



Spotlight on Technology, Culture & Human Behavior

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Submitted: 2. February 2026

Published: 4. February 2026

Volume: 13

Issue: 1

Affiliation: Journal of Science, Humanities and Arts (JOSHA), Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany

Languages: English

Keywords: Housing Affordability; Dating App Fatigue; Constructed Identity; Fertility Decline; Online Exploitation.

Categories: News and Views

DOI: 10.17160/josha.13.1.1122

Abstract:

Technological systems increasingly shape how people live, love, and relate—often revealing hidden social pressures and vulnerabilities. This Spotlight traces how digital and cultural infrastructures reorganize everyday life: a hyper-competitive housing market that pushes students toward self-marketing and extreme compromises; growing “app fatigue” that drives singles back toward face-to-face dating; and the continued appeal of biography as a distinctly human form that resists algorithmic speed and simplification. The collection also confronts technology’s darker edges, including evidence that addictive patterns of digital use (more than screen time alone) correlate with youth mental health risks, and the severe harms enabled by online coercion networks targeting children. Curated in JOSHA’s interdisciplinary spirit, these pieces invite readers to see technology not as a neutral backdrop, but as a force reshaping intimacy, opportunity, attention, and safety.

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1. Wohnungsmarkt in Freiburg: Zwischen Notunterkunft und FKK-WG - Housing Market in Freiburg: Between Emergency Shelter and Nude Shared Apartments

By Greta Zieger

The article examines the housing market in Freiburg im Breisgau, a well-known student city in Germany. According to the Moses-Mendelssohn-Institut, it has the fifth most expensive rents in the country. The market is extremely competitive, forcing students to be creative and flexible when looking for a shared apartment (WG). Strategies range from bringing gifts to casting appointments, “selling yourself” during viewings, compromising to live with older tenants, or even joining nude WGs. Due to high costs and the luck needed to find accommodation, studying in Freiburg has become a privilege.

This article was previously published in *Frankfurter Allgemeine* on June 20, 2025.

[Read the full article here](#)

2. A New Way to Date: The Old-Fashioned Way

By Catherine Pearson

Dating apps are in trouble, the headlines tell us that actually, they're dead. Users are reaching a breaking point and deleting dating apps, yet at the same time, they don't know where to start when it comes to finding true love. Single people are going through a crisis; they long for love, however, they no longer know how to interact with others. Technology, social media and the pandemic have created a certain disconnect between the ideal love sold in romantic comedies and what is the reality. Now, people are moving away from the marketed swiping by apps and they are returning to the old-fashioned way of dating; taking the risk of interacting face-to-face, while redefining how to put themselves out there without feeling vulnerable. The article explores why dating apps are losing cultural dominance and how singles are relearning face-to-face connection in a post-pandemic social landscape.

This article was previously published in *The New York Times* on June 6th, 2025.

[Read the full article here](#)



3. Can You Ever Really Know a Person? Biographers Keep Trying

By Parul Sehgal

The article reflects on why biographies remain compelling today, arguing that they preserve human complexity even as digital life rewards speed, simplification, and AI-mediated storytelling. In an era where everything is shrinking due to the lack of span concentration, biographies stay steady and maintain the same profile done around the 19th-century. But the art of biography nowadays does have an awareness, a real understanding that the writer conjures the actual persona through letters and records, recreating something that we may never know if it's true or not. It's also diversifying, greatness is no longer a prerequisite; ordinary lives of the people surrounding "geniuses" are captivating as well. Moreover, in a world where conversations are done through AI, biographies captivate people by being human, and all humans long for a little gossip, even from past lives.

This article was previously published in *The New York Times* on June 13th, 2025.

[Read the full article here](#)

4. How the iPhone Drove Men and Women Apart

By Ross Douthat

Is there a decline in population or are we so overpopulated that we stopped having children? An intricate question asked by the host Ross Douthat to professional sociologist Alice Evans who specializes in this topic, studying the reason for the rapid drop in fertilization rates around the world. This interview explores all the possible reasons for the current coupling crisis and the hit that is taking in the world wide economy. From political views to religion and much more researched areas, they share a place to reflect on this new way of engaging with the desired partner, or maybe the reason why this is lacking.

This article was previously published in *The New York Times* on May 29th, 2025.

[Read the full article here](#)



5. Real Risk to Youth Mental Health Is ‘Addictive Use,’ Not Screen Time Alone, Study Finds

By Ellen Barry

The article highlights growing evidence that compulsive digital engagement, rather than screen time alone, is linked to increased mental health risks among children and adolescents. Recent studies show that the children who are more likely to have suicidal thoughts are the ones who became “addictive” — meaning that they have trouble putting it down, or felt the need to use it more and more. Some children exhibited addictive behavior even if their screen time was relatively low. As part of everybody’s world, screentime is rapidly showing the bad effects and implications on the youngest, showing the importance of research in this area and listening to the precautions stated by the authors and researchers.

This article was previously published in *The New York Times* on June 18th, 2025.

[Read the full article here](#)

6. 20-Jähriger wegen Verdachts auf Mord an Kind festgenommen/ 20-Year-Old Arrested on Suspicion of Murdering a Child

By *Süddeutsche Zeitung*

Trigger Warning: This article discusses sexual abuse of children, self-harm, and suicide. Reader discretion is advised.

A 20-year-old German man has been arrested on suspicion of inducing children worldwide to commit suicide, self-harm, and create pornographic content. He is accused in connection with the death of a 13-year-old American boy. The suspect is part of the terrorist group “764,” known for profiting from such criminal activity. The investigation is ongoing. The article emphasizes the importance of parental supervision, online education, and recognizing early warning signs in children’s online interactions.

This article was previously published in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on June 18, 2025.

[Read the full article here](#)



Acknowledgements

GPT-5.1 version of Chat-GPT (OpenAI) and Notebook LM (Google) were used during the writing process as part of JOSHA's policy of experimentation with AI tools. However, JOSHA takes full responsibility for its content.