

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key: Algorithm Ace: 12th Grade Social Media Influence Case Files

Students deconstruct the socio-political impact of digital personas through rigorous analysis of parasocial relationships, virtue signaling, and algorithmic bias.

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**1. A lifestyle influencer frequently promotes 'sustainable' fashion while simultaneously accepting sponsorship deals from fast-fashion giants with poor labor records. This scenario best illustrates which sociological concept in digital culture?**

**Answer:** C) Performative activism and virtue signaling

Performative activism occurs when individuals or influencers engage in public support for a cause to enhance their image, despite their actions (like fast-fashion deals) contradicting that cause's core values.

**2. True or False: The 'echo chamber' effect in social media algorithms is primarily designed to challenge users with diverse viewpoints to increase platform credibility.**

**Answer:** B) False

Algorithms are designed to maximize engagement by showing users content that aligns with their existing beliefs, which creates echo chambers rather than exposing them to diverse viewpoints.

**3. When a follower develops a one-sided psychological bond with a content creator, feeling as though they share a real friendship, they are experiencing a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship.**

**Answer:** B) Parasocial

Parasocial relationships are one-sided connections where one person extends emotional energy and interest, and the other party (the influencer) is completely unaware of their existence.

**4. Consider the rise of 'Finfluencers' (Financial Influencers). What is the primary ethical concern regarding their impact on Gen Z and Millennial investment behaviors?**

**Answer:** A) Lack of standardized fiduciary disclosure

Unlike regulated financial advisors, many influencers provide investment advice without legal fiduciary responsibility or clear disclosure of paid promotional interests in specific assets.

**5. The concept of \_\_\_\_\_ refers to the way influencers curate an aesthetic that suggests 'effortless' success, often obscuring the labor-intensive production and editing involved.**

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**Answer:** A) Aspirational realism

Aspirational realism involves influencers projecting a life that seems attainable and 'real' to followers while actually being highly curated and polished to drive engagement.

**6. True or False: Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act generally protects social media platforms from being held legally responsible for the specific content posted by influencers.**

**Answer:** A) True

Section 230 provides 'safe harbor' for platforms, meaning they are treated as conduits rather than publishers of third-party content, shifting liability away from the platform itself.

**7. How did the shift from 'chronological feeds' to 'algorithmic feeds' fundamentally change the strategy for social media influencers?**

**Answer:** B) It prioritized content that triggers strong emotional engagement

Algorithmic feeds prioritize relevance and engagement metrics; content that provokes strong reactions (comments, shares, saves) is boosted regardless of when it was posted.

**8. In the context of the attention economy, the term \_\_\_\_\_ describes the process of converting social media influence and follower reach into tangible financial capital.**

**Answer:** B) Monetization

Monetization is the specific process of generating revenue from a digital audience through ads, sponsorships, affiliate links, or merchandise.

**9. True or False: 'De-influencing' is a trend where creators advise followers against buying overhyped products, often to increase their own perceived authenticity and trust with their audience.**

**Answer:** A) True

De-influencing is a strategic pivot that builds 'authenticity capital' by being critical of products, which ironically can make their later positive recommendations more persuasive.

**10. Which of the following describes the 'Grandmother's House' effect (context collapse) on platforms like Facebook and its impact on influencer communication?**

**Answer:** B) The collision of many different social circles into one single audience

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Context collapse occurs when an influencer's content is viewed by vastly different audiences (family, coworkers, strangers) simultaneously, making it difficult to tailor messages effectively.