

## **My History Minor, My Father's Confusion With Memes, and Other Consequences of Social Media**

When I was in elementary school, history class was the bane of my existence. I wondered why we had to spend so much time learning about [algebra's origin](#) in the 9th century or the [types of pottery](#) the Romans used. Now, as a senior journalism and advertising major and history minor, these tidbits of knowledge learned throughout my academic career are an instrumental part of my identity as an adult. I still don't quite understand why we had to learn about the history of algebra, but I digress.

I believe that I have an interesting perspective on the intersection of the rise of social media and culture as a member of the [generation of the first true digital natives](#). I was in elementary school when iPhones and Instagram came out, and even as a child, I noticed a distinct shift between my pre and post-technology-filled life. As I've gotten older and have come to both appreciate and curse the role of social media in my life, I've observed that despite being more closely connected to my friends than ever, I sense a growing distance from both older and younger individuals in my life.

I'll be working for [Creative Artists Agency](#), the leading talent agency in the world for motion pictures, television, and sports representation, upon my graduation in May, and I consider myself to have a good pulse on pop culture happenings. However, my sister, Juliana, who is two years and one day younger than me, often has to clarify or explain social media trends or new apps that I don't understand (as if I didn't already feel old enough as a graduating senior, awesome).

Juliana and I attend the same school, have the same major, and live one block away from each other, yet our social media feeds are the one area of our relationship that puts the most distance between us.

My dad is the epitome of a well-meaning adult who is unable to speak the same language as my siblings and me due to social media. My younger brother, Peter, will often bring up memes at the dinner table that he finds entertaining, and my father, a Harvard Business School MBA recipient, cannot, for the life of him, understand what a meme is, no matter how many times we explain it to him. And my dad isn't some old man- he's only 49 years old (I know what you're thinking, and no, he was not a teen parent).

Social media has made us unable to speak the same language. It's not in the big moments that I notice this, but in the small, off-hand jokes we make at the dinner table. The little references from a popular YouTuber that my parents have never watched before. Sure, each generation has their own secrets, but social media is causing them to be produced at a rapid speed, which pushes us further away at a quicker pace than anytime before in our history.

Certain things about social media are too nuanced to be taught and must be understood. As someone entering the marketing world, I am fortunate to understand and use this for my career. My advertising background allows me to appreciate social media's fast-paced turnover of trends for business reasons. The history minor, book-lover, and film-photo-taking part of me who cherishes words and moments feel sadness when realizing that none of these "trends" are here to stay, even temporarily.

I've never thought about it until now, but maybe the part of me that loves history, that loves knowing about how people cooked their food in medieval Europe, or how one day someone invented electricity out of thin air, maybe that part of me realizes why history is so important in this era of social media. As a society, we need to recognize that wanting to be as connected in real life as we are online is essential. There is value in being connected to the past, even if it only happened a year ago. We as a society are more prosperous because of our knowledge of the pain and triumphs of our predecessors, and we cannot let the desire to be "in the know" deplete our history, which is rich in its own right. I'm happy that I've come to that conclusion because now I feel that I've gotten value out of my history minor, which my grandparents warned me I wouldn't be able to.