

TECHNOLOGY

Is the World Ready for Virtual Fashion?



Digital outfits can be more creative than physical clothing.

Fashion enthusiasts have a new way to show off their style on social media: digital clothing. Some companies are now offering intangible outfits and accessories made of pixels, rather than fabric, for customers to “wear.” Those who purchase a digital outfit receive a photo of themselves with the garment professionally edited onto their bodies, ready for online sharing. One advantage compared with traditional fashion is that these clothes don’t have to be physically produced or shipped, meaning they can arrive quicker and have a smaller carbon footprint. While some people see this trend as a waste of money, the founders of digital fashion start-up DressX predict everyone will eventually be wearing digital duds for video calls, gaming, and more. “Digital fashion is the new fast fashion,” Daria Shapovalova, DressX co-founder, told *Forbes*. “If we really want it fast, it should be digital.” •



COURTESY OF TRIBUTE BRAND (DIGITAL OUTFITS); COURTESY OF NESTAUS (VENKAT SISTERS); CHASE DEKKER/MINDEN PICTURES (WHALES); WOEWIKI/YUR/GETTY IMAGES (FISH)

Volunteers Wanted

Ever since they were in elementary school, sisters Shreyaa and Esha Venkat of Ashburn, Virginia, have enjoyed helping others. In 2016, they launched Nest4Us, a teen-led nonprofit that encourages kindness and social good. “We had so much fun giving back to the community with our family that we wanted to create opportunities where other families and friends could volunteer together and explore their passions in their own unique ways,” says Shreyaa, 19. Nest4Us’s five core programs focus on issues such as education, leadership, and feeding the hungry.

The organization has now grown to include more than 3,000 volunteers from 27 different countries, doing everything from organizing workshops on mental health to packing toiletries and food for those in need. The co-founders say they love helping volunteers discover a love for service, and they hope that the success of Nest4Us will prove that young people are able to create significant positive change in the world. “You don’t need to be an amazing superhero,” says Esha, 16. “Everybody has the power to make a difference, no matter who they are or where they come from.”



The Venkat sisters, Shreyaa (left) and Esha, started a nonprofit to boost volunteerism.



20 tons

AMOUNT of food some of the biggest whales eat every day, according to new research. Calorie-wise, it’s about the same as consuming 80,000 Big Macs.

SOURCE: NPR

\$43.2 million

WINNING BID at auction in November for a first printing of the U.S. Constitution. It’s one of 13 surviving copies of the document produced for the 1787 Constitutional Convention and Continental Congress.

SOURCE: ASSOCIATED PRESS

46%

PERCENTAGE of Gen Z Americans who say that Covid-19 has made pursuing education or career goals more difficult, higher than any other age group.

SOURCE: AP-NORC CENTER FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS RESEARCH

Humpback whales feed on anchovies in California.



Body heat from crowds can be stored and reused.

ENVIRONMENT

Dancing for Climate Change

Anyone who’s ever busted a move knows how much heat your body can create while you’re dancing. Normally, that energy goes to waste, but now, a nightclub in Glasgow, Scotland, wants to put it to good use. The club, SWG3, has installed a new technology that turns the heat from dancers’ bodies into renewable energy, using the hot air in the club to charge a thermal battery. That renewable energy can cool and heat the venue, and can be stored for months. SWG3 estimates it’ll save 70 tons of carbon emissions each year. TownRock Energy, the company that developed the technology, hopes this will set a precedent for other venues around the globe. “We would love for different clubs in different cities to start to compete to be the most green,” founder David Townsend told BBC News. “The clubbing generation right now are very enlightened with regards to climate change, and it will make a big difference for clubs to be able to say they’re net zero.” •

ADELEVIN/GETTY IMAGES (HEAT); MICHAEL C. HUNTER/CONCERT; DAVID FREUND/GETTY IMAGES (GRADUATION CAPS); SHUTTERSTOCK.COM (ALL OTHER IMAGES)

The Dilemma

BY PHILIP GALANES

Caring or Rude?

If someone tells you they’ve had surgery or been ill, is it rude to ask for details, such as the nature of the illness? My sister says it is: If the person wanted to tell you, they would volunteer the information. I see her point, but perhaps the person doesn’t want to give more details unless we express interest in them. Not everyone wants to know. So is it more polite to say, “May I ask what the illness was?” Or is it better to leave it alone? —KATHRYN

YOU AND YOUR SISTER offer plausible readings of an encounter. Balancing the risks, though, I would go with her approach. It is kinder to respect people’s privacy about health matters (that don’t affect us) and to avoid asking them to recount possibly traumatic events than it is to pose potentially unwanted follow-up questions. A general statement of support (“I’m sorry for your troubles”) works fine. And with close friends, you may add: “I’m here to talk if you want to.” This has the additional benefit of putting the person who was ill in charge of the conversation. —Adapted from “Social Q’s” in *The New York Times Magazine*

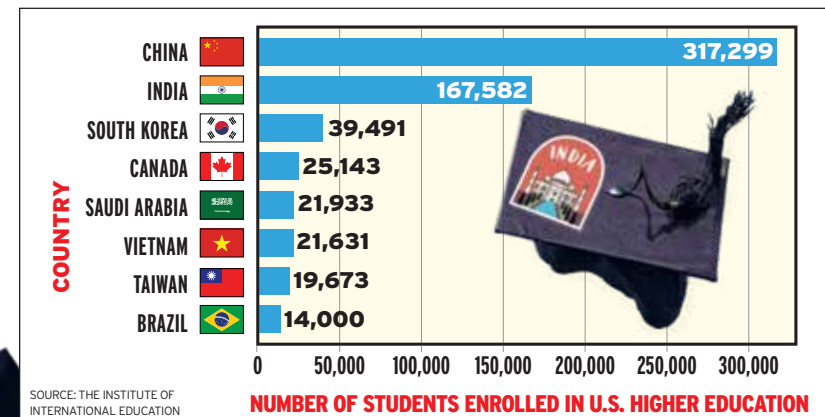


COMMENT on this dilemma upfrontmagazine.com

EDUCATION

Coming to America

International students make up 4.6 percent of the total student population in the U.S. This graph shows the countries the most students came from during the 2020-21 academic year. How might the pandemic have affected these numbers?



SOURCE: THE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

