

# **Uses and Gratification Theory in the Concept of the Daily Me**

Research Proposal

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April 20, 2020

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MC 7021- Mass Communication Theory

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Uses and Gratification theory (UGT) focuses on understanding how and why people use different media to satisfy their particular needs and gratifications. This is one of the first theories to recognize that people are active, not passive, audience members of the media (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy, & Goodman, 2016, p. 262). Although scholars can apply UGT to all aspects of mass communication (especially journalism), the overall trend within current UGT research is **using UGT to observe social media behaviors due to their popularity and interactive nature.**

Social media, defined as “online platforms where users can interact with each other, build networks, share and create content, publish, and make comments” (Rathnayake & Winter, 2018, p. 4) has allowed people now more than ever to actively seek out certain types of media to gratify their needs such as knowledge gain, entertainment, relaxation, social interaction or reward (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy, & Goodman, 2016, p. 262).

Furthermore, social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram give users the chance to **custom tailor** their news feeds, thus leading to selective exposure and introducing the concept of the **“Daily Me.” This concept asserts that people actively customize the news they expose themselves to (perhaps in a subconscious effort to reaffirm their beliefs on a certain topic).** People are therefore often only seeing one side of an argument within mass communication. One example of this occurs on social media when people usually only “follow” pages they like and rarely “follow” pages they dislike. Users also might only follow people with similar political views as them, thus creating political polarization.

Although many researchers have used UGT to analyze social media, **there is a gap when observing UGT’s effects on the concept of the “Daily Me” and selective exposure.**

Understanding how people customize their newsfeeds can help the media understand how they

are reaching their audience. It can also help potentially lessen information biases and political polarization that occurs as a result of this news personalization. When people fail to learn about information outside of their own network, they are greatly hindering the chance to connect with others and learn more about different perspectives.

This study intends to fill this research gap by proposing a qualitative study that uses UGT to analyze the concept of the “Daily Me.” UGT is arguably the best lens to look at the concept of the “Daily Me” through since, like the “Daily Me,” UGT states that people use media to gratify certain needs/wants and that they actively control their media consumption. By implementing a survey, this study hopes to understand if certain UGT gratifications affect social media user’s “Daily Me” and news consumption. Data from this study will contribute to UGT and “Daily Me” research by connecting the two, looking at the “Daily Me” through a different angle and creating a pathway for future research.

This paper is organized into the following sections: Literature Review (which includes the origin of UGT, the origin of the concept of the “Daily Me” and multiple relevant studies), Research Questions, Methods and Conclusion.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

### **What is Uses and Gratification Theory:**

Beginning in 1944, social scientist Herta Herzog researched the types of satisfaction listeners received when hearing radio programs; she used the word “gratifications” to categorize the various dimensions of satisfaction. In the 1970s, researchers Elihu Katz, Michael Gurevitch and Hadassah Haas added to Herzog’s research by noting that UGT is based on the “social and psychological origins of needs, which generate expectations of the mass media or other sources, which lead to differential patterns of media exposure, resulting in need gratifications and other

consequences” (Korhan & Ersoy, 2016, p. 1,803). In other words, people actively seek out certain media to fulfill their needs. These needs can include information seeking, newsgathering, social interaction, entertainment, self-expression or keeping up with friends and family (Rokito, Choi, Taylor, & Bazarova, 2019, p. 77). This theory believes that people are aware of their needs and thus, their medium choice is goal-oriented; each medium offers benefits that consequently attract people to choosing it (Hossain, 2019, p. 17). Although some scholars criticize UGT for being too individualistic and not meeting all the requirements to be considered an official theory, many people believe that the emergence of social media will help the theory become more recognized as being legitimate.

### **What is the Concept of the Daily Me:**

The concept of the “Daily Me” first arose in 1995 after Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab founder Nicholas Negroponte introduced the idea in his book “Being Digital.” As previously mentioned, this concept claims that people play a large role in news selection by actively customizing their news packages (Thurman, 2011, p. 396). Although Negroponte applies this concept to digital media, many researchers note that a form of customization has always existed. For instance, newspaper readers often only read certain sections that interested them and ignored sections they had no interest in reading (Thurman, 2011, p. 411). In today’s social media, the concept of the “Daily Me” is associated with “selective exposure” of news. Selective exposure is defined as “the tendency of users to ignore dissenting information and to interact with information adhering to their preferred narrative” (Cinelli et al., 2019, p. 2). Social media users who selectively expose themselves to a certain newsfeed often only see a limited number of news sources regardless of their knowledge of other alternatives. Selective exposure can also lead to echo chambers, groups of like-minded people

with the same perspectives on a particular topic. Because echo chambers are filled with people who think the same way, people in these chambers are reinforcing and strengthening their existing ideas with confirmation bias and ignoring ideas that do not fit within these beliefs. This creates stronger polarization and more “misinformation cascades” (Cinelli et al., 2019, p. 2).

### **How and Why Consumers Use Social Media:**

Eda Yaşa Özeltürkay, associate professor at Cag University, and Emel Yarimoğlu, assistant professor at Yaşar University, wrote the article “How And Why Consumers Use Social Media: A Qualitative Study Based On User-generated Media And Uses & Gratifications Theory.” To determine how and why people use social media, they designed a qualitative study with 23 in-depth interviews. These authors likely chose this methodology because it would give them a detailed description of what drives people to seek out social media and what needs they are gratifying by doing so. Although this did not give them a large sample size, it successfully gave them a chance to get an in-depth understanding of social media’s thoughts behind their actions.

For their study, Yaşa Özeltürkay & Yarimoğlu (2019) used both UGT and user-generated media content as the lens through which they analyzed social media. They used UGT because it “explains why people use social media tools, and the theory also asserts that people utilize media because they are seeking to fulfill a need that necessitates being met” (p.143). Also, they define user-generated media content as user-created content that contributes to information on the Internet; the three categories to user-generate media content include consuming, participating and producing (Yaşa Özeltürkay & Yarimoğlu, 2019, p. 147). The researchers chose to use UGT since it offers a way to understand how and why people seek out various media to fulfill their needs. Their two research questions are “How do consumers use social media within the scope of

the UGM [user-generated media]?” and “Why do consumers use social media within the scope of UGT?” (Yaşa Özeltürkay & Yarimoğlu, 2019, p. 147).

Results from the study show that Facebook and Instagram were the most popular social media platforms. Although users log in to these platforms every day, many do not share content each time they log in; Yaşa Özeltürkay and Yarimoğlu (2019) refer to these users as “silent followers” (p. 157). Researchers postulate that this is due to social pressure; “silent followers” are concerned with how others will perceive and judge their posts and behavior. Moreover, Yaşa Özeltürkay and Yarimoğlu (2019) determined that most users use social media to consume information, to be entertained as “silent followers,” to socially interact with others and to post content about their “self-actualizations” so that they, too, can feel like celebrities and gain recognition (p. 157).

In a similar study entitled “Effects of uses and gratifications on social media use: The Facebook case with multiple mediator analysis,” professor Alamgir Hossain used UGT to conduct an online survey to determine how people’s habits and their subjective norm affect their social media usage. He defines a habit as “a learned sequence of actions that have automatic responses to certain cues, and that are functional to obtain specific objectives or end-states” (Hossain, 2019, p. 18). Moreover, Hossain says people’s subjective norm is the normal behaviors that they believe they should be doing; these beliefs often become instilled in them from those individuals closest to them, such as parents or close friends. In terms of social media, the subjective norm is the amount of perceived social pressure an individual may feel to behave a certain way on social media (Hossain, 2019, p. 19).

Results from this survey show that both habit and subjective norms play a significant role in how people use social media and what gratifications they hope to receive. Gratifications

received by social media usage create habits, which in turn influence a person's desire to repeat his or her behavior to receive the same gratifications (Hossain, 2019, p. 26). Furthermore, the subjective norm also affects a person's social media usage; people are strongly influenced by their friends and family. For example, people are more likely to use Facebook for entertainment purposes if their family uses it for entertainment, too (Hossain, 2019, p. 26).

By using UGT to determine how and why people use social media, Yaşa Özeltürkay, Yarimoğlu (2019) and Hossain (2019) present new information to UGT research. The growing popularity and use of social media are changing the way that people receive their information and interact with companies. Therefore, media companies must adapt to these changes to better engage their audiences. Without changing, media companies run the risk of losing their audience, as people can now easily select a different media source that better appeals to them.

#### **Usability and Functionality Factors of Social Media:**

Eastern Mediterranean University researchers Orhan Korhan and Metin Ersoy, authors of “Usability and functionality factors of the social network site application users from the perspective of uses and gratification theory,” wanted to use UGT to analyze how and why people use social media and what aspects of social media apps appeal most to users. They chose this theory because they felt that it “guides the assessment of consumer motivation for media usage and access” (Korhan & Ersoy, 2016, p. 1,799). Korhan, who works in the Department of Industrial Engineering, and Ersoy, who works in the Department of Radio, TV, Film and Journalism, pull from several articles to define UGT. They say this theory is concerned with “how individuals satisfied or gratified their needs regarding content during the use of media” (Korhan & Ersoy, 2016, p. 1,803). The researchers also hoped to analyze various social media's usability and functionality. They define usability as “the extent to which a web site facilitates

users to utilise its functions easily and appropriately” while functionality is defined as “the extent to which the website operates in the way it is structured and is expected to perform as users desire” (Korhan & Ersoy, 2016, p. 1,804).

Using a qualitative approach, the researchers designed a cross-sectional survey to determine the usability and functionality factors of social media apps through UGT (Korhan & Ersoy, 2016, p. 1,804). They conducted the study for undergraduate and graduate students within various faculties and schools in the Eastern Mediterranean University, a university that the authors believe to be “highly international” (Korhan & Ersoy, 2016, p. 1,805). They divided the survey into the following three sections: demographics, analysis of social media user behavior and ratings of social media apps’ usability and functionality (Korhan & Ersoy, 2016, p. 1,806). Korhan and Ersoy (2016) likely chose to implement a large survey to gain insight from a wide range of people. By using a large sample, they gave themselves a better chance of having a more accurate representation of the population and their social media behaviors.

The survey findings determined that most social media users prefer to use the platforms to keep in touch with their friends and family, to receive news, to learn new information or to be entertained. Korhan and Ersoy (2016) note that these qualities gratify the respondents’ socialization, entertainment and learning needs (p. 1814). When looking at UGT, respondents scored Instagram as giving them the highest satisfaction. The researchers believe that this is because users now prefer to receive quick and short visual information rather than in-depth information. Moreover, respondents said Twitter and Skype were the most usable and functional. Interestingly, Facebook received the lowest usability and functionality scores even though it is the most downloaded and used app. According to survey participants, the most important



usability factor is the app's "ease of use" and its "learnability" while the most important functionality factor is "personalization" (Korhan & Ersoy, 2016, p. 1,809).

Understanding social media's usability and functionality offers a different perspective into UGT research and gives scholars another way to think about why people choose the social media they choose. Gratifying innate needs might not be someone's number one reason for going to social media; rather, people might choose a certain medium due to its ease of use or convenience. The authors' realization that people now prefer to see short, visual messages is also vital for media companies to understand. If media companies fail to understand this and adjust their messages accordingly, they might lose their audience to other noise within that user's life.

#### **User-Oriented and Platform-Oriented Gratifications:**

Another article that analyzed how social media play a role in uses and gratifications is "Carrying Forward the Uses and Grats 2.0 Agenda: An Affordance-Driven Measure of Social Media Uses and Gratifications" by lecturer Chamil Rathnayake and associate professor Jenifer Sunrise Winter. These authors categorized social media gratifications into either user-oriented or platform-oriented. User-oriented gratifications focus less on the social medium features and more on the user. Some examples of these types of gratifications include socializing and relaxing. Conversely, platform-oriented gratifications analyze how the features of the social medium play a role in gratifying the user (Rathnayake & Winter, 2018, p. 373). Unlike many previous studies that looked at user-oriented gratifications, these authors wanted to solely focus on platform-oriented gratifications and how they play a role in UGT.

When looking at platform-oriented gratifications, the authors use the MAIN model. This model "rejects the idea that all gratifications relate to innate needs and argues that distinctive gratifications can emerge from new media affordances" (Rathnayake & Winter, 2018, p. 374).

The MAIN model notes that social media contain the following four traits that trigger a user's judgment of a particular medium: modality, agency, interactivity and navigability). Modality refers to the various ways of presenting media content, such as through audio or pictures. The agency aspect suggests that social media users are sources of information and can act as gatekeepers and content builders. Interactivity is the main trait of social media and refers to social media users having the ability to make changes to media content. Lastly, navigability is defined as the ability for users to move through a certain social medium.

To conduct their study, Rathnayake and Winter (2018) sent out two online surveys to analyze the relationship between UGT and platform-oriented gratifications; the first survey had 393 respondents while the second one had 313 (p. 375). Findings from the survey demonstrate that there is little difference in perceptions of uses and gratifications based on gender, age or ethnicity. However, perceptions of uses and gratifications can vary depending on the education level (Rathnayake & Winter, 2018, p. 383).

Although this article did not have many findings, it did make an important distinction between user-oriented and platform-oriented gratifications. It is important to recognize that not all users pursue a social media platform due to their innate needs and desires; rather, some people choose a social medium based on the traits of that medium. This study successfully lays foundational work for future studies to build upon.

### **Over Gratification Versus Under Gratification:**

In "Over-gratified, under-gratified, or just right? Applying the gratification discrepancy approach to investigate recurrent Facebook use," Cornell University and University of Pennsylvania Law School students Shelby Rokito, Yoon Hyung Choi, Samuel Hardman Taylor and Natalya N. Bazarova used UGT to analyze the gap between gratifications sought from social

media usage and gratifications actually earned from social media usage. They break this gap into three different categories: under gratified, over gratified and exact fulfillment. Although they do not give exact definitions of each category, they give helpful examples. For instance, if someone logs onto social media to fulfill a need for entertainment and they receive both entertainment and social interaction, they have been over-gratified. On the other hand, if this person logs on looking for entertainment and social interaction, but they only receive “partial entertainment,” they have been under-gratified (Rokito, Choi, Taylor, & Bazarova, 2019, p. 76). Like Hossain (2019), these researchers also look at the role of habit in social media usage.

To conduct their study, the researchers chose a quantitative experiment that allowed them to monitor social media users’ gratifications both at the beginning and the end of each Facebook session. They also collected data regarding the length of the sessions and how often the user logged onto Facebook over a week period. Finally, respondents also took a pre-survey and post-survey (Rokito, Choi, Taylor, & Bazarova, 2019, p. 77). Findings prove that people use Facebook mainly to find entertainment, relieve boredom or keep updated with their social network (Rokito, Choi, Taylor, & Bazarova, 2019, p. 79). In addition, frequent Facebook logins are associated with more feelings of over gratification and under gratification. For example, under gratifications resulted in more recurrent Facebook visits and a longer time spent on the site. However, a longer Facebook duration creates higher gratification satisfaction. Lastly, stronger social media habits and gratification satisfactions lead to people logging on to Facebook more often throughout the day (Rokito, Choi, Taylor, & Bazarova, 2019, p. 81).

This study adds important information to the UGT research by explaining the concepts of over gratification and under gratification. Learning what motivates people to use social media and what level of gratification they receive can help people learn how to self-regulate their social

media usage. Also understanding a habit's role in social media usage is imperative for people who want to limit or change their social media usage.

### **Effects of News Customization:**

In “Factors Motivating Customization and Echo Chamber Creation Within Digital News Environments,” University of Maryland student Brooke Auxier and Michigan State University assistant professor Jessica Vitak recognize that a large amount of information in a social media user's life create noise that might overwhelm the user. Because of this, users might be more likely to customize their newsfeed, purposely leaving out information they dislike. Auxier and Vitak (2019) note that this “modestly contributes to ideological segregation” (p.2). These researchers wanted to analyze customization on social media newsfeeds and how this affects the user. Thus, they developed two research questions: “How does an individual's anxiety about current events impact their news customization practices?” and “How does an individual's political affiliation/partisanship impact their news customization practices?” (Auxier & Vitak, 2019, p. 5).

The researchers developed a qualitative online survey with Qualtrics to ask questions about demographics, partisanship, news feed customization, feelings about information overload and anxiety levels. Survey data showed that social media users who tried to diversify their newsfeeds by following sites from both sides of an argument reported less anxiety than those users who only followed pages with similar views to them. No significant correlation existed between these users who tried to diversify their news and their political affiliation. Furthermore, data showed that users who identified as Democrats showed more anxiety about current events than Republicans. Moreover, both Republicans and Democrats participated in more newsfeed customization than Independents (Auxier & Vitak, 2019, p. 8).

Although some may criticize this study for having a sample size that might not be representative of the American population and for using data that relies heavily on participants' memory, this study still adds significant findings to “Daily Me” and “selective exposure” research by noting the relationship between customization, partisanship and user stress/anxiety levels. With 67% of American adults receiving at least some of their news from social media, it is important to understand how customization affects their news consumption and their stress levels (Auxier & Vitak, 2019, p. 2). Future research could use this article to determine a way to minimize information overload so that people feel less of a need to customize their news and rely on echo chambers.

### **Who is Most Likely to Succumb to Echo Chambers:**

Like the Auxier & Vitak (2019) study, “Age, gender, personality, ideological attitudes and individual differences in a person's news spectrum: how many and who might be prone to “filter bubbles” and “echo chambers” online?” also analyzes what type of person is most likely to customize their social media news and who might be prone to become part of an echo chamber or a filter bubble. Authors Cornelia Sindermann, Jon D. Elhai, Morten Moshagen and Christian Montag define a filter bubble as “a potential and extreme consequence of pre-selected/implicit personalization (not driven by the user itself) of the Internet” (Sindermann et al., p. 1). They also note that filter bubbles show the consequences of Internet algorithms that constantly analyze “various data points of the individual and create different sets of information presented to each individual, accordingly” (Sindermann et al., p. 1). Moreover, they define an echo chamber as an environment where people are only exposed to information that reinforces their attitudes and beliefs toward a topic, thus creating group polarization. These authors believe that people who

consume their news exclusively through social media are most at risk to filter bubbles and echo chambers (Sindermann et al., p. 7).

Sindermann et al. (2019) want to determine if age, gender, personality and ideological attitudes affect someone's likelihood to customize his or her newsfeed. To conduct their study, the authors implemented a survey on an online platform called Survey Coder from August 2018 to June 2019 (Sindermann et al., p. 3). Findings from this survey show that participants who look at the largest number of various news sources are older males with a high personality trait of openness. Participants who had the highest ratings of conscientiousness also mostly received their news offline, thus showing that they would be less likely to succumb to a filter bubble or echo chamber. The researchers also discovered that the average age of people who receive their news exclusively from their social media newsfeed is 24 (Sindermann et al., p. 6).

This study expands upon previous research to determine who is most likely to be part of an echo chamber or a filter bubble. These researchers note that many people “fear that the personalization of diverse Internet platforms resulting in ‘filter bubbles’ and/or ‘echo chambers’ could have tremendous consequences, in particular when information about news and political campaigns are at stake” (Sindermann et al., p. 1). Because echo chambers and filter bubbles often create polarization, it is important to understand who is most at risk so that scholars can find ways to avoid this.

### **Selective Exposure in Different News Sources:**

Professors Ana Cardenal, Carlos Aguilar-Paredes, Carol Galais and Mario Pérez-Montoro analyze the role of different news access points in selective exposure in their article “Digital Technologies and Selective Exposure: How Choice and Filter Bubbles Shape News Media Exposure.” These three access points include direct access (i.e. from a news outlet), Facebook

news articles and Google news articles. These authors define selective exposure as a concept “which states that given the chance, individuals will choose to consume media that reinforces their previous beliefs” (Cardenal et al., 2019, p. 466). Cardenal et al. (2019) recognize that 65% of digital media users prefer to receive their news online rather than from the television or printed media (p. 466). Furthermore, technology can intensify selective exposure by user choice or algorithmic filtering. When the user has the chance to choose what he or she sees, he or she will most likely choose to see like-minded information. On the other hand, digital algorithms collect users’ past choices and habits and show users similar information. Although this is involuntary for users, these algorithms often lead to filter bubbles (Cardenal et al., 2019, p. 467).

After developing six hypotheses, the authors conducted their study by implementing surveys online and tracking online data (Cardenal et al., 2019, p. 471). Results showed that Facebook significantly increases chances of selective exposure among liberals, while decreasing it among conservatives. On the contrary, Google decreases the chances of selective exposure among liberals and increases among conservatives (Cardenal et al., 2019, p. 477). They believe these results occur because conservatives might tend to use Google to directly search for their preferred newspaper while liberals could possibly use social media more for news consumption. These authors also note that previous studies have shown that Facebook is more biased toward the left (Cardenal et al., 2019, p. 479).

In a similar article entitled “Social media and the future of open debate: A user-oriented approach to Facebook’s filter bubble conundrum,” authors Philip Seargeant and Caroline Tagg analyze how Facebook users’ online actions can help contribute to polarization and filter bubbles. They define a filter bubble as “the concept that a website’s personalization algorithm selectively predicts the information that users will find of most interest based on data about each

individual...and that this creates a form of online isolation from a diversity of opinions” (Seargeant & Tagg, 2019, p. 43). They designed a questionnaire on SurveyMonkey and followed it up with in-depth interviews (Seargeant & Tagg, 2019, p. 44).

Their results showed that Facebook users still face an “array of divergent opinions” despite a user’s Facebook personalization algorithm (Seargeant & Tagg, 2019, p. 46). These opinions could be seen most notably in the “comments” section of a post, where users debate with each other on a certain topic. Many participants claimed that they were not offended by opposing opinions, but rather by other people’s lack of accuracy; many participants felt that people do not fact check the news they see on Facebook. The authors speculate that this is due to Facebook operating as a “hybrid media-communications platform means where opinion and fact are mixed or juxtaposed to a far greater degree than they are for ‘traditional’ media platforms” (Seargeant & Tagg, 2019, p. 47). Overall, these authors believe that, although the Facebook algorithm plays a role in personalization, it is ultimately the user’s attempt to avoid conflict with others by hiding or unfriending people that leads to polarization and filter bubbles (Seargeant & Tagg, 2019, p. 48).

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS:**

This study intends to fill a gap in UGT research by proposing a study that uses UGT to look at the concept of the “Daily Me” to determine how and why people use social media to selectively receive certain information. I propose the following research questions:

RQ1: What aspects of UGT most significantly affect the “Daily Me”?

RQ2: What role do different gratifications (i.e. entertainment, social interaction, information seeking, relaxation, self-expression and communication with friends and family) play in a social media user’s newsfeed customization?



**METHODS:**

To answer these research questions, I intend to utilize a qualitative approach and conduct a survey. I am choosing a qualitative approach because it is the best way to effectively gauge patterns, themes, attitudes and behaviors amongst social media users for this particular study. I will construct the survey using Qualtrics and administer it online through the Manship School of Mass Communication Media Effects Lab (MEL) using a convenience sample of college students. I will also administer it on my Facebook profile to reach individuals who might not be familiar with MEL. Before partaking in the survey, participants will have to verify that they are at least 18 years old and use social media. Furthermore, the survey will be available for participants for two to three months. At the completion, I will use SPSS to analyze survey data.

**CONCLUSION:**

Traditionally, scholars have used UGT in conjunction with legacy media. However, as technology has advanced and news has shifted online, scholars are now studying UGT in the realm of social media. Findings from the above articles have all enhanced UGT and “Daily Me” research by developing several findings. For example, research discovered the existence of “silent followers” and showed that people habitually and actively seek out social media to gratify their innate needs, such as information gain, news gathering, socialization and entertainment. Furthermore, people prefer social media apps that are convenient, easy to use, easy to learn and able to be personalized. Scholars have also made an important distinction between user-oriented and platform-oriented gratifications as well as over gratification and under gratification. Important additions to “Daily Me” research included discovering who is most likely to succumb to echo chambers and learning that social media users with diversified newsfeeds reported less anxiety than those users who only followed news sites with the same ideological views as them.

UGT and “Daily Me” research can benefit multiple areas of mass communication, such as journalism and political communication. By understanding how and why people customize their social media platforms to only see certain news stories, the media and political parties can both learn how to better reach their intended audience. Just as it is important to understand what people *are* seeing on their newsfeeds, it is also important to understand what people *are not* seeing. Advertising agencies might also benefit from understanding how people personalize their newsfeeds so that they can better target their ads to people who will actually see them. Scholars who are interested in UGT research with the “Daily Me” might also be interested in selective exposure, echo chambers, filter bubbles, political polarization, social media algorithms, news filters and news spectrums.

This study will aim to use UGT with the concept of the “Daily Me” to determine how and why people use social media to selectively customize their news package. Future research might want to analyze specific social media platforms rather than social media as a whole. As technology changes, UGT might also change by incorporating more digital uses and gratifications and less legacy media gratifications.

Overall, UGT has been relevant for decades and will continue to be relevant in the future. Whether they realize it or not, Americans’ use of news customization is creating an increasing amount of information bias and segregation into groups of people who have the same perspective as each other, leading to polarization, intolerance, a lack of mutual understanding and difficulty with problem solving. Until society changes and decreases its highly customized life, a country “indivisible, with liberty and justice for all” cannot occur.

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