

CRACCUM

06 TECH



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This week, Flora and Naomii become NFTs

If you said to us, "Let's meet on Zoom!" in 2019, our responses to you would've been, "What is that?" and "Doesn't 'zoom' mean going really fast?"

It's crazy how much technology has advanced in the last few decades. Hell, it's crazy how much technology has advanced in the last couple of years. We've gone from running around on campus from class to class, to jumping from one Zoom link to another. Performers have moved from doing their shows on stages to online. Dating has changed from meetcutes in person, to people sending creepy DMs and messages on dating apps. Buying art has shifted from getting the physical copy to getting... the digital receipts??? (We still haven't figured out what the fuck NFTs are.) Even our language has adapted to these advancements. A lot of technologies have just become verbs ("Email when you have time!").

This all begs the question: how did we get here so fast? Well, technological developments tend to go into turbo-mode during times of conflict. We can thank WWI nurses for disposable sanitary pads, planes as we know them

now wouldn't be here if it wasn't for WWII, and China wouldn't be rushing to advance their AI technology if it weren't for their feud with the US. As much as people like to think that we're in the Long Peace, it's evidently not true. We've also had wars through the 50s, the 60s, the 70s, the 80s—and like essentially every decade since World War II until now.

Of course, that's not to say technology itself is bad—far from it. Every couple of years you hear someone important say, "Just you wait and see! The machines will overtake everything!" and yet it still hasn't happened. Technology has replaced a whole bunch of services, that's for sure, but it's also created a whole bunch of new jobs—and new degrees!—for people to do. As much as the 'tech bros' unfortunately end up being the butt of many jokes, we literally would not be here without them (shoutout to the CompSci majors out there).

Technology has the ability to do wonderful things, like mitigate climate change, improve safety systems, and improve learning outcomes. But even

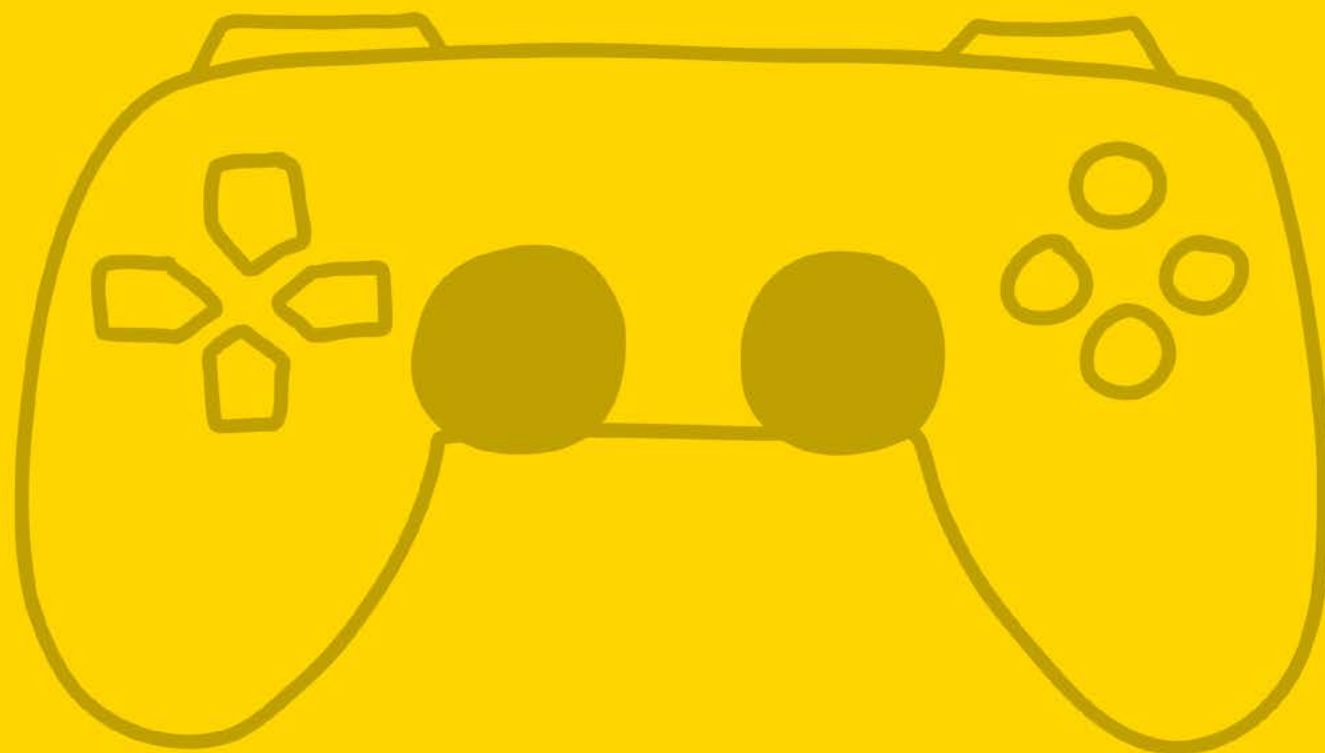
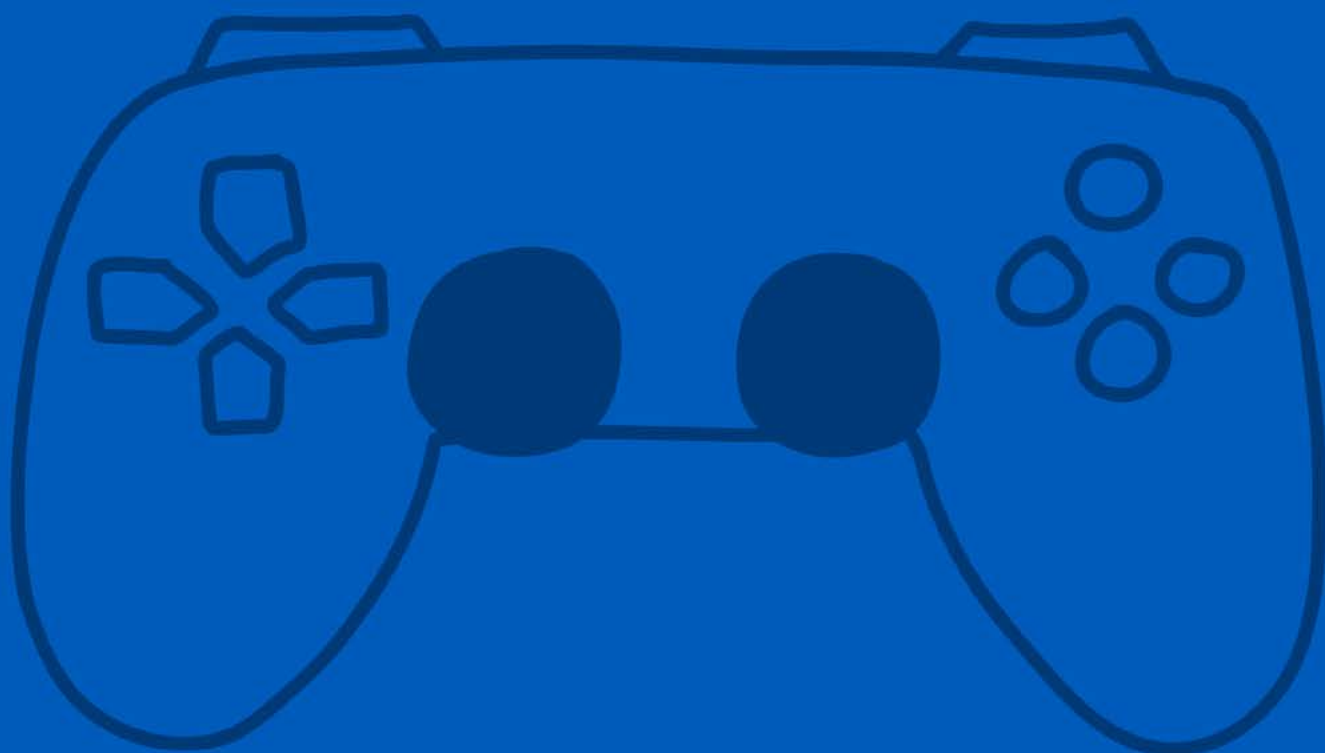
technology isn't immune from those pesky human biases. More often than not, that's where technology fails. People like blaming technology for their problems. But technology itself doesn't have a moral alignment. The people that make it do. And with an increasingly diverse workforce and opportunities (#MinoritiesInSTEM), there's no reason we can't move toward a future where tech serves *all* of us.

As with any system, there can be major flaws. And it takes scrutiny and discussion to make progress in those flaws. Everyone has an inner tech bro, and everyone is affected by modern tech in some way or another, so everyone should have a say. That's why we're proud to bring you this edition of *Craccum*; we hope you love it as much as we do.

XOXO

Arohanui,
Flora Xie (she/her) and Naomii Seah
(she/her).

NOTE: LAST WEEK'S EDITORIAL CONTAINED A PRINT MISTAKE. MOST OF THE TEAM WORKS *LESS THAN 10* HOURS A WEEK, WHICH MEANS <10 RATHER THAN >10. SORRY, WE'RE NOT GOOD AT YEAR THREE MATHS.



Player One, Are You Ready to Donate to Ukraine?

Gaming Corporations raise millions in humanitarian aid for Ukraine.



CHARLIE PARKER (SHE/HER)

The need for humanitarian aid to Ukrainian citizens amidst Russia's invasion of Ukraine remains high, and companies within the gaming industry have raised over US\$100 million in donation funds.

As of the 28th March, Epic Games raised over US\$70 million for humanitarian relief, the largest corporate donor in the industry. Profits were gained through *Fortnite*, where all profits gained from DLC purchases went directly to relief charities from the 20th March to the 3rd April.

Humble Bundle's "Stand With Ukraine" bundle has contributed the second largest donation funds since March 18th, which includes over 120 games and software. 100% of the profits are donated to relief efforts in Ukraine and has raised over US\$20 million in funds.

Second-year undergraduate student, Daniel, told *Craccum* that "Video games are a super common hobby for students, and it's a fast-moving market where you're consuming their content and DLC all the time. It's nice to feel like for once you're not just funding a huge corporation who doesn't care about the world."

It's nice to feel like for once you're not just funding a huge corporation who doesn't care about the world.

These actions can equate to more than just the money and creates a chain-reaction for charitable donations. Third-

year undergraduate student Jarod said, "Seeing companies like this donate inspires other people to [donate]. People who buy games from the same creators often have a lot of respect for these companies, and if they see people they respect donating, they're more likely to follow their lead."

Additional measures have been taken by companies against Russia, with companies such as Sony, Microsoft, and Nintendo all temporarily halting sales to Russia. Other companies, such as Remedy Entertainment, are providing monetary and welfare support to employees who reside in Ukraine. They are also providing support for Russian employees who Remedy Entertainment says in a public statement "are appalled by this brutal war".



Back to In-person Learning Raises Concerns for Disabled Students



CHARLIE PARKER (SHE/HER)

The return to in-person learning seemingly ignores disabled students and their health, by currently offering them no additional support and making it difficult for them to feel safe returning to campus.

On the 23rd March the University of Auckland announced that students would be returning to in-person learning for all teaching activities, excluding tests and exams. Under the announcement on the University website, it states "Where there are compelling reasons for a particular teaching activity not to be taught in person (e.g., staff with health conditions that make them high risk) alternatives may be approved". However, there is no mention of what this decision means for students with disabilities and what alternatives would be provided to aid their learning.

Craccum spoke to some disabled students who attend the University, and all were nervous about returning to campus. They have concerns about returning to a potentially packed campus, the noise and health discomfort this may come with, and many noted the public transport commute to be one of the biggest concerns.

Under the 'disability's services' page on the University website, there is no information on additional support during COVID-19, and not even a page to provide help or support during the online learning process despite the majority of learning taking place over the past two years being remote. For those who are unregistered students with disabilities, this makes it difficult for them to access any COVID-19 related resources.

Those who are registered have not

been contacted regarding additional support. An undergraduate student at the University, Laura*, told *Craccum* they feel "somewhat" neglected by this decision and lack of support, noting the University hasn't reached out to offer additional support. A Master's student at the University, Caitlin*, said "I don't think students have been deliberately neglected but returning to normal

support."

However, staff seem to be of the utmost importance when it comes to higher risk people being on campus. Their "'at risk' staff returning to campus during COVID-19" page provides guidance to staff regarding who the Ministry of Health deems as high risk, and the guidelines for accommodation processes to allow staff to feel safe on or off campus. It acknowledges that this includes visible and invisible disabilities, as well as mental health conditions. The page states that "staff and their managers are encouraged to have these conversations", whilst high risk students are being swept under the rug.

The University of Auckland is not alone in not providing information online, with AUT, Massey University, Victoria University of Wellington, University of Otago, and Canterbury University all neglecting the impact of COVID-19 under their 'disabilities services' website pages.

Caitlin also told *Craccum* that "There are some great supports for disabled students, if you are struggling to access them, then do reach out to someone who will listen." AUSA Advocacy Service provides a confidential form that can be filled out to explain your concerns and to help find potential solutions to issues that the University may not be directly supporting you for.

*AT THIS TIME THE UNIVERSITY'S DISABILITY SERVICE HAS NOT RESPONDED TO THE REQUEST TO COMMENT.

*STUDENTS WISHED TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS



does raise the issue that we may become blindsided by normality, and are not listening closely enough to the experiences of disabled taurira".

Hannah Burkin, author of Advanced HE's qualitative report on the impact of COVID-19 said online that "Experiences documented during the pandemic highlight that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach simply does not work; you cannot be truly inclusive if you place disabled students on a par with their non-disabled peers in relation to

UoA Students Stand in Solidarity with Survivors of Sexual Harm on Campus

CW: SEXUAL ASSAULT, RAPE.

Student-led organisations are calling out the University of Auckland for its handling of recent cases of sexual violence in halls of residence.



JESSICA HOPKINS (SHE/HER)

Recent media articles published by the NZ Herald detailed the University of Auckland's response to two separate reports of sexual violence in Residence Halls last year. In both cases, the perpetrators were permitted to continue studying, despite the Proctor agreeing they committed rape.

Thursdays in Black UoA (TIB), a student-led movement working to eliminate sexual violence on campus, shared in a statement, "To both wāhine and all survivors, we believe you, we hear you, we support you." In their open letter condemning the University's response, the group stated that despite the University's promising *Harmful Sexual Behaviours Action Plan*, they have seen minimal progress to keep campus safe.

The organisation has encouraged UoA students to wear black on Thursdays in solidarity with survivors of sexual violence. "It is now more than ever important to be resilient and keep pushing for safer spaces. By wearing black, we stand in solidarity and advocate for survivors, to show that they are not alone and that we see them, hear them, and support them." They have also offered to visit individual Halls, recently visiting Waipārūrū Hall to hand out badges and brooches and answer questions.

Executive members met with Campus Life, which operates a range of wellbeing services, including Accommodation, Counselling, and Health Services, on 29th March to share student concerns about how the University handled these cases. TIB Director Vivian Whyte told *Craccum*

that this meeting was "frustrating and distressing but not hopeless." "Essentially, they maintain that they did all they could within their power, but that their power is limited."

"The people in that meeting share our sentiment that the current system isn't fit for purpose, even acknowledging that it creates more harm to survivors in some instances. They agreed to an independent review of how the University responds to sexual violence, and we've made it clear that as students we want to be seen as partners in this review."

...the current system isn't fit for purpose, even acknowledging that it creates more harm to survivors in some instances

The University responded to the first article in an email to students, stating that while the Proctor's decision was made in "good faith", their disciplinary response was inadequate. The Proctor's decision has since been overturned, with a Discipline Committee (DC) hearing set to take place.

The University states that the first case, handled in October 2021, was reopened for review after "significant new evidence" came to light. This new evidence has been reported as a taped phone call, where the alleged perpetrator admitted to the survivor that he had raped her. Following the

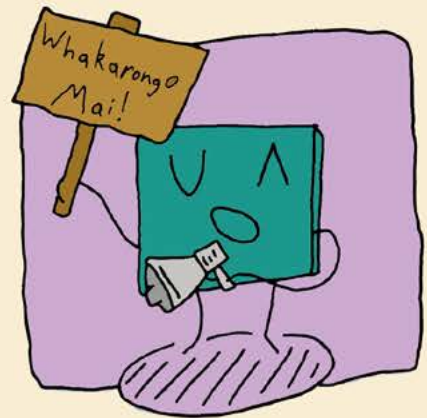
second article, the University will now review the second case and all cases involving harmful sexual behaviour. According to the TIB Director, the University is currently seeking external legal advice on whether the second case should be escalated to DC.

Stop Sexual Harassment on Campus (SSHOC), a group of staff and students from Aotearoa's eight universities, have been alongside Thursdays in Black consistently calling for an independent body to address the mishandling of sexual violence cases by tertiary institutions.

In a Press Release, they called for urgent Government intervention, and for the Minister of Education to respond to systemic issues activists have been highlighting for decades. "Once again we hear how survivors of abuse have been let down by their own Universities—with systems and people who are more concerned about following antiquated processes rather than putting the needs of the survivor at the forefront."

Moving forward, TIB Director Vivian Whyte told *Craccum* that AUSA and TIB are teaming up to promote a campaign "Still Not Asking For It"—which aims to hold the University to account regarding recent sexual assault cases and connect students to sexual violence resources and help. "Enough is enough. By teaming up we aim to mobilise the student voice and achieve the big changes our University community needs to see. Watch this space as we continue the mahi together and ask the hard questions."

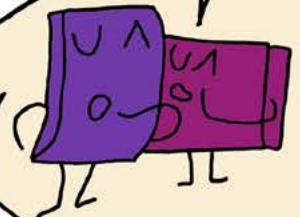
The student-led clubs, initiatives, and programmes against sexual harassment are amazing. They advocate for all the right things. The University needs to own up and listen to students and student organisations about what works best. Student consultation is really important, and I feel like the University hasn't done its job.



I used to be a Resident Advisor, and consent is definitely something we are trained on and communicate with our floors and have meetings about. We make that message really clear. But in halls, there's a lot of freedom, and when you're drunk, and in your first year, people can behave in a way that makes others uncomfortable.



I was shocked by the reaction from the University. You wouldn't think they would just brush it under the carpet and ignore it. It's interesting to see their response to sexual assault compared to other things like cheating which they take very seriously.



Everyone has the right to feel safe on campus—but right now, the way in which the University responds to sexual violence means that this isn't a reality.

Students are very vulnerable in halls. That's where you live, and it's your home while you're studying. You should expect to be safe, and it's upsetting for something like this to happen and go unpunished.



Whakarongo

MAI



How do Students Feel About UoA's Attitude Around Consent?



JESSICA HOPKINS (SHE/HER)

Nellie

Following recent reports of sexual violence in Halls of Residence, the University of Auckland has faced criticism for allowing perpetrators to continue their studies. Students have shown their support for survivors and are calling for the University to do more to protect its students. Craccum asked students on campus about whether they think UoA has a culture of complacency regarding consent and their experience of studying here with ongoing harassment and assault.

Mia

"Harassment definitely happens in halls quite often, but nothing to this extent. It's not just physical. In halls, girls might feel uncomfortable in communal spaces because of boys' behaviour, but we don't want to step forward and make a big deal out of it, so we just turn to our friends and hope it goes away. There should be more discussions about consent in halls. They do address it when harassment comes up in halls, but it stops at the halls. It seems like the University doesn't care enough about it."

"It was shocking and really disappointing to see how the situation was handled and that it had to be made public before the University took any notice. As a female student who lives in halls it's sad to see that they take other matters like academic conduct more seriously than something as serious as this."

"Students are very vulnerable in halls. That's where you live, and it's your home while you're studying. You should expect to be safe, and it's upsetting for something like this to happen and go unpunished. There was some punishment, but I don't think it was enough."

"I used to be a Resident Advisor, and consent is definitely something we are trained on and communicate with our floors and have meetings about. We make that message really clear. But in halls, there's a lot of freedom, and when you're drunk, and in your first year, people can behave in a way that makes others uncomfortable. There are often videos taken without consent. There's a culture of boys wanting to be boys, where they think it's funny to share stories about girls they have hooked up with or to get with as many girls as possible. The halls protect these groups of guys and allow them to think their views on women are acceptable, but it's not."

"The uni has really dropped the ball on a lot of things. They need to show that they care more about their students. They need to hold themselves accountable and not try to deny that they didn't release an apology because it was in the media. The University has done so much shit in the past that it is no longer shocking. But in this case, it is really disappointing that they allowed this person to remain in the halls and go unpunished."

James*

"It's really shocking that this is something still present in the University. How the University handled it by just brushing it to the side and allowing that individual to stay on campus really upset myself and a few of my mates who are a part of female empowerment clubs at the University. It's really shitty to know that you're going to a University that still has sexual assault and the way it's been treated is awful."

"The student-led clubs, initiatives, and programmes against sexual

harassment are amazing. They advocate for all the right things. The University needs to own up and listen to students and student organisations about what works best. Student consultation is really important, and I feel like the University hasn't done its job."

Katherine*

"In my personal experience, there has been a culture of consent with the people I've been around on campus. But I've heard of other situations where consent has been a bit blurry. I'm sure it's (sexual harassment) something that happens often, but nobody really talks about it. This is the first time I've heard of it happening on campus, which is crazy because I've been here for almost three years."

"I was shocked by the reaction from the University. You wouldn't think they would just brush it under the carpet and ignore it. It's interesting to see their response to sexual assault compared to other things like cheating which they take very seriously."

Vivian, Thursdays in Black Director

"Everyone has the right to feel safe on campus—but right now, the way in which the University responds to sexual violence means that this isn't a reality. The two cases which have recently come to light in the media are living proof of this. In a world where sexual violence is already severely underreported, we find their failure to protect the safety of our community perverse and distressing."

*NAMES WERE CHANGED TO PROTECT STUDENT'S IDENTITY.

Māori and the Digital Divide

Technology is the future of Aotearoa, and Māori need to be a part of it



OMNI ARONA NGĀPUHI, NGĀTI WAI (HE/HIM)

Māori have a long but mostly unrecognised, tāhuhu kōrero (history) of imaginative innovation and comprehension of new technologies. Sails that were used by our ancestors to traverse the pacific were lateen (triangular shaped) and held many advantages over sails used by Europeans at the time. The designs of our waka hulls reduced drag, making for faster boats. Our ingenuity exists even within our mythology, with Maui fashioning a weapon and a fishhook from his grandmother's jawbone. This ingenuity has since been muted, silenced, and reduced to a whisper following the effects of colonisation. Māori inclusion within the tech world is both underrepresented and in demand, but barriers to technology have limited

Māori inclusion within the tech world is both underrepresented and in demand, but barriers to technology have limited our people's ability to take part in a digital future.

our people's ability to take part in a digital future. Māori are less likely to have internet access due to the cost, and the same goes for devices. Caleb (Ngāti Maniapoto), who studies Computer Science, noted that "our family getting a computer was one of the most important things to happen to me as a kid". Growing up in Te Kuiti, he notes that "I would've been stuck there" had it not been for that family computer. After discussing with our tuākana, Caleb concluded that having access to that piece of technology allowed him to grow and learn things he would otherwise have never known.

Kristen (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Pūkenga) told us of how her art teacher sponsored her by paying for her Adobe Creative Cloud subscription. "Mrs McKenna paid for me to be able to use Photoshop, a lovely old Pākehā lady who wasn't too familiar with digital art but understood that I could do something special for myself." It was through this that Kristen was able to get a scholarship to UoA. "By being here, I was able to learn what I want to do with my life. I'll be moving to AUT to study Communication Design, and that wouldn't be possible without Mrs McKenna." Kristen feels that by paying for that subscription, Mrs McKenna "supplied me with the tools to shape my future, one that I would

**Mrs McKenna
"supplied me with
the tools to shape
my future, one that
I would never have
had."**

never have had.

"Only now am I learning how to use Photoshop and fully operate a camera, things that were always in my potential and ability but were



never able to foster due to access. What could I have been if I had access to these things at a younger age? Could some of my people trapped in poverty have become the next Cartier-Bresson or Wozniak if cost and accessibility hadn't been such a big barrier for them?"

The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the cracks in an already broken inclusion system. Internet access has arguably become a necessity during Covid, with communication, work, and education being done from home.

In terms of tech, Māori are significantly underrepresented, with our people being only 4 percent of the sector's workforce

Aiko Consultants Limited reported that 145,000 children did not have internet access when going into our first lockdown. Digital-first and online-by-default education strategies are, unfortunately, marginalising some whānau. It has meant that finding solutions for digitally excluded individuals has to become a priority. As you'd expect, digital exclusion is worse for Māori than other populations, according to Motu Economic and Public Policy research. This is partly due to our people living more rurally, specifically kaumatua living in isolated areas while also being of low-socioeconomic background. This barrier to tech has reinforced the already present barriers to education.

With Māori/NZ history finally being taught in schools and Covid's effect on how we go about education, our people become subjugated and are placed at the intersections of so many issues and debates. This includes our position within this digital world. In terms of tech, Māori are significantly underrepresented, with our people being only 4 percent of the sector's workforce. Māori begin to miss out on an industry whose median salary is ever increasing. If we miss out now, the equity gap will continue to grow. It is not hard to see the pipeline from the lack of technology education and the unaffordability and inaccessibility of technology, to an underrepresented indigenous tech workforce. The inequitable number of Māori in the tech sector means wealth and prospects bypass our people and whānau, leading to potentially intergenerational consequences.

Given the right tools, Māori can be more capable than anyone. Digital access for our people is an important issue that demands more attention

Over the past few months, the discussion around tech growth within Aotearoa has become a major discussion. The Government has proposed extensive changes to how it supports tech sector growth in Aotearoa to facilitate diversity. These proposals include actions that empower Māori to increase our participation in a growing section. Minister for Digital Economy and Communications, David Clark, said that "building Māori participation" is a priority.

Given the right tools, Māori can be more capable than anyone. Digital access for our people is an important issue that demands more attention and means that we wait, hoping for change. Tech access and internet affordability are issues that need to be tackled to reduce inequity. If these barriers to tech and education are removed, our people will gain the ability to shape the digital future of Aotearoa. Our history then becomes our future, and Māori are able to continue a long history of ingenious innovation and comprehension of new technologies.

Whoa! University in VR?

I can't wait to pay off my virtual loans



TASMAN CLARK (HE/HIM)

The University of Auckland is currently in its fifth and (maybe) final Semester of digital learning. We've all experienced the worst of it, from Zoom lectures filled with names instead of faces, to the only social interaction being the voice of a recording. With modern technology, there must be a way to improve our use of digital learning—right? Well, with virtual reality (VR) kicking up a storm, especially the Metaverse, it looks like we could be sucked into the Matrix to learn algebra within the next few years. Could this new format improve our currently tedious online learning situation?

Believe it or not, VR, as a communication tool, is already common in some workplaces—one of them being software development. Dylan Duffy-Bregmen is a recent graduate of Victoria University with a BSc in Computer Science. He now works from home for Blackball Software and uses VR every morning for meetings. Dylan and I both took a page out of *The Lawnmower Man* and stepped into VR to talk about his experience with this new medium. Even just getting into VR was a bit of a nightmare—but once we were in it was refreshing to see a moving body in front of me responding to my questions. Although I was taking notes the entire time—ironically staring at a screen *within* the virtual world—it was entertaining to hear a voice in the space, and to glance

over my left shoulder to see my mate chatting to me.

One of the first things Dylan noticed about using VR in his job was a boost to his morale and work ethic. Even though Dylan's time in university wasn't hugely affected by digital learning—as computer science degrees can be done relatively easily online—he still noticed an impact when he was able to look around and see his colleagues next to him. Being able to interact with his colleagues in such a realistic way, made his work feel much more engaging—he could see the people that were on the other side of the emails. Funnily enough, Dylan has only ever met his co-workers twice in person but has seen them almost every day in the Metaverse for the past two months. Naturally, he now finds it difficult to imagine his co-workers as anything other than their avatars. "You don't think about it after a while," he muses.

Dylan's boss and Blackball Software's founder Ben Liebert notes how surprisingly effective it was when they started using VR. "Even though you are cartoon rendered, it is just so much more immersive than video chat (which is pretty damn artificial anyway)." Both Dylan and Ben believe that the eye contact, spatial audio, and depth perception that you get in VR play a huge role with their engagement in their work and meetings. They also think that VR will be implemented into our education systems in the future. "I don't know how good it will be," Ben says, however, he believes it will go far because "it's becoming a new medium within which to communicate." Dylan, with his

experience and personal interest in global technology, believes VR could replace some part of digital learning "within 5-10 years."

Implementing VR into education could be a massive improvement to the engagement of students and destroy the wall between us that is Zoom—and it seems awfully exciting that we could soon be stepping into *Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over*. We could have architecture students walking through a house

Being able to interact with his colleagues in such a realistic way, made his work feel much more engaging—he could see the people that were on the other side of the emails.



they've designed, art history students finally seeing two arms on Venus de Milo, and med students interacting with a human body at no expense. The opportunities seem endless, but maybe we should look at some important questions first...

Associate Professor Luke Goode, who teaches a communications course on new media and the future of communication at UoA says that we should prioritise the social and moral questions around VR in education:

"Is the implementation based on poor educational principles? Does it exacerbate inequities among students? Does it degrade the social, communal and collaborative aspects of education? Does it lock public education deeper into dependency on powerful profit-

driven tech corporations with dubious ethics?"

Answering these questions would only be the first step in implementing VR at university—we should also consider practicality. Professor Andrew Luxton-Reilly currently teaches CompSci and Dr. Burkhard Wuensche researches VR and scientific visualisation. They see VR, or even augmented reality, being adopted in the far future as a learning medium. But for now, there are certain barriers to widespread adoption of VR. For example, in VR, note-taking can be a struggle; VR equipment is expensive, and developing 3D content that caters to students' diverse needs makes this medium less appetising. Even small things like the fact that 5-15% of VR users experience simulation sickness inhibits our progress to implementing VR in education.

Let's imagine we've overcome all these philosophical and practical hurdles—will we see results? Dr. Sam Kavanagh, who did his PhD on the applications of VR in education, found that since VR provides an immersive experience, that "it unsurprisingly also increases engagement". But with any new technology and fad—much like our first year of sleeping through pre-recorded online lectures—the novelty will eventually die off. This is a shame, because it seems increased engagement is all VR has going for it. Dr. Kavanagh discovered that there is no cognitive difference between learning on a computer and learning on VR. However, there is a glimmer of hope. His research gave a small indication that people could remember spatial information better in VR—but not many areas would benefit from this improvement.

So, will we ever experience VR university and go to our Metaverse Munchie Mart? Maybe. Maybe not.

Perhaps we shouldn't view VR as a solution to all our digital learning problems. Associate Professor Goode says that "we should think of it as one tool among others." In some circumstances, text-based learning will be what's best. He said viewing VR as a solution to make education more engaging is "a naïve fantasy"

"Is the implementation based on poor educational principles? Does it exacerbate inequities among students? Does it degrade the social, communal and collaborative aspects of education? Does it lock public education deeper into dependency on powerful profit-driven tech corporations with dubious ethics?"

and VR "won't fix anything if it's the underlying materials or the educational approaches that are broken." Dr. Kavanagh also expressed that universities are lagging behind in digital formats; trying to "shoehorn these mediums into the traditional lazy hour-long-lectures-spread-over-a-one-size-fits-all-predetermined-semester-length format." So, maybe sitting in hour-long lectures with a phone strapped to our face won't aid us; but instead, using this taped-on phone in areas where it can be applied could be beneficial—a place like architecture or engineering where full 3D blueprints can be envisioned.

Nonetheless, VR does provide the social element online learning typically misses. Even interviewing Dylan for this interview in VR was much more engaging and lifelike—we weren't stuck behind 2D screens. But Zoom would've gotten me the same answers—without the 40 minutes of troubleshooting, eyestrain, and racing red stripes across my face.

Virtual reality will soon become the norm. But we should only use it when we need to. You wouldn't use Excel to write your English essay—right?

Zoom Fuck-Ups: When Technology (and People) Fail.

LIVE Zoom, LAUGH at the absurdity of it all, LOVE your *schadenfreude*.



ARELA JIANG (HE/HIM)

Say what you want about online learning, but Zoom classes are fucking funny. If you'd told Socrates future students would be sitting at home taking classes using a book with moving-pictures that featured their teachers also at home, he'd probably ask whether women were taking these classes too. Zoom classes aren't fun, so can you blame students for showing up as a silent black square? Turns out, students have been busy using Zoom wrong in every cooked way possible.

So, this week at *Craccum*, we asked students to send in their Zoom fails, fuck ups, shenanigans and hilarities—and you guys were more than happy to spill. Check out your fellow Zoomers' confessions, maybe while you're in a Zoom class! Just make sure to check that your mic and cam are off—don't want Panapto to immortalise your sympathy cringes.

Mic drops making you want to drop out

Come on guys, this isn't your first rodeo! No wants to hear your girlfriend play fortnight in the background, or your Messenger popping off cause you've actually got a social life. Turn those mics off, otherwise you'll end up like some of these students.

"I was in a Zoom student and lecturer forum and you could hear some guy vaping with his camera off, like fatty cloud-type hoons. A lecturer kept asking if they were okay but you could see the students knew what was up."

"Someone [was] on the mic while going to take a shit."

"I thought I was muted when a reel played 'your little pussy belongs to me.'"

"Forgetting to mute myself before starting to vacuum my whole apartment."

"Thought I was on mute and was coughing from vaping and then a random messaged me telling me to turn my mic off. Didn't even say please either. I boosted from that class a few minutes later and haven't gone back since. Now I'm a week behind."

"Someone had their TikTok playing at full blast while unmuted for a solid five minutes in the first tutorial for a class, and the tutor just kept introducing themselves and pretended it wasn't happening in the background."

"My friend and I attended a Zoom



tutorial together but neither of us had prepared for it, so for the most part of the tutorial it was us just chatting shit, but the tutor unmuted us without us knowing. We quickly muted ourselves when we realised, but we had no clue how much time had passed (and how much of our conversation everyone else heard)."

Laptop lights, camera (optional), action!

Cameras on or off? That is the question. That worn-out line aside, another overused line is your tutor asking students to please turn their cameras on. Not gonna happen mate, I'd rather be a faceless creep than expose everyone to me still in bed 'cause I woke up a minute before the Zoom started.

"Everyone on my Zoom watched me whack my entire iced coffee across my desk."

"Accidentally had an anatomy chart of Lightning McQueen from Cars as my background."

"Accidently saying 'fuck' in a Zoom lecture when I realised my camera was on and having to relisten to myself on the recording."

Lecturers: Not just a friend, but a Zoomrade too

When you've got lecturers who've been around so long that the real life Kate Edgar was probably their flatmate,

"My lecturer for a course tried to put us in breakout rooms in a live Zoom lecture, and the moment she brought it up all you could hear was the sound of people leaving the call rapidly."

online learning is not on their side. But we few students of this garbage institution who still show up to online classes don't make it easy for them either. Sure, lecturers make bank but they don't get paid enough for the shit Zoom is putting them through.

"I was in a Zoom student and lecturer forum and you could hear some guy vaping with his camera off, like fatty cloud-type hoons. A lecturer kept asking if they were okay but you could see the students knew what was up."

"Prof tried and failed three times to get us the correct link so we all sat for 30 mins+ with no class."

"I fell asleep (with my camera off). It was so embarrassing because my professor would have private one-on-one office hours you can book after the lecture has finished (but on the same call). So there I was on the Zoom completely asleep, everyone [had] logged off except one student who was trying to have a private conversation with the professor."

"A student in my tutorial accidentally sent a private message to the entire class, announcing that they had woken up five minutes before the tutorial started (like, same though), and the tutor had a chuckle."

"[Someone was] talking shit about the class and [didn't realise] the lecturer could see."

"My lecturer for a course tried to put us in breakout rooms in a live Zoom lecture, and the moment she brought it up all you could hear was the sound of people leaving the call rapidly."

Keep your nastiness at hom—oh, wait

I get it, you're at home all day and society is collapsing outside—no wonder you're horned up. But do you really think your Zoom class is the best place to get a bit freaky or to hit up a random classmate who DMed you to turn off your mic? Every hole might be a goal, but Zoom does not mean get a (breakout) room.

"There was a Zoom-boomer in my Stage One Educ lecture, and he was so

"There was a Zoom-boomer in my Stage One Educ lecture, and he was so downbad he started flirting in chat with the women in the class."

downbad he started flirting in chat with the women in the class."

"Was so bored on a Zoom tutorial once I started masturbating to pass the time and since it was marked participation I couldn't leave. I only stopped cause they put us into break out rooms and the tutor was in ours."

"I accidentally texted my mobile number to the whole group and then some creep started texting me."

"I started having sex with my girlfriend while my Zoom class about disasters played in the background. We kept going even when he started talking about hundreds dying in the Napier Earthquake. Not gonna lie, the paranoia that the Zoom would fuck up and turn on the mic kinda made it hotter."

"I was in a live Zoom lecture and we had a special guest lecturer that day—unfortunately, I missed essentially everything he said in the class. After he introduced himself, my boyfriend started going down on me—thank god my camera and mic was off, but I'd never have expected to orgasm to a guy talking about Spotify algorithms"

So yeah, Zoom lectures suck. It doesn't hit the same to come late to a Zoom class versus walking in 10 minutes after your Contract Law lecture's started cause you wasted time picking a fucking HOT outfit no one cares about, not having done the readings, and only to go on Instagram the entire time. But, students are making do and man, we are doing it so wrong. As long as people keep fucking up on Zoom, I'll keep showing up (only if it's marked participation though).

Who Run the World? Girls! (That Invest)

An interview with podcast host Simran Kaur



GRACE BURTON-MCKEICH

Craccum was able to score an interview with UoA alumnus Simran Kaur—don't ask us how. Then again, I'm pretty sure *Vogue* and *Craccum* have about the same readership—right? Simran founded the *Girls That Invest* podcast. It's the #1 business podcast in Aotearoa, Canada, and the US, and #2 in the UK. The mission of her and her co-host, Sonya Gupthan, is to humbly smash the Patriarchy by empowering women to invest. *Craccum* sat down with Simran to find out what role tech plays in her projects.

How did you go from studying optometry to having the #1 business podcast in Aotearoa, Canada, and the US?

I always had an interest in personal finance but it was, well, personal. I knew I was going to one day walk into a job with more money than I had ever seen before—going from a uni student to a full-time employee—so I wanted to learn everything I could

about money. I never thought I would do anything else except optometry—but I always enjoyed dabbling in social media. Even in university, I grew an online Instagram community of over 300k South Asian women to talk about topics like feminism and activism—I've just always been drawn to using social media as a platform to have open discussion with people where borders are no longer a barrier.

If there isn't a study to repeat the outcomes of an investment style—it's not a reliable source of information to me. Being able to separate fact from fiction is important, especially in today's world.

My love for female empowerment then led me to the realisation that a lot of the foundations of patriarchal society in the South Asian context stems from financial inequality—and when I looked outwards I saw the clear correlation between personal finance and empowerment. If you have a genuine mission to help people, you're consistent every day about doing that—becoming the #1 in your category/field ends up becoming a possibility!

Did you learn any skills in your degree that have helped you get to where you are today?

Being a health professional means



your job everyday involves building rapport very quickly and also explaining concepts that take you years to learn into two or three sentences in layman's terms.

Analogies were a big part of my job working as an optometrist. I wanted my patients to walk away actually remembering what I had explained so they could easily recall it.

One of the things I've been able to do well from our feedback is breaking down confusing concepts. We've had people say, "I've had ex-boyfriends mansplaining for hours what you've taught me in minutes."

Another important skill, which I think everyone should be taught, is only relying on evidence-based methods. If there isn't a study to repeat the outcomes of an investment style—it's not a reliable source of information to me. Being able to separate fact from fiction is important, especially in today's world.

What have some of your highlights been from starting your podcasts?

One of the biggest highlights will be



the day we realised we were the #1 business podcast in the US, Canada, and NZ, and #2 in the UK—it was such a surreal moment.

At this point we were still recording in our bedrooms—still editing ourselves (something we still do) and had no idea we were going to grow so quickly. It truly was exponential.

What are some of the challenges you have faced working in the social media/tech industry?

I think one of the biggest challenges is learning how to turn social media off. A lot of my job involves interacting with our community on social media. If you're not careful you can easily blend your real life with your social media and never truly be able to turn off "work". It's not like a 9-5 where you're done at 5pm. It's important to understand your own boundaries.

Are there any things you wish were different about the social media/tech industry?

On social media it's very easy to start feeling bad about yourself because all you see is other people's highlights. It's very easy to compare yourself to others, and when we speak about money so openly—including how much we earn, what we own, what our assets are, etc.—you're bound to surface some emotions in people who may feel strongly about it.

It's important to us that if we speak about a highlight we also acknowledge perhaps the privileges surrounding that—such as buying a home alone but also having the privilege of good

financial literacy growing up. I try to make a conscious effort to also share the not so glamorous side of our jobs—like burnout or failures.

Related to the previous question, is there anything we, as listeners and scrollers, can do to help address these issues?

It's always important to take everything you see with a grain of salt and to remember perspective matters. If you see someone living an idealistic life, it's important to step back and note that no one actually does. During the first investing masterclass I was hosting, despite it being a huge hit, outside of the video frame of me presenting the webinars was four days' worth of dishes. I was working a 9-5 and full-time on *Girls That Invest* and just didn't have the energy, but it's things like that, that I like to share as a reminder of the highlight reel phenomenon.

What's some advice you would give to people who are interested in starting a podcast?

Done is better than perfect. We started out with \$200 microphones, free editing software, free recording software and free hosting software. You don't need the best to begin, you just need to begin.

The best thing I've learned is to always keep learning and keep taking feedback. After our first episode we asked everyone we knew to give us their constructive criticism. We then made a Google Doc with it all and tried to work on each thing.

The most helpful listeners are those who actually reach out to you and tell you they don't like when you said or did XYZ—they want you to succeed. If they didn't care, they'd just silently unsubscribe and you'd never be any better off from it.

What are five pieces of tech you can't live without?

1. My phone. I probably run 80% of my entire business through my phone on the go
2. Google Maps. I prefer it over



someone giving directions, it drives Sonya (my cohost and best friend) mad!

3. My wifi doorbell. It's so helpful to get notifications on my phone if someone leaves a package or tries to leave a note.
4. My online calendar. Working in an industry where there are a million things to do is hard for me to keep track of in my mind. I much prefer listing down everything I have to do, time blocking it. I use gCal so I can access it across all my devices.
5. My blue yeti microphone. We've now upgraded to Shure microphone, which is much more fancy and has a lot more wires and gadgets attached to it, but I do love that I can whip out my old blue yeti USB microphone, plug it into my laptop and start recording instantly.

What are your top five podcast recommendations?

Besides *Girls That Invest* (is that cheeky?), I love sooo many podcasts! Right now I'm especially loving:

1. *Celebrity Memoir Book Club*
2. *Mindset Mentor*
3. *Diary of a CEO*
4. *Call Her Daddy*
5. *Property Academy Podcast*

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Why do people keep trying to sell me NFTs?

Here's what they didn't tell me, and what they're probably not telling you.



GEORGE BROOKER (HE/HIM)

About halfway through the Delta Lockdown I started getting weekly calls from a company insistent on selling me cryptocurrency. What was odd about this company was that no matter how many times I told them that I wasn't interested, they wouldn't stop. This continued for nearly two months before they finally gave in. Spam calls aren't uncommon. But I've never had the same company call me twice in the same day. Why do so many people desperately want to sell me crypto?

Why do so many people desperately want to sell me crypto?

The crypto space has grown exponentially, from weird internet money to a huge community of investors and blockchain activists. Last year, NFTs brought crypto back into the mainstream with celebrities and corporations racing to cash in. Nearly everyone has that one family member or mate from high school who's excitedly tried to sell them on the blockchain. But, explanations of the blockchain rarely go further than repeating "digital ledger" over and over. That's quickly followed by a lot of talk about decentralisation, banks, the government, and yeah some people do get scammed but that's like a thing that happens normally, sometimes, so it's fine, and if you bought an ape NFT last year look how much money you'd have! Naturally, this can make cryptocurrency

First up: the blockchain—what's so special about a digital ledger? Turns out, not much.

pretty difficult to understand. So, let's get to the bottom of what's actually going on, and why I think you might not want to be a part of it.

First up: the blockchain—what's so special about a digital ledger? Turns out, not much. The blockchain itself is basically just a fancy spreadsheet that has a list of the details of every crypto transaction. What's special about

the blockchain is that it's not just one document. Every single wallet has to keep its own copy, and for a transaction to be recorded, every single wallet has to update itself. Then every wallet needs to agree with every other wallet that a transaction is legitimate. Anyone who's tried to split dinner more than four ways knows this sucks. Imagine if you had to keep every receipt for everything ever brought. Then every time you want to go shopping you compare receipts with the cashier to work out the running total of who owes who. Then you call everyone in the world to update their receipts and finally you can walk out with your shopping. Worse yet, if someone doesn't agree on any transaction then the entire system grinds to a halt. This happens every time someone sends anyone else crypto, and it's why transactions take hours or days, and use as much energy as most households do in a month.

Where do NFTs come in? NFTs are often thought of as digital art. In reality an NFT is incapable of storing any more information than a link. Usually an NFT links to a web address where a thing is stored. Because of this, most NFT art is stored on 3rd party web hosts like Google¹. If something happens to these hosts, or the person who sold you the NFT deletes their account, you're left with nothing but a very expensive, broken link. This is why there are so many scams involving NFTs. Because they don't actually contain much

Nearly everyone has that one family member or mate from high school who's excitedly tried to sell them on the blockchain. But, explanations of the blockchain rarely go further than repeating "digital ledger" over and over.

information. It's very easy to sell an NFT on false promises. You can make an NFT, put the link to someone else's art, then attempt to sell it, and that NFT itself will be indistinguishable from one the actual artist made and sold. This often results in not just buyers getting scammed but also artists losing out on sales. The lack of a central authority means there is no-one to turn to if you've been scammed. It is impossible to reverse a transaction once it has happened.

So, why would anyone want to buy such a worthless and risky asset? Well, if bitcoin is crypto's way of letting you spend your wealth, NFTs are how you flaunt it. NFTs finally solve the problem of what to spend your cryptocurrency on—more crypto! Cryptocurrency has long attracted the attention of the financial elite, and what they love more than making money, is showing it off. NFTs are a very quick way to show someone that they are poorer than

In reality an NFT is incapable of storing any more information than a link.

you. NFTs attract such high prices because it's never been about the art. As NFT influencer Gmoney notes in an interview with CNBC "With an NFT, by posting it as my avatar on Twitter and Discord, I can quickly 'flex' with a picture"².

All of this is not to say that everyone trying to sell you an NFT is trying to scam you. There's a lot of hype that's built up around them, and the promise of making tens of thousands of dollars flipping art in your spare time is alluring. But it's just that, hype. Almost all big sales are the super rich passing around the same hundred thousand dollars. Big price jumps are often the result of people buying their own NFT with a different wallet to inflate the price, and the promise of decentralisation only creates a marketplace where scams are easy to pull off. So, if you want to support your favourite artist you're probably better off buying a print. Or maybe a nice mug?

Imagine if you had to keep every receipt for everything ever brought. Then every time you want to go shopping you compare receipts with the cashier to work out the running total of who owes who. Then you call everyone in the world to update their receipts and finally you can walk out with your shopping.

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As NFT influencer Gmoney notes in an interview with CNBC "With an NFT, by posting it as my avatar on Twitter and Discord, I can quickly 'flex' with a picture"





Wong Kar-wai's ghost in my point and shoot. Taken at a fashion show in Parnell train station. Artists were Taylor Groves and Emma Jing.

Top left: Nirvana Haldar

This photo was taken on my most recent trip back home and is one of my favourite pictures I've taken on film... Having a first-person view of what it's like to be on the streets of Hong Kong is a very kind reminder of home and all the memories that I've made there.

Inner right: Rachel Sung (she/her)
@gnuslehcarr

This is a photo of my flatmate Cara peeking into the abandoned infirmary at the Greenlane Hospital! She did research on the architecture of the building and it's crazy. I love exploring abandoned settlements.

Polaroid: Tasman Clark (he/him)
@tasmanclark

This photo was taken around the Panmure Basin. It is interesting to me because the image shows no sense of scale. This photo could show a vast lagoon or a tiny rock pool.

Centre left: Salvador Fung (he/him)

Photo of a random door in Remuera station. Taken on Minolta X-300, using Portra 400.

Outer right: Eric Lee (he/him)
@esjlee98

This is from the Here & Now Festival, when I was doing Yang/Young/杨! This pic was taken, I think, a day or two after we moved into the Basement Theatre for rehearsal! Very exciting times.

Bottom left: Flora Xie (she/her)
@floraescent



Film Is Not Dead

Why Instagram looks like it's set in the eighties



MADELEINE CRUTCHLEY

At the moment, the aesthetics I find scrolling through my Instagram feed aren't that different from flipping through my parent's photo albums. Grainy film photography, Super 8 footage, and glossy polaroids fill my home page. Though I'm flicking my thumb over an impossibly clear touch screen, it feels like those snaps could be from Summer 2022 or Summer 1987. I can even recognise my Dad's dusty mullet in a few of those pics. Everything really does roll back around.

'Roll back around' may even be too conservative a description for this resurgence. #35mm now returns 35.8 million results on Instagram, and the more assertive tag #FilmIsNotDead returns 22.4 million. Kodak Alaris has noted the increasing demand for analog photography forms, and started to reproduce the once beloved Ektachrome film in 2018, in both 35mm and Super 8 formats. The products had originally been discontinued in 2013, due to declining sales.

In the past few months, that growing demand has become especially

apparent in Aotearoa. With a nationwide film shortage, photography enthusiasts and professionals alike were left to scrounge over a few remaining rolls while shipments were massively delayed. Thankfully, our local film shop, Junktion on Karangahape Road, proclaimed that the "NZ film shortage is finally over" on the 23rd March. Finally, edgy hipsters will fill K' Road again, snapping blurry pics of pasta (it's me, I'm edgy hipsters).

However, that film photography hobby does not come cheap. Some relatively unremarkable point and shoot models go for \$200 or \$300 dollars on TradeMe. Please note, that does not include the time investment or stress factor; the two hours spent cursing out the bidder you're rallying against, and tearing your hair out over every dollar the auction racks up. The costs don't stop there—an average 35mm roll goes for about \$20 at Junktion, and developing that film can cost \$10-30 each time (Toi Tumara and Red Dragon Film Lab, both with drop-off points on K'Road, are about the cheapest around).



So, at that high cost, why is this business booming? Why might we be keen to return to analog formats of photography, when the average smartphone or digital camera can capture shiny, bright, high quality images at lightspeed?

UoA professor Dr. Allan Cameron researches a variety of subjects relating to time, technology and media aesthetics, and considers the resurgence of this analog photographic format. He notes that there's an "interesting phenomenon, this kind of afterlife of technology, that things we'd assumed had gone, or were going, like the vinyl record or film photography, through this cyclical process keep coming back." He explains that though we may see technological developments that could make these analog methods 'obsolete', the "technologies are enmeshed with the culture and with cultural memory... the place it holds culturally that leads people to want to bring things back."

So, in a time where university students, for example, are studying online for eight hours a day, deeply immersed in a digital space, there might be a cultural context and memory around the analog camera that's attractive.



Perhaps the film camera makes us think about a time with slower, more deliberate engagements with technology. Dr. Cameron highlights that there's a "general sense that everything is dissolving into the Cloud, because so many of our experiences are coming to us through the same screens... you lose the distinctive experience around a particular cultural object." Instead of requiring us to engage with yet another glaringly bright screen, film photography allows for a more direct, tangible experience. Dr. Cameron explains that we engage with analog technologies "in a really direct, embodied way, it's about picking up the object... and actually having a tactile experience with it as well."

Tasman Clark, a UoA alumnus, describes having an intensely tactile experience with his polaroid camera, which resulted in one of his favourite shots. He explains that the polaroid was "ripped out of [his] camera and the chemicals kinda screwed up to look like that! I really like it. looks like a beach, or an avalanche, or something. Weird art." Obviously, there's something specific about the colours, and aesthetics that attracts Tasman to this photo, but he highlights his physical engagement with the technology.

Rachel Sung, another student photographer, explains her experience trialling a new analog medium, creating the header image for this article. She explains "I visited a friend in Ann Arbor Michigan in the fall and borrowed a medium format film camera to experiment with. We visited an arcade and I was enraptured by the aesthetics of the different gaming machines there; I spent a large portion of time taking long exposure photographs as opposed to playing the actual games." Again, Rachel's interaction with the camera emphasises her direct, physical engagement with the technology, as well as an appreciation for vintage aesthetics.

Film photography is a mode of production so separate from the hyper-digital activities that we engage with in our everyday studies and work life. It's pulling on a specific cultural frame, context, and physical actions that might be refreshing or even enviable in

our contemporary times.

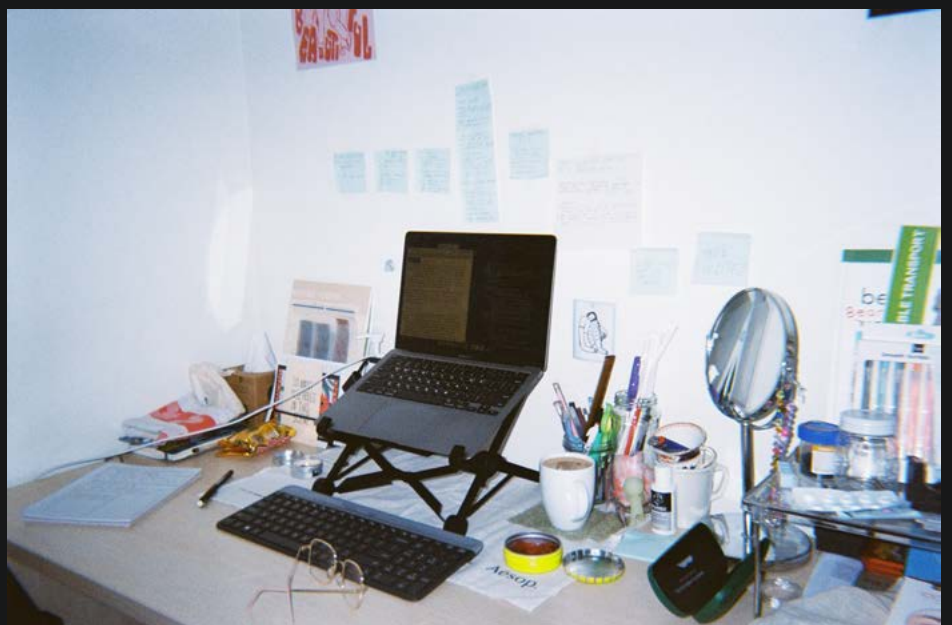
The aesthetic appreciations that Tasman and Rachel have both mentioned here, as well as the general longing after film grain throughout these communities, is something Dr. Cameron also highlights. He explains that people not only engage with the cultural or social frames around the analog technologies, but will also "make arguments based on aesthetics. They'll say 'It looks different on film.' Famously, people talk about analog technologies as having a warmth to them, being more human."

The fondness for this aesthetic 'warmth', the graininess of film, the distinct depth of field, it's all tied to an appreciation and longing for some mysterious other time. Dr. Cameron explains that this warmth "is a value that we attach to analog technology retrospectively, so our view of media technologies is always changing with each generation, and the meaning that we attach to analog technology is a meaning that we construct specifically in relation to the digital. It's absolutely to do with context." The fervour for film is also about reflecting on the time period before digitisation, and that warmth exists due to the distance we now have to those analog technologies (and from the time period itself).

The longing for simpler times, however, isn't really a nostalgia that's qualified by the actual existence of those times—it's more a mode of escapism based

on contemporary dissatisfaction. We have to be careful that we remain critical while approaching aesthetics with a nostalgic longing. Dr. Cameron explains that nostalgia "can go in a couple of different directions, like it can be very conservative... maybe that can be attached to a conservatism that is political or social." However, he suggests that this longing for change can also be productive, and progressive as "the nostalgic has this thing of wait a minute, let's slow things up a bit. Let's not lose this connection with history and the past. There's always these two sides to the nostalgic, which makes things really interesting."

The allure of the film camera, and the warm, grainy images it creates, is especially strong in the age of Snapchat. It's a welcome technological change from our screens, which might have become anxiety-inducing with their university tasks, LinkedIn network requests, and unwanted, invasive DMs. I like the way that film photography makes me wonder outside of my own small world, and the way it makes me question the necessity of digitising every single thing. The idea that it signals a want to slow down is one I would welcome. So, #FilmsNotDead, optimistically speaking, because of the future possibilities it might represent. Maybe we'll bring back the fax machine next, so we can actually get away from our desks for 30 seconds.



♪ *Te Hokinga Mai,
Te Hokinga Mai
Tu tangata tonu!* ♪



Te Reo Tech: How Good are the Apps?

The resurgence and revitalisation of Te Reo in a tech world



OMNI ARONA NGĀPUHI, NGĀTI WAI (HE/HIM)

Over the last few years, Māori have been embracing their Reo, rejecting generations of stigma and shame associated with its use, and rediscovering our culture through a language that was unable to be passed on to us. Te Reo is currently undergoing a revival, with citizens contributing to its resurgence by incorporating it into their everyday lives. This renaissance has coincided with a rise in tech, which has made it easier than ever to learn. As someone who is still on their Te Reo journey, I looked at the best apps to help us learn the language of Aotearoa.

Te Kūaha

The University of Auckland has acknowledged that Te Reo Māori is the foundation of Māori culture and identity and that it is an endangered language. Te Kūaha is a part of The University of Auckland's 'Language Plan for the Revitalisation of Te Reo Māori'. While the UI doesn't look the best, Te Kūaha does the basics very well. When it comes to language learning, the app is intuitive. Tapping any Māori word in any paragraph allows us to hear the proper pronunciation. This also exists when dragging across any paragraph section, enabling us to hear how these words sound within sentences. But the app is not simply a language learning app. Te Kūaha covers areas of Tikanga Māori, creating ones Pepeha, locations of importance, and the importance of Te Reo within te ao Māori. However, the app is limited in its ability to provide advanced learners with a means to move towards more complex elements of Te Reo. Increasing the scope of the app's content would be a major improvement.

Te Kūaha makes the important link between language and culture, putting it ahead of most another Te Reo apps.

7.5/10



Kupu

Kupu is a new kind of language-learning app. Take a photo of anything around you. It will use image analysis to identify what is in the photo and the Māori word for it (for me, it was my computer mouse and the massive stack of unread books on my desk, lol). The app is innovative and is a great example of how technology can be used to revive Te Reo. It is fun and gets better as people continue to scan things. The app scores points for ingenuity. The app has expanded with Spark developing Kupu 2.0, which supports Te Reo learning in the classroom following the government's announcement to make NZ history compulsory in all schools.

The app facilitates the curiosity of its user and is so far endlessly enjoyable.

8/10 for ingenuity.

Drops

Drops is the first multi-language learning app to incorporate Te Reo into its linguistic range. The app uses image association to help the user learn whatever language is chosen. You'll have to pay a monthly subscription fee to use the app, but this is reflected in the splendid interface, the scope of learning, and the range of languages you can learn. Daniel Farkas (Drops co-founder) told *idealog*: "Helping to preserve and promote smaller languages around the world is a cause very close to my heart, so it's been exciting to see New Zealand's genuine interest in the revitalisation of Te Reo Māori." The app is 10/10 for that statement alone.

Great user experience makes it a 9/10 despite the cost.

Kōreoreo

Kōreoreo is an interactive learning tool developed by AUT that uses repetition and phrase listening to learn Te Reo. The app is best used by someone who wants to incorporate Te Reo in their daily lives. The app uses scenarios to base your learning upon. These scenarios are everyday events where anyone can incorporate Te Reo Māori. Again, this isn't an app that offers someone a full course on learning Te Reo, but we all begin our journey somewhere, and Kōreoreo is a great place to start.

A app for clearly for beginners but still a great tool for those who would like to brush up on their language skills.

6/10

Are NFTs Art?

Economies, art, and the newest technological 'innovations'



VICTORIA NICOLL (SHE/HER)

NFTs... Bored-looking chimpanzee pictures that are sometimes worth as much as \$69,300,000. I'm sure we've all heard of them. We might have even seen someone we went to high school with going down the rabbit-hole. However, up until a couple of weeks ago, I didn't really know what they were, how you acquired them, and what the impacts of them are.

We'll start with the basics. NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens) are unique, verifiable assets. Their identifiers and attributes give them worth, a similar concept to that of owning an original piece of artwork. Each NFT represents a single unit of value, in that you cannot exchange one NFT for another, like you can with Bitcoin or other cryptocurrencies. In essence, it is exactly like owning a unique art piece, just in the form of pixels on your computer screen.

Each NFT has a code on it, like a signature, verifying that it's the original piece, and the way that these codes work mean that, theoretically, you cannot forge it. Because of the fact that they're non-fungible, there's only one version, one original, which means that an original NFT is then scarce, and its monetary value goes up (this is where you get the people paying millions of dollars); they're supposedly one-of-a-kind.

UoA itself held a webinar in May last year, hammering into some of the weirdness and hype surrounding NFTs,

but no NFT club has been started on campus (yet). It seems that many of us don't really see the point of this process. It's hard to, when the negative impacts of NFTs outweigh the positives: the environmental impact and capitalistic tendencies of NFTs mean that we're not really that interested in

what they have to offer. That's not to say that none of us are, but it seems like there's a pretty strong undercurrent of mystification and concern running through the student body when we talk about NFTs.

Why, then, are they relevant to us?

They're relevant because they're being minted and dealt right under our noses, in Aotearoa. 1 News reports on a man from Hamilton right in amongst the NFT biz. Martin van Blerk, a 20-year-old man from Hamilton came up with an idea for an NFT universe, known as Pixelmon. It took inspiration from Pokemon, and the concept was that interested buyers would buy in on a promise to receive an individualised NFT, one that could then act as their avatar in the Pixelmon world. These NFTs sold out super quickly, falling into the hasty pace of the internet and

its tendency to hype things up, but the unveiled NFTs weren't all they were cracked up to be. From there, he got told he was only in it for a cash grab, a quick way to make some money, and people reckoned that Pixelmon, in the end, wasn't fully legit. If this is happening in Aotearoa, and this isn't even one of the bigger examples of NFTs going awry, what's the rest of it like?

Unsurprisingly, there's a degree of distrust in anything regarding NFTs: the murky rules around ownership, what we can (comfortably) turn into

Unsurprisingly, there's a degree of distrust in anything regarding NFTs: the murky rules around ownership, what we can (comfortably) turn into consumable art, and why we need them.



consumable art, and why we need them. The Harvard Crimson wrote a think piece this month about the ethics involved in NFTs. There's a consensus that these ethics are complex. NFTs might allow for a wider democratisation of art, and can be looked at as a means through which art can progress, but there are also issues; questions of copyright, and the monetisation of museum, historical images. Recently, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts refused to loan a Congolese sculpture back to the Congolese Plantation Workers Art League, so the Arts League pulled an out-of-copyright image of the sculpture from the web and minted it as an NFT as a form of reappropriation. Legal battles were spawned, and discussions over rights of ownership of colonial sculptures in a postcolonial world emerged. Can profit be made from colonial exploitation, if it goes towards the colonised nation? Why shouldn't people be able to reappropriate art that they feel was unfairly taken from them? If NFTs have the possibility to revolutionise the art

world in such a way. Why shouldn't we encourage this?

So, the end question is: are we engaging with NFTs as a piece of artwork, like we do with a lot of the original inspirations for NFTs, or do we regard them as economic investments? If we're regarding them purely as economic investments, then their relationship to art is hindered significantly, or, the definition of art is then altered to fit a significantly more capitalistic lens. If we're looking at them as pieces of art, rather than economic



REMEMBER
WHEN THOSE
WERE A
THING?

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investments, then the art world gets thrown into question. Because of the accessibility of NFTs, the art world, collectors, and curators, lose some of their exclusivity and appeal—if everyone's buying one-of-a-kind pieces, where can exclusive curations and art collectors expect to fall? Of course, though, these questions aren't the only issues: the environmental impact of NFTs uses so much energy that it throws into question whether they're worth our time at all.

One thing is sure, though, it pays to

Are they completely unfounded, or are they the natural progression of art?

keep tabs on what's going on, and to notice how it's impacting our everyday scrolling, our economy, and the direction art's going to take in the next few years. Are they simply an economic craze that'll be over in a year, or is there something more to them? Are they completely unfounded, or are they the natural progression of art? Maybe they're just the next step in merging the digital with the physical, but we won't know for sure until after the fact. What

we do know, through cautionary tales, is that there's a degree of responsibility that has to be acknowledged when minting and trading NFTs, if not because of the environmental impacts, then because of the ethical questions you have to consider when even briefly thinking about them. Either way, they're fascinating to watch.

So, the end question is: are we engaging with NFTs as a piece of artwork, like we do with a lot of the original inspirations for NFTs, or do we regard them as economic investments?



The F(onion) of Wisdom

Where I take a headline from "The Onion" and write an objectively finer article



SOPHIE SUN (THEY/THEM)

"Man Wishes He Knew Enough About Cars To Tell If Repair Costs One Blow Job" – The Onion, 22/03/22.

Like every other neurodivergent young adult of our generation, I have many uneducated opinions on technology. In my ideal world, I would own a baby pink flip-phone, text my friends with cute "(ツωζ)" faces, and know nothing about social media (and/or Will Smith/Chris Rock). Sometimes technology seems like a double-edged sword. While I love the fact that I can drive an electric hybrid car, I can't ignore the realities opposed to it, like the fact that public transport in Auckland still fails the individual, and that New Zealand lacks a way of disposing car batteries when it eventually arrives at its technological end. Similarly, social media lets me stay in contact with my best friends who live cities away, but I know my mental health would be so much better without it.

Recently, I've been dreaming about dropping off the face of the earth and living in a rural cottage with my own garden (or simply sitting in a bog Ophelia style). Without a doubt, I would die in a week. I would have to get up four hours before I normally do just to have toast for breakfast and sorry to my cottagecore dream, but God made me a "material gort".

The point is, technology has ruined my life. In primary school, I would laugh

at my teachers for not knowing how to use smartboards, but now it seems like technological skills are a privilege. The rise of capitalistic competition means that there are multiple options for something as simple as a to-do list. But without time or money, consumers (a.k.a. us) can never really understand what we're signing up for. How many times have you ignored the terms and conditions from seemingly harmless websites, only to receive a new onslaught of spam mail the next day? And while technology sometimes acts as a lifesaver (Zoom re: online university; or the ANZ app re: me buying Maccas on a night out), it seems like the thing that is meant to be connecting us to one another has an awful lot of individual responsibility.

I'm so used to growing up around technology that screen-sharing on Zoom and integrated digital calendars seem normal. But if I hadn't hung out with RGB light-up keyboards and dual monitor boys, the learning curve is awfully steep. Even when I sign up for a new vet, they ask me to join a separate online portal or to transfer over my data. I love that I can do that but it also makes me stop and question that if I hadn't known what I was doing, would my cat exist in some outdated limbo?

Academically, this man-made man race

is so obvious. There are infinitely more academic sources and supplementary learning material online but only if you know how to look. Libraries are great, but there is an extra factor in travel time, and there's no Ctrl+F when you're looking for specific information. Not everyone's computers have a working mic or a camera for Zoom, and not everyone can stream Panopto videos reliably. Not everyone has a computer. Plus it's no secret that Apple phases out their operating systems so that you have to buy the latest models to keep up to date. Once you're part of the technological cycle, you're trapped in it forever.

Donkey's conclusion: GPUs and CPUs, what about me n u?



A Buyer's Guide to Weird New Tech

The technology you never knew you needed!



SARA MCKOY (SHE/HER)

Ever thought about how cool it would be to own a flying car? Or an assistant robot that can do everything for you? How about tech that lets you transmit your thoughts into commands for your devices?

While these are all in the cards (seriously) within the next few decades, the science world has already been busy producing some interesting—and weird—inventions. I've collected some of the most recent developments in tech for your viewing interest. Enjoy this collation of strange devices accompanied by my very humble and totally cynical judgements.

1. Sweat-Proof Gaming Mouse.

6/10: Problems were solved. Important ones? Hmmmm.

For all you gaming addicts (and I know you're there), this one's for you. No more unbroken hours of screen time interrupted or even inconvenienced by hyperhidrosis. By housing a tiny fan that blows cool air onto your palms, this mouse can take care of your most dire gaming needs.

2. Samsung Galaxy Flip Phone.

4/10: No it's not just because it's Samsung.

Whilst I admire the casual nod to older technology (90s I know, but shh I was

born in 02), this phone kind of takes the worst of both worlds in its design. It loses the retro look of those flip phones and combines modernity with a strange feature that, to be honest, has no real need in today's world. Maybe it'll take off, but I find the concept of pressing my phone screen together rather unsettling.

3. Roll-up TV Screen.

0/10: That's rich people bullshit.

What a life-changer! Every time I'm finished watching TV I'm like "damn! I wanna see the wall behind this thing now! What a waste of space! If only I could get rid of it completely while I'm not using it". I'm sure you've thought the same. Good news for us, for the low, low price of \$100,000 your TV will hide itself from view—for all the obvious reasons you would want that.

4. Furbo Dog Camera.

10/10: I love dogs and this deserves nothing less.

Don't spend enough time with your dog? Always at work or uni? Good news for you, now you can see, talk to, and feed your dog while you're away! Don't worry about how your dog will process receiving love from a you-sounding robot, or the absolute ease with which one might knock this machine down, just think about the positives! Now you never have to address your attachment issues! You also won't need to worry about having a dog sitter, 'cause why pay someone to do what you can now do on your phone? Good idea, tech people!

5. Futuristic Toothbrush.

7/10: Points 'cause its kinda funky, some lost bc fucking rich people.



When it comes to innovation, absolutely no task is left unimproved and teeth brushing is no exception. While it may not seem like there's much more we can do with this, scientists have developed a toothbrush equipped with sensors that "map out" where in your mouth you missed while brushing. It'll let you know if you're brushing too hard and at risk of injury. Thank God for that. Get yours now for a sweet \$250 and watch all your dental problems melt away!

6. Therapeutic Robot Pet.

9/10: -1 point for the physical design choice.

Want a pet but live in an apartment? I feel that. Now you can have one! And what's more, it'll be specifically designed to bring the same joy as a real pet. Except for some reason it doesn't have a head. I guess that makes sense—how would genuine animal resemblance make it seem more like a pet? But to their credit, it won't bite, or bark, and it also won't try to take over when the robots gain awareness. In other words, it's a city landlord's wet dream for these to become the new norm. Let's hope it wasn't programmed to shed or pee on the carpet, though. Maybe you can keep an eye on it using your Furbo Dog Camera.





A Brief History of Bitcoin

How the financial crisis revolutionised money



AVINASH GOVIND

Late in the evening on the 14th of September, 2008, word began to spread that Lehman Brothers, one of the most profitable banks in the world, was about to collapse under the colossal weight of its debts. Throughout the early 2000s, the bank had spent over half a trillion dollars betting on the American housing market as it inflated into a bubble, clinging to the belief that the price of homes would not fall, despite mounting evidence to the contrary. When the market crashed in 2007, all hell broke loose. Its executives spent their last year at the firm flailing wildly as the price of homes sank to record lows; they shuffled assets around and courted investors in the hopes of preventing their demise. But nothing worked.

As the sun rose over Manhattan on the 15th, dozens of newly unemployed investment bankers moped around the bank's Wall St. headquarters with cardboard boxes overflowing with files. Down the road from them, the American financial sector was in a panic. By the time the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) opened for business at 10 am that day, investors were in a hurry to sell their stocks in a range of different banks, making it clear that they expected more bankruptcies to follow. Investors weren't wrong to worry either. After all, Lehman Brothers was far from the only bank that took reckless bets that failed to pay off. In the year leading up to its collapse, dozens of smaller banks declared bankruptcy; a few larger ones were bought by competitors or the

government.

Within days, the global financial system was in a tailspin. Executives from across Wall St. began flowing into the office of Ben Bernanke—then the conservative Chair of the Federal Reserve, responsible for setting the United States' monetary policy and interest rates—desperate for him and other policymakers to step into action with a plan to save them. Bernanke, in turn, rushed back and forth between Washington D.C. and New York City, working in tandem with President George W. Bush's economic team to find a way to stave off a recession.

Less than a month later, both houses of the American Congress created the Troubled Asset Relief Programme

(TARP), enabling the U.S. government to bail out its financial sector by pumping hundreds of billions of dollars into it. The policy was controversial, amounting to a hand-over of government money to private banks that spent years engaged in knowingly fraudulent, predatory, and reckless conduct within the housing market. By most accounts, the bill that created TARP only passed after Bernanke lobbied lawmakers by exaggerating the effects of not bailing out the financial sector. Hank Paulson, a former Goldman Sachs head who was then the Treasury Secretary, gave legislators—few of whom were economists—just one night to decide whether they supported the bill.

It didn't take long for Bernanke to join the rest of the U.S. government. In early December, he released a short press release announcing that the Federal Reserve would print \$600 billion to buy mortgage debt held by banks—separate from TARP. Within a few years, that number grew to more than \$2 trillion. Anger directed at the Federal Reserve soon poured in from across the political spectrum. But some of the most caustic critics of Bernanke were his former allies. By using his power as the head of America's central bank to print a significant amount of money, Bernanke had abandoned long-standing libertarian principles and betrayed the American right.

Since the late 1960s, when the American economists Anna Schwartz and Milton Friedman published *A Monetary History of the United States*, the right has believed that one of the most significant causes of inflation is an increase in a country's money supply. According to them, the amount of money in circulation should grow at the

In some ways, Bitcoin is like any other currency; people can use it to buy products and record transactions. But, in one major way, it's unrecognisable.

same rate as the economy. If it grows too fast, you get inflation; too slow, a recession. In 2008, many libertarians argued that Bernanke risked sending the United States into a hyper-inflationary spiral.

It was during this moment of crisis that Satoshi Nakamoto*—a pseudonymous programmer—released a short white paper on an obscure online message board. Days after Bernanke formally announced the Fed's decision to buy bank assets, Nakamoto described their vision of a new currency that made central banks and financial institutions obsolete. Amid a global crisis, Satoshi invented Bitcoin.

In some ways, Bitcoin is like any other currency; people can use it to buy products and record transactions. But, in one major way, it's unrecognisable. A major issue that any currency faces is the double-spend problem: How do we ensure that a person doesn't duplicate a dollar? If everyone could produce money, it would lose its value immediately. Most traditional currencies deal with this by only allowing financial institutions to create money. In the public sector, Bernanke and other central banks have the exclusive right to print currencies. Outside of government, regular banks can lend money that they don't have, producing new dollars with each new loan.

But this system isn't perfect. As Nakamoto wrote in their 2008 paper, "[financial institutions] must be trusted not to debase [conventional currencies], but the history of fiat currencies is full of breaches of that trust." Under Nakamoto's system, both central banks and commercial banks would be irrelevant. Instead, a computer program and millions of users control the currency, working cooperatively to generate new bitcoins and prevent duplicates. Each time someone tries to transfer a bitcoin, groups of people, known as miners, race to verify that the transaction is authentic. Once this happens, Bitcoin's program adds it to a public database and generates a bitcoin for the successful miner.

If Bitcoin became a widely used currency, our economy would transform—and not necessarily for

But if the goal of the crypto movement is to democratise finance, as many of its advocates claim it is, stripping governments of their power to regulate our monetary system is not the way to go.

the better. Without a central bank in place, every economic crisis could easily progress into a depression. For instance, during the financial crisis, though Bernanke did essentially reward toxic behaviour by buying bank assets, he also helped the American economy to recover from a recession by maintaining low interest rates. While some of his actions do deserve criticism, doing nothing would have caused spending to crash across the globe, hurting the most vulnerable people in our economy.

In 2008, Nakamoto's disdain towards financial institutions wasn't unwarranted; it still isn't. But if the goal of the crypto movement is to democratise finance, as many of its advocates claim it is, stripping governments of their power to regulate our monetary system is not the way to go. Rather, the solution would involve making central banks and financial institutions more accountable to the public; it would involve tightly controlling our financial sector and barring former bankers from holding some public sector jobs. Hobbling central banks would only create a less stable economy with fewer protections from economic shocks.

Bitcoin is not value-neutral. Underpinning the currency are a host of ideas about politics and economics. Though it may be easy to separate Bitcoin from the ideologies surrounding it, it's worth remembering that every Bitcoin investor is, knowingly or not, buying into an argument about how our society should work.

A Silicon Valley Myth or Fact—Has Technology Really Made The World a Better Place?

Spoiler alert: the Tech Bros are lying to you.



YASMIN DULLABH (SHE/HER) AND NANCY GUO (SHE/HER)

Tech bros, scientists, CEOs, presidents, heck even our technologically-challenged Boomer grandparents, all subscribe to the rhetoric that technology has made our lives easier. This discourse has become so ingrained in our common sense that it carries the same weight as stating that 'the sky is blue' or that 'all hot girls are into astrology'.

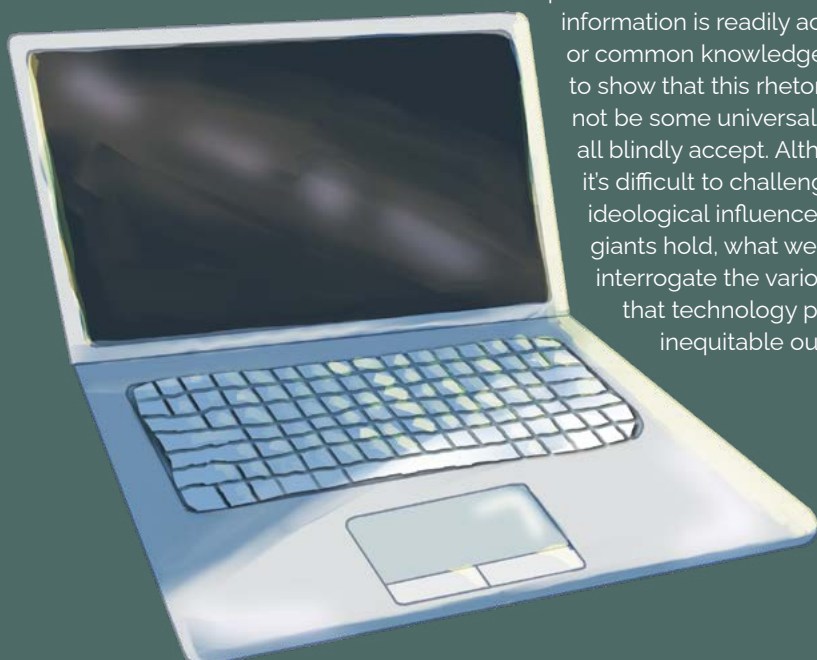
However, this rhetoric doesn't exist without good reason. Technology has arguably transformed our everyday lives in a myriad of ways. We can connect instantaneously with our besties, even if they live in butt-fuck nowhere like West Auckland. We can find out the name of our uni crush's aunt's dog with just a few Facebook searches. Especially with the existence of platforms like Youtube, it's now possible to access in seconds tutorials on how to yodel or crochet sock puppets, amongst other important life skills necessary for modern-day existence.

But has technology really made our society more equitable? Or has it only made life a little cushier, easier, and more convenient, for a privileged few? To answer these questions, it's imperative that we examine the ideological implications that come with subscribing to the "technology has made our lives better" rhetoric that the Brads and Chads of Silicon valley preach. Well, for starters the fetishisation of technology only preserves the chokehold that tech corporations have on our economy and personal lives. If we're told repeatedly that technological development is unquestionably a positive force, how do we restrain the economic influence of tech giants like Google and Apple? Outside the economy, as consumers, where do we draw the line between what is 'okay' and 'too far' when it comes to tech companies accessing our personal information? What restraints are in place to prevent these corporations from exploiting their power? The fact that none of this information is readily accessible or common knowledge just goes to show that this rhetoric should not be some universal truth we all blindly accept. Although it's difficult to challenge the ideological influence tech giants hold, what we can do is interrogate the various ways that technology produces inequitable outcomes.

But has technology really made our society more equitable? Or has it only made life a little cushier, easier, and more convenient, for a privileged few?

Firstly, technology is usually pretty expensive, which creates a significant barrier to entry. Whether we're describing laptops, phones, or home internet, each of these pieces of tech come with a considerable cost that is often not affordable for many households. Neither is powering these devices. Being unable to afford power, let alone the internet, is something that impacts many families in Aotearoa. The Ministry of Health estimated that currently at least 7000 to 8000 students from Years 9 to 13 do not have access to devices or stable internet at home. So clearly, the economic cost of purchasing and running technology poses a significant issue for New Zealanders of lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

If the lack of equity of access to technology wasn't apparent before, the first lockdown of 2020 made sure to hammer home the realities and prevalence of the digital divide in Aotearoa. Kaveesh, an Urban Planning student, notes that a considerable number of students "can't afford a laptop even though it's vital for their education". Although this has been an ongoing issue for decades, education institutions needed a full



blown pandemic "to provide students with an essential learning device". Given how expensive technology is, in combination with the increasing economic inequality in Aotearoa, as we develop into an increasingly technology dependent society, it's clear we are leaving many New Zealanders behind.

Technology also comes with its own language. This is another barrier as whether or not someone has received prior exposure and experience with technology is usually a direct result of their upbringing and background. It's unrealistic to expect all students and employees to harbour pre-existing knowledge of basic computer systems and skills. Not all of us come from backgrounds where our families could provide the knowledge and devices to become technologically adept. Vanisha, a Design and Commerce student, reports that they have "had a lot of people (mostly old people) come to Whitcoulls (where they work) asking for books about computers because they just can't get the hang of it". This is a significant equity issue. Especially as many things have moved online—these barriers make it harder for some people to go about their daily tasks like paying bills or booking appointments. Being 'tech savvy' is a privilege many of us take for granted. Rikka, a Computer Science and Design student, notes that "the introduction of tech into early schooling builds that literacy. Once you know how to operate the basic everyday tech well, it becomes immensely easier to understand other devices and concepts". Thus, it's important to recognise that what school you go to greatly impacts the quality

It's unrealistic to expect all students and employees to harbour pre-existing knowledge of basic computer systems and skills.

and quantity of technological education you are exposed to from an early age.

Paving the way for an equitable world using tech is impossible without the examination of who makes our technology and who they are making it for. When we look at the teams of people behind big technology companies—who is making the final decisions? Do they reflect society as a whole, or just a small privileged minority? Access to technology means different things within different contexts. Molly, a Design and Arts conjoint student, states that it's important to look at "who is involved in the design process? Who is coding the software? How diverse are the teams who work on the technologies?" These are all important issues we should be holding tech giants accountable for.

Let's not forget about the hellscape that is capitalism. As this unsustainable economic system is built upon acquiring more and more capital, at the heart of the production of goods is profit. From the assembly lines and distribution centres, to the hands of the consumer—the journey of a piece of tech from start to finish is tainted with exploitation. And as no technology is free, as long as we continue to live in a class-based society, there will never be such a thing as equitable tech. In a capitalist society, technological



progress can never be entirely beneficial for all.

But that doesn't mean we should stop fighting for equity. Or underestimate the power of technology to produce equitable outcomes. To access information and organisations that are striving to make the world a better place with technology, check out the resources below.

Resources

Digital Inclusion Map: An online database of digital inclusion projects and resources within Aotearoa. <https://digitalinclusion.nz/#maptop>

Recycle a Device (RAD): A non-for-profit organisation that helps get laptops (donated and refurbished devices) to those in need. <https://recycleadevice.nz>

DigiTautua: A group supporting Māori and Pasifika students in need to get new and refurbished devices. ' <https://www.digitautua.org.nz>



WHICH TECH BRO ARE YOU?



NANCY GUO (SHE/HER)

Silicon valley is a vast place. So is Discord, PB Tech and the Metaverse, whatever that is. What do all of these spaces have in common? Bad vibes and men that wear Patagonia vests and running shoes year-round. These creatures are known as the *tech bros*, a fascinating species that sport five-paged LinkedIn profiles, wardrobes consisting exclusively of hoodies, and a lack of bitches... Just like wolves, the hierarchical pack structure is central to the functioning of *tech bro* society. At the top are the alpha *tech bros*, aka the crème de la crème of the pack. With their god-like status, the rest of the beta *tech bros* bow down to their superiors, worshipping and emulating their behaviour with the hopes of one day becoming just like their idols. So, which alpha *tech bro* are you? Complete the following quiz to find out!

Describe your personality!

- A. Spacey. I'm also a genius who is beyond staying in touch with current reality...
- B. Entitled, narcissistic, and slightly robotic.
- C. Fun and quirky! I am definitely not your average chill, normal dude XD!
- D. Bald.
- E. I'm SUCH a nice guy! I deserve to win the Nobel Peace Prize just for existing.

What's your favourite hobby?

- A. Utilising 100% of my brain at all times.
- B. Yelling "NI HAO" and pretending I speak amazing Mandarin.
- C. Playing with scrabble tiles 'til I end up with a combination unique enough to name my next child.
- D. Browsing for cool new wigs made by underpaid workers in factories that are unfit for human inhabitation.
- E. Oh you know me, I donate to charities for fun because DID I TELL YOU I AM A PHILANTROPIST???

Mostly As: Steve Jobs — Forever travelling in some parallel universe, your lack of engagement with this dimension sets you up to be the next Steve Jobs. His signature black turtleneck and jeans combo perfectly captures your personality—boring, bland, and predictable.

Mostly Bs: Mark Zuckerberg — Efficient and organised, you're the ultimate girlboss—so naturally the tech bro that best represents your admirable entrepreneurial spirit is Mark. But don't get too cocky, we all know you're

What job would you do if you didn't work in tech?

- A. I live and breathe tech. I AM TECHNOLOGY.
- B. Being ~meta~ is a full-time job, thank you very much.
- C. Being a diplomat for the Martians or running my baby mama Grimes' fanclub.
- D. A scientist conducting research in hair follicle revival.
- E. Probably something in Public Relations? I'm pretty good at manipulating the media to portray me as a benevolent white man with no shady past whatsoever!

What's your favourite song?

- A. "Parallel Universe" by Red Hot Chili Peppers.
- B. "I Am Not a Robot" by MARINA.
- C. "Space Oddity" by David Bowie.
- D. "Short Kings Anthem" by blackbear and Tiny Meat Gang.
- E. "Nice Guys Finish Last" by Green Day.

secretly a robot.

Mostly Cs: Elon Musk — Your chaotic, problematic and 'not like other boys' energy makes you stand out from the crowd. With that creative mind, you are unstoppable just like Elon Musk with your neverending wacky ideas—whether that's space exploration or designing self-driving cars because you're salty the car bros never accepted you.

Mostly Ds: Jeff Bezos — Come on, Jeffrey, you can do it! Pave the way, put your back into it! Just like Amazon's founder, your

Let's settle the debate—are there more wheels or more doors in the world?

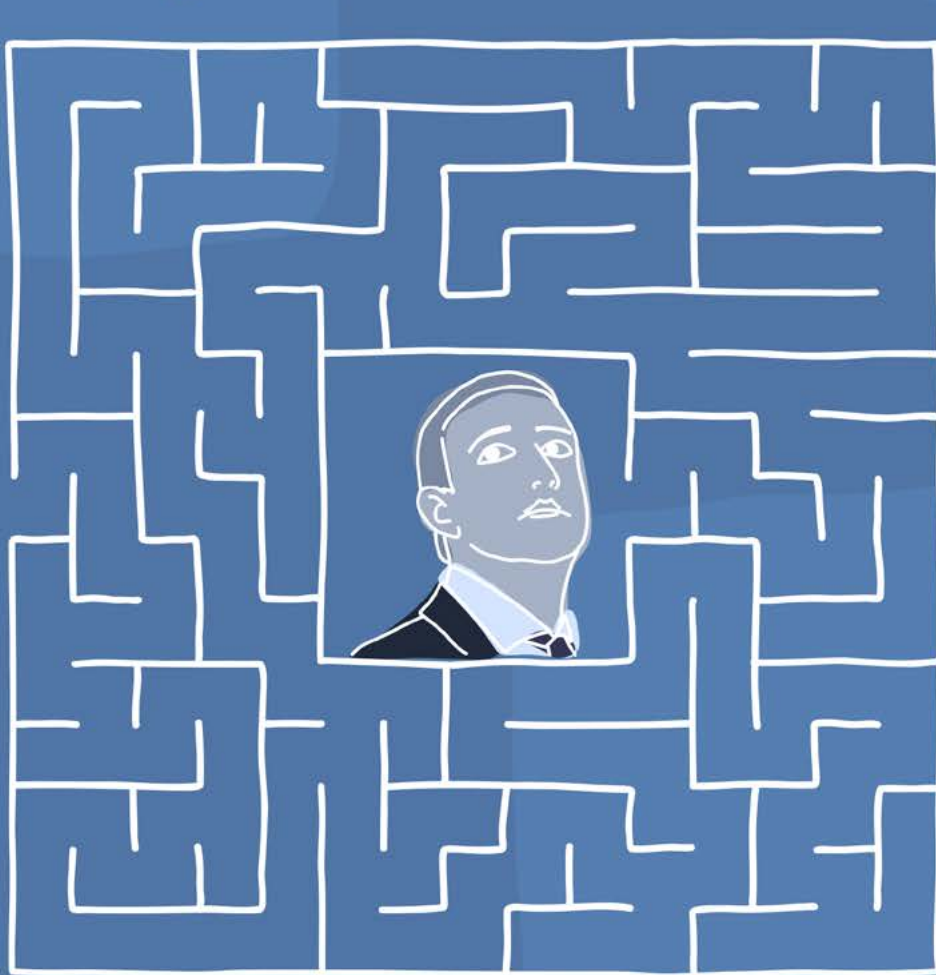
- A. I do not care for worldly discourse.
- B. Are we talking about ~meta~ doors and wheels? No? Cool, I'm not taking part in this.
- C. 1000% wheels! If it's a Tesla wheel, that gets double the points to account for how swag my creations are.
- D. Um, guys here's a more pressing issue—what do I do if my girlfriend is thirsting over Leonardo Dicaprio...
- E. Doors of course! There are so many doors of opportunity in life, you've just got to take them, just like I did.



chaotic evil energy makes you stick out like a sore thumb at every party. However, behind that cool exterior is a soft interior, riddled with insecurities that no amount of tax evasion could ever fix!

Mostly Es: Bill Gate — You embody the "pick me" and male manipulator energy of Bill Gates, America's favourite billionaire. But we're not fooled by your antics, at least the other *tech bro* Alphas have the balls to admit their exploitative ways...

help mark zuckerberg escape the metaverse



and here's
some
sudoku



| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 3 | | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | | 5 | 2 | | |
| | | 6 | 1 | | 4 |
| | 2 | | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| | 3 | 1 | 4 | 6 | |
| 4 | | 2 | | | 3 |

HOROSCOPES

This week Polly Prophet won a PBTech Giveaway on Facebook and finally received her VR goggles in the mail. Since that glorious day, she's done nothing but join a secret society on Roblox and purchase cursed minion NFTs off the dark web. Polly has unsurprisingly decided to stay in the Metaverse indefinitely. To fulfil her Craccum duties, she has enlisted the help of her new AI bestie, Axela, to decode your week!

ARIES

Expect to be bugged down this week. Glitches, malfunctions, and error 404s, are heading your way. But no fear! Although your server seems to be overloaded with information, your emotional resiliency and tenacity will carry you through April with ease.



TAURUS

Communication will not be a strong point for you this week. At times it may feel like you aren't on the same wavelength as everyone else, and you know what—you're right. Instead of becoming frustrated with your loved ones, be like Siri and simply search the web for the answer you are seeking.



GEMINI

With April's arrival, this is your social season my Geminis. Get out your gamer girl headset, brush the dust off your rainbow keyboard, grab your favourite snacks, and jump on Discord! Adventures on Minecraft and Stardew Valley await!



CANCER

Fortunately, your sad girl autumn has come to a close. Fresh beginnings, new connections, and creative expression are the three key themes of April. Whether that means taking a leap of faith or channeling your artistry into designing some overpriced digital tokens—the Metaverse has got your best interests at heart.



LEO

As the life of the party, this week you'll be feeling extra groovy, or extra "HYPE" as you Leos like to say. Despite the energy surge coming your way, it's helpful to hit that 'restart' button every now and then to avoid burning out.



VIRGO

This is the time that your gut instincts are most aligned with the order of the Metaverse. Do not listen to external influences. Instead, zone in on the feelings of your gut microbiome, they know what's up. Invest in that stock. Take that risk. Your future is bright.



LIBRA

Just like the invention of the Dyson airwrap, technology, and your presence has made modern life so much easier. March was tough, but my algorithm tells me that April will be the polar opposite. So, hang in there! Good things are on the horizon.



SCORPIO

Alexa, turn it up! My Scorpios, your week is packed with spontaneity, good times and a few impromptu dance numbers. This is the time to come out of your shell, shed that stifling Patagonia vest, and live a little.



SAGITTARIUS

Your sweet souls are the embodiment of Silicon Valley—always brimming with innovation, new wacky ideas, and way too much money for anyone to handle. Consider dabbling in a career of sugaring, or just being extra generous to your friends this week. Let's not be gatekeepers!



CAPRICORN

The vibes for the week are very much Bing.com. You are both a nuisance and useless to society. The people around you wish they could log off, but for some reason the default browser has been set to your shitty presence. Spare our poor souls and consider deactivating soon.



AQUARIUS

Your energy best resembles the crypto market. Volatile, mysterious, but somehow everything still works??? Many strange and risky opportunities will be popping up this week and it's up to you to decide what's best. Knowing your irrational tendencies, this will likely be a challenge.



PISCES

As the Metaverse's favourite children, you will be granted the power of the ICK this week. Do not fight its mystical and mighty force. The ick will protect your kind souls from the heartbreak of modern reality...





MAY 8, 2022 — 11:00 PM

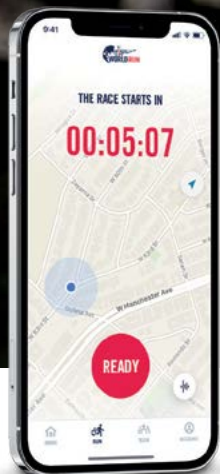
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TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME ALL OVER THE WORLD

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