

## **Surviving in the Information Explosion era**

*Julie Heng for Staff Editorial, Volume 3 Issue 6*

We are living in an information era—an information explosion era, experts say.

There are so many options, so many ideas, so many assertions readily available. We are allowed access to the widest spectrum of facts and figures ever amassed in human history.

And yet, at times, this spectrum of information becomes confusing, even misleading.

It's understandable that we as news consumers cannot handle such overwhelming information. News spreads so quickly that it can be difficult to evaluate the accuracy and implications of new headlines. It can be easy to feel as if news is just white noise, sound waves constantly clashing. As a result, many media consumers retreat to their own preferred comfort zones, cherry-picking stories and rationales they can readily accept. For them, the news becomes a cyclic, passionate echo chamber.

This is a very dangerous social problem, however. Staying entrenched in one or two outlets can cause us to be overcome by bias. Among many reasons, this further polarizes competing sources and audiences, making the common search for truth more difficult. This is why it is crucial for us as consumers of media to obtain news from multiple feeds, especially from competing ideologies, in order to gain a comprehensive view of the situation. By searching for truth with less biased influence from our own initial ideologies, we will ultimately find reliable facts ensured by solid logic. The sound waves will collide, and through destructive interference, the truth will win out.

In essence, we media consumers have to become scientists, combing through many sets of hypotheses to find a theory that respects the facts and not the other way around. The key is to consult many sources—many reliable sources, to be clear—to find accurate facts. It is only through analyzing facts from multiple feeds, and then evaluating the reliability of those sources, that we can ascertain what is closest to the truth.

Besides, we are not simply consumers of media anymore. On social media, we have become the distributors and amplifiers as well. According to studies by the Pew Research Center, 93% of Americans get their news online, and over two-thirds are getting some from social media. In the end, we have an even greater responsibility to be well-read and truthfully informed.