Science & Technology

Study Hall: Fall 2016

Research briefs.

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Beyond the headlines

Viral news stories may be widely shared, but they're not necessarily widely read. When researchers from Columbia's Data Science Institute and the French computer-science institute Inria monitored news headlines shared on Twitter, crosschecking them with click data from link-management service Bitly, they found that 59 percent of the time, users who shared news links never actually clicked on the link to read the story.

Bail backlash

Columbia economics doctoral student Christopher Hansman, Columbia alumnus Arpit Gupta '16BUS, and Maryland public defender Ethan Frenchman have published a study on the effects of cash bail and pretrial detention. They found that when a court imposes bail, it increases a defendant's likelihood of conviction by 12 percent and raises the likelihood that he or she will commit another crime by 6 to 9 percent. Among the probable contributing factors, say the study's authors, is that defendants who cannot afford bail may feel additional pressure to take a plea deal.

Note to Beijing

A study on the health effects of London's Great Smog of 1952, a toxic fog that choked the city for five days, sheds new light on the long-term impact of severe air

pollution. Researchers from Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health, UC San Diego, and UMass Amherst found that babies who were exposed to the smog in their first year of life were 20 percent more likely to develop childhood asthma and 9.5 percent more likely to suffer asthma as an adult.

More classes, less debt

According to an analysis of Tennessee data by the Community College Research Center at Columbia's Teachers College, college students who are encouraged to take a fuller course load in their first semester are not only more likely to graduate, but they complete their degrees faster and pay 9 to 19 percent less for their college education.

The conscious commute

Hate your morning commute? Use that time wisely, and it could be good for your career. According to research led by Columbia Business School doctoral student Jon Jachimowicz, people who focus on their long- and short-term professional goals while commuting feel less emotionally exhausted and more satisfied at work.

Epilepsy, suicide link

Using data from the US National Violent Death Reporting System, researchers at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention discovered that suicide rates are 22 percent higher for people with epilepsy.

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