

Zoom dysmorphia brings to light the good and bad of technology

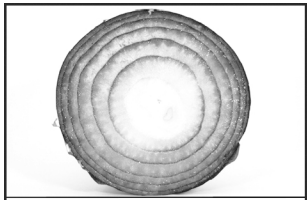
I was saddened by a new phenomenon that COVID-19 has caused – zoom dysmorphia.

For those of you who might not know what Zoom Dysmorphia is, apparently it is a new mental health disorder emerging from excessive video calls, causing someone to be insecure about their appearance.

I will be the first to say I prefer not to show my face on zoom calls, so, the size of the meeting typically dictates if I am showing my face or not. I have also never been one to like to have my photo taken. I would much prefer to be behind the camera taking a photo than in a photo.

So, I can certainly understand why someone might not like to look at themselves as they do these virtual meetings, especially for some who it has become the new way to hold meetings.

There are a few meetings that due to the sheer number of attendees, the organizer



A SLICE OF LIFE

Linda Wilk



has asked that we not share our video because it reduces the quality of the program capabilities – fine by me.

On the other hand, if I am doing a smaller meeting, I appreciate seeing others faces to get a better sense of what they are thinking or if I am communicating appropriately.

Our oldest daughter, Laura, is currently teaching as part of her graduate schooling degree and early

on struggled with getting her students to show their faces. It did not help that during her first session her computer did not cooperate, and she was not able to project her face. It set the tone for future classes of students not sharing their video.

This new phenomenon however surely adds to why someone might choose not to show their video.

Of course, there have been suggestions as to what to do if you are struggling to see yourself on screen all the time. You can cover your face with a post it note that way others still see you, but you do not have to view yourself.

Or, you can add lights to the computer screen area to change your look, brightening your appearance.

Or you can do the extreme that many now have been known to do – get plastic surgery done.

A new study from Massachusetts General Hospital

Department of Dermatology suggests there has been an increase in cosmetic procedures prompted by excessive time spent on video calls.

The study found a 56 percent increase in requests for cosmetic procedures and 86 percent of those requests are prompted by flaws seen over video calls.

One thing I would not suggest you do when participating in a zoom meeting, or worse yet a court proceeding, is what happened recently in southwest Texas when an attorney inadvertently appeared on screen as a computer-filter-generated cat.

According to an internet article, what began as a civil forfeiture hearing took a hilarious turn when Presidio County Attorney Rod Ponton arrived in Zoom court in the form of a fluffy white and brown kitten.

For about 30 somewhat awkward, but mostly funny seconds, Ponton struggled

to remove the filter.

With other lawyers on screen wryly smiling, 394th Judicial District Court Judge Roy Ferguson tried to walk Ponton through key-strokes. Ponton said he was ready to proceed even in his feline form. The judge, however, did not allow the proceeding to continue.

Again, I will be the first to admit, I have found myself from time to time noticing just how many wrinkles I have, depending upon if I am smiling or talking.

Yet, I try to remind myself that wrinkles are just part of life and as some have said, show a life well lived. Or others have said are a rite of passage and add character.

This zoom dysmorphia also reminds me just how materialistic many of our lives have become. Instead

of focusing on ourselves while zooming, we should think about others and how we can positively impact their lives.

I believe zoom meetings are here to stay at some degree even after COVID-19 is over and we are allowed to meet in person again. I know for the regional meetings that I am a part of, being able to get on my computer and connect to groups instead of spending an hour to travel to a meeting that lasts an hour and then spending another hour to drive back, just doesn't make good fiscal sense. So, while zoom dysmorphia or zoom fatigue may be a new problem as a result of COVID-19, let us take away the good from this new technology and focus less on ourselves.

Local weekly schedule

Schedule Feb. 18-25

Thursday, Feb. 18

• 7:30 p.m. – The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, James Dean Memorial Theatre, 509 South Washington Street, Marion. Presented by Marion Civic Theatre, this musical is a riotous ride,

complete with audience participation. An eclectic group of six mid-pubescent vie for the spelling championship of a lifetime. While candidly disclosing hilarious and touching stories from their home lives, the tweens spell their way through a series of (potentially made-up) words, hop-

ing never to hear the soul-crushing, pout-inducing, life un-affirming “ding” of the bell that signals a spelling mistake. Six spellers enter; one speller leaves! At least the losers get a juice box. Sundays 2pm matinee only. Plays: \$12 adults, \$10 seniors and students. Musicals \$15 adults, \$12 seniors and

students. Studio Series \$10, Children's Theatre \$8. Tickets available online.

Friday, Feb. 19

• 7:30 p.m. – The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, see Feb. 18.
• 7:30 p.m. – Taylor University presents “Who’s
See Schedule, Page 4

Central

operator has that,” Clayton said. “Making that whole system work for us is the ultimate goal. Quality assurance goes hand-in-hand with the EMD system for catching some other issues that may happen in the center.

“Setting this up during a pandemic, I think we’ve done really well with the amount of stuff we’ve had to accomplish.”

Another goal for Central Dispatch, with the help of the various law enforcement agencies in Marion, is to secure the parking lot and surrounding areas near the Dispatch Center. According to Clayton, there have been several occurrences since the Center has gone live where the public have interacted with dispatchers either going to or coming from the building.

“We’ve had several occurrences where dispatchers have been met in the parking lot by people,” Clayton said. “The last thing I want my dispatchers, who are coming down here to do an

8-12 hour bid serving and protecting Grant County citizens and first responders is being harassed when they are in the parking lot.” There have been talks of putting a monitor by the back door so dispatchers can see a live view of the parking lot. That monitor will be linked to two cameras, one on the door and another that will cover the parking lot. Additionally, Marion Police Department Chief Angela Haley stated that, due to the fact the area is heavily trafficked with homeless people and those coming and going from the nearby Rescue Mission, a fence on either end of the nearby alleyway could deter people from entering the area.

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, staffing the Dispatch Center has also been an issue. Clayton and his team have discussed moving a third shift dispatcher to the second shift to help handle the higher volume of calls, and the plan is to have two more

full-time and five more part-time dispatchers ready to start by March 1. Lastly, Gary Bates provided an update on the Tower Project, which has been in the works over the past several months. The last of three sites in Central Marion received FAA approval, officially greenlighting the next step of the process. “We are still on schedule,” Bates said. “We are still on track for mid-April to May for our antenna site registrations. Once we receive those, we can start the process of building the towers and adding equipment.” If all goes according to plan, tower construction will begin in May, equipment will be added throughout June and July, and they will be in full operation between August and September.

The next GCPSOCPB meeting will take place on Wednesday, Mar. 10 beginning at 2 p.m.

Indiana History Answers

1. C 2. A
3. E 4. B 5. D

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