratic process to make lasting change.

9. Global Habitat

Alarming Report Finds Only 6% Of Earth’s Surface Indoors

LAWRENCE, KS—Drawing attention to the distressing prevalence of outside areas on the planet, researchers at the University of Kansas released an alarming report Monday revealing that a mere 6 percent of the Earth’s surface is actually indoors.

“Our team found that a shocking 185 million square miles across the globe are fully out-of-doors in the open air,” said lead researcher Priya Chatterjee, adding that on all seven continents, there exist vast stretches of forests, mountain ranges, and bodies of water that are completely exposed to the elements, without so much as a single room where an individual might go inside and relax.

“It is quite disconcerting to realize that nearly all of the Earth’s surface is outside, unprotected from meteorological conditions. The reality is that the vast majority of the planet is at risk of getting cold, windblown, or totally soaked.”

The report also concluded that more research was necessary to determine whether certain as-yet-unclassified locations, such as gazebos, courtyards, and breezeways, should be categorized as indoors or outdoors.

10. Political Habits

Report: More Americans Turning To Louder Sources For Their News

PHILADELPHIA—Saying that the trend signals a major shift in the media landscape, a report issued Thursday by the University of Pennsylvania revealed that a growing number of Americans are turning to louder sources for their news.

“Over the past 10 years, media-consumption habits have changed markedly as more people eschew traditional news outlets in favor of sources that report the latest stories at a far higher volume,” said the study’s lead author Emily Harding, noting that audiences for television and radio programs that deliver news in a reasonable, non-damaging tone of voice have fallen by nearly 40 percent since last decade.

“Respondents were shown one well-reported clip of environmentally sustainable practices on a large dairy farm, followed by a second, poorly-reported but eardrum-shattering clip about how factory farms have ripped open the ozone and will lead to our impending doom. Given the thunderous din of the latter, it wasn’t surprising which one they trusted more. It seems, for a steadily growing segment of the population, that heavily blaring, borderline deafening media outlets are their only source of news.”

Harding added that if current trends continue, the U.S. news cycle is likely to reach tornado siren levels exceeding 125 decibels by 2020.

**Non-Satirical Texts**

1. Consumer Spending

Study Finds People Willing To Pay More For New Biofuels

KANSAS, MO–When it comes to second generation biofuels, a study published in November in the journal Energy Economics from researchers at Washington State University shows that consumers are willing to pay a approximately 11 percent more than the cost of conventional fuel.

"We were surprised the premium was that significant," said Jill McCluskey, WSU professor in the School of Economic Sciences, and adding that they wanted to study people in different regions of the country, to make sure they weren't just getting a local result, and people in all three cities studied said they would pay more for these products.

"This new biofuel doesn't exist commercially yet, so we have to do these surveys to make sure there's a potential market for it, and this shows there clearly is a market. People were concerned that the new fuel may put their car at risk, but they also saw the added benefit to the environment."

Before they were surveyed, half of the participants were given information about second generation biofuels. Those participants were more willing to pay a greater premium, which suggests that marketing the benefits of the new biofuels would improve consumers' perceptions.

2. Health Problems

Report: Heart Attack Risk Doubled For People With Less Education

BOSTON, MA–People who leave school without a school certificate are more than twice as likely to have a heart attack as those with a university degree, according to a groundbreaking new study published in the Journal of Medicine investigating age and heart disease.

"The lower your education, the more likely you are to have a heart attack or a stroke - that's the disturbing but clear finding from our research," said lead researcher Dr. Rosemary Korda, who elaborated that a similar pattern of inequality existed between household income and cardiovascular disease events.

"What these differences in heart attack rates between more and less disadvantaged groups show us is just how much heart disease in the population can be prevented with proper research. Studies are continuing in this area to better understand what is driving these socioeconomic differences in order to help these people."

These findings demonstrated the value of the study as an important resource making it possible for researchers to investigate big questions in large numbers of people, and to get faster answers that are useful for policy makers in higher levels of government.

3. Stress

Study Suggests High Stress Levels May Delay Women Getting Pregnant

NEW HAMPSIRE–Healthy women trying for a baby may have reduced chances of conceiving a child in any month if they are stressed, the results of a study by researchers at Oxford University and the US National Institutes of Health suggests.

“This is the first study to find that a biological measure of stress is associated with a woman's chances of becoming pregnant that month,” explained lead author Dr. Cecilia Pyper, adding that females between ages 18 to 40 with high levels of a chemical marker for stress were less likely to succeed in conceiving.

“We want to understand the things that affect the chances of conception, and many younger couples are very keen to know what they should do to improve their chances of having and raising a healthy baby.”

This research is part of a larger experiment, which has recruited 1500 young prospective mothers in the UK trying to become pregnant and aims to see whether aids such as a fertility monitor could also help them. It is also looking for the effect of other negative factors like smoking, alcohol and caffeine on chances of successful birth rates.

4. Divorce

Report: More Sex Partners Before Marriage Doesn't Necessarily Lead To Divorce

CHICAGO–Common sense says having multiple sexual companions prior to marriage leads to less happy marriages and increases the odds of divorce, but a report published this week in the Journal of Sociology suggests some of the strongest predictors of divorce in years gone by no longer matter as much as they once did.

"Overall, American women are far more likely to have had multiple premarital sex with multiple different people in recent years," lead researcher Nicholas Wolfinger said, pointing out that as premarital sex became more acceptable, its negative effects on marital stability decreased, and that Americans became more accepting of nonmarital intercourse.

"Perhaps it is not unexpected that having many partners increases the odds of divorce. The greater surprise is that this only holds true in recent years; previously, women with two partners prior to marriage had the highest divorce rates."

Also noteworthy is the decline in the proportion of women who get married having had only one previous partner. As late as the 1980s, over half of new brides were virgins or had had only one sex partner.

5. American GDP/Manufacturing

Report: Diabetes, Heart Disease, And Back Pain Dominate US Health Care Spending

TEXAS–Just 20 conditions make up more than half of all spending on health care in the United States, according to a new comprehensive financial analysis that examines spending by diseases and injuries published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

"While it is well known that the US spends more than any other nation on health care, very little is known about what diseases drive that spending." said Dr. Joseph Dieleman, lead author of the paper, who estimates that approximately $300 billion in costs remain unaccounted for, indicating total personal health care costs in the US reached $2.4 trillion in 2013.

"IHME is trying to fill the information gap so that decision-makers in the public and private sectors can understand the spending landscape, and plan and allocate health resources more effectively."

While the majority of those costs were associated with non-communicable diseases, the top infectious disease category was respiratory infections. Public health education and advocacy initiatives, such as anti-tobacco and cancer awareness campaigns, totaled an estimated $77.9 billion in 2013, less than 3% of total health spending.

6. Gender Inequality

Report: Men More Likely To Be Seen As 'Creative Thinkers'

CALIFORNIA–People tend to associate creative skill with stereotypical masculine qualities, according to a new paper published in Psychological Science suggesting that the work and achievements of men tend to be assessed as more creative than similar work and achievements produced by women.

"Our research shows that views about what it takes to 'think creatively' overlap substantially with the unique content of male stereotypes, creating systematic bias in the way that men and women's originality is evaluated," says lead researcher Devon Proudfoot, saying that this could lead people to view creative problem solving as an ability more common among men than women.

"In suggesting that females are less likely than males to have their innovative thoughts recognized, our study points to a unique reason why women may be passed over for leadership job positions within many different industries when climbing the ladder.”

Gender bias in creativity judgments may affect tangible economic outcomes for both genders in the workplace, as previous experiments have shown that people in relatively higher power positions are more likely to rely on stereotypes when forming decisions about people.

7. Vacation Habits

Report: Recession Drives Down U.S. National Park Visitation

CLEVELAND, OH–A national recession doesn't just affect Americans' wallets. It also impacts their travel to national parks. According to a new study published by the U.S. Department of Interior, the significant decrease in national park visitation is linked to the weakened United States economy.

"Economic downturns come and go, but the impact on resource conservation and park visitor management could last longer," said first author Neelam Poudyal, stating that the findings could help park managers plan ahead for revenue shortfall and a decrease in park visitation, particularly as the economic forecast for the coming years remains bleak.

"While the recession affected all types of park visitation, trips involving longer timeframes and higher costs such as overnight visits and backcountry camping are likely to be hit harder than shorter and relatively cheaper trips such as day visits and weekend camping.”

Researchers have linked many factors to a decline in park visitation, including natural disasters and the growing reliance on indoors technology for recreation, but this study was the first to examine economic factors linked to park visitation during peak and non-peak tourism times.

8. Civic Engagement

Report: Civic Engagement May Strengthen Brain And Improve Memory

OLYMPIA, WA–Instead of shrinking as expected, the memory center in the brains of seniors maintained their size and, in men, grew modestly after two years in a program that involved them in civic engagement, new Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health research suggests.

"Someone once said to me that being in this program removed the cobwebs from her brain and this study shows that is exactly what is happening," says study leader Michelle Carlson, adding that the participants were followed for two years, which in this case was long enough to see changes that wouldn't have been detected after just one year.

"By helping others, participants are helping themselves in ways beyond just feeding their souls. They are helping their brains. The brain shrinks as part of aging, but with this program we appear to have stopped that shrinkage and are reversing part of the aging process."

It’s not entirely clear which elements of the program account for the improved memory function and increased brain volumes because the program increased involvement in many different kinds of activities that retired people may not have engaged in otherwise.

9. Global Habitat

Report: Global Habitat Loss Still Rampant Across Much Of Earth

FLAGSTAFF, AZ–Habitat destruction still far outstrips habitat protection across many parts of the planet, according to a new study released this week by the Journal of Ecology which revealed more than half the planet could now be classified as completely converted to human-dominated land use.

"An area of 4.5 million square kilometres, or about two thirds the size of Australia, has been converted to human-dominated land use in the past two decades alone," lead researcher James Watson said, adding that there had been considerable gains in global efforts to increase the size of protected areas, but alarming levels of habitat loss persisted.

"As a consequence of past and recent habitat loss, almost half of the world's regions now must be classified at very high risk, as 25 times more land has been converted than protected.”

The researchers identified 41 regions across 45 nations that are in a 'crisis state', where humans have converted more than 10 per cent of the little remaining habitat in the past two decades.

10. Political Habits

Report: Americans Are More Politically Independent, More Polarized Than Ever

ATLANTA, GA–Stating that many older citizen’s political views contrast significantly when compared to people from previous generations, a new study published in the Journal of Political Science has found that approximately half (46 percent) of adult Americans today now identify as political independents.

"Americans, especially young people, are abandoning the two major parties to declare themselves independent, demonstrating large groups such as major parties are less popular," the study’s lead author Jean Twenge, adding that those who do claim devotion to the Democratic or Republican party in the United States are more similar in their views when compared to independents.

"It may be that the definition of what they consider conservative is changing. Overall, younger Americans may not be as reliably liberal and Democrat as many had predicted, especially as they are likely to grow more politically independent as they age."

In recent years, there has also been an rise in political conservatism among young people. High school seniors in 2010 were 38 percent more likely to identify as political conservatives than their age-matched peers in the 1970s.