

BRICK

by

BRICK

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WELCOME TO THE SITE: LAYING THE FIRST BRICK

HEY THERE, FRIEND! NAME'S BRICK, YOUR FRIENDLY FOREMAN FOR THIS PROJECT. I'LL BE GUIDING YOU THROUGH THE INS AND OUTS OF INSTAGRAM, LIKE A SEASONED BUILDER SHOWING YOU HOW TO LAY YOUR FIRST ROW OF BRICKS. NO FANCY JARGON, NO PRESSURE JUST SOLID, STEP-BY-STEP GUIDANCE TO HELP YOU BUILD SOMETHING STRONG.

NOW, INSTAGRAM. WHAT IS IT? THINK OF IT LIKE A GIANT DIGITAL BULLETIN BOARD OR SCRAPBOOK WHERE FOLKS POST PHOTOS, VIDEOS, AND LIFE STORIES [1]. WANT TO SEE YOUR GRANDKID'S GRADUATION? YOUR NEIGHBOUR'S FAMOUS CHILLI RECIPE? A CAT WEARING A TINY HAT? IT'S ALL JUST A FEW TAPS AWAY.

FOR MANY OLDER ADULTS, GETTING THE HANG OF THIS STUFF CAN FEEL LIKE STEPPING ONTO A BUSY CONSTRUCTION SITE WITHOUT A HARD HAT — BUT THAT'S WHERE THIS ZINE COMES IN. IT'S YOUR TOOL BELT, PACKED WITH EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO FEEL STEADY ON YOUR FEET IN THE DIGITAL WORLD. WE'LL TALK SAFETY, STRUCTURE, AND EVEN HOW TO TRAIN THAT SNEAKY LITTLE ALGORITHM SO YOU SEE MORE OF WHAT YOU LOVE (AND LESS OF WHAT YOU DON'T).

SO GRAB YOUR GLOVES, TIGHTEN THAT TOOL BELT, AND GET READY WE'RE BUILDING YOUR DIGITAL CONFIDENCE ONE BRICK AT A TIME. YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN A NEW TRICK, AND YOU'VE ALREADY LAID THE FIRST ONE JUST BY OPENING THIS ZINE. LET'S GET TO WORK!
— FOREMAN BRICK 🧡
(YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS INSTAGRAM)



UNEVEN GROUND: WHAT IS DIGITAL EXCLUSION?



WHOA THERE, WATCH YOUR STEP! YOU'VE JUST HIT SOME UNEVEN GROUND ON OUR BUILD SITE THIS IS WHERE WE TALK ABOUT DIGITAL EXCLUSION. IT'S A FANCY TERM, BUT ALL IT REALLY MEANS IS THAT NOT EVERYONE HAS THE SAME ACCESS OR COMFORT WITH TECHNOLOGY [2]. FOR MANY OLDER ADULTS, USING THINGS LIKE SMARTPHONES OR SOCIAL MEDIA CAN FEEL LIKE TRYING TO POUR CONCRETE WITHOUT A LEVEL.

HERE'S THE DEAL: YOUNGER FOLKS GREW UP WITH TOUCHSCREENS AND WI-FI LIKE IT WAS SECOND NATURE. BUT IF YOU DIDN'T, IT'S EASY TO FEEL LEFT BEHIND [3,4].

DIGITAL EXCLUSION CAN AFFECT [6]:

✂ PEOPLE WITHOUT STEADY INTERNET ACCESS

✂ FOLKS WHO NEVER USED TECH AT WORK OR SCHOOL

✂ ANYONE WHO FINDS THE PACE OF TECH UPDATES DOWNRIGHT

DIZZYING

BUT HERE'S WHERE IT GETS INTERESTING: IN ONE PROJECT, A GROUP OF OLDER ADULTS ROLLED UP THEIR SLEEVES AND TOOK PART IN A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH EFFORT [7]. THEY WEREN'T JUST TRYING TO LEARN HOW TO USE INSTAGRAM THEY WERE ASKING HOW SOCIAL MEDIA COULD BE A TOOL FOR ADVOCACY. COULD THEY USE IT TO SPEAK UP, ORGANIZE, AND INFLUENCE POLICY-MAKERS? THE RESEARCH SHOWED THAT WHILE THERE AREN'T MANY STUDIES ON THIS YET, THERE'S HUGE POTENTIAL.

INSTEAD OF BEING SEEN ONLY AS HEALTH INFO SEEKERS OR FAMILY PHOTO LIKERS, THESE SENIORS QUESTIONED WHY AGEIST ASSUMPTIONS STILL SHAPE HOW PLATFORMS AND DEVICES ARE DESIGNED. THEY CALLED FOR AGE-FRIENDLY DESIGN AND SUPPORT BECAUSE, WITH THE RIGHT TOOLS, OLDER ADULTS CAN USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES, JOIN PUBLIC DEBATES, AND EVEN SHAPE POLICY.

SO IF YOU'VE EVER FELT LIKE SOCIAL MEDIA WASN'T MADE FOR YOU YOU'RE NOT WRONG. BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T PICK UP THE RIGHT TOOLS AND HELP REBUILD IT. ONE BRICK AT A TIME.

DID YOU KNOW ONLY 4 IN 10 ADULTS OVER 65 OWN A SMARTPHONE—THAT'S A LOT OF PEOPLE LEFT OUTSIDE THE DIGITAL CLUBHOUSE [5].

THE BLUEPRINT: UNDERSTANDING INSTAGRAM'S ALGORITHM

ALRIGHT CREW, TIME TO ROLL OUT THE BLUEPRINT! EVERY GOOD BUILD STARTS WITH A PLAN, AND ON INSTAGRAM, THAT PLAN IS CONTROLLED BY SOMETHING CALLED THE ALGORITHM. SOUNDS HIGH-TECH, BUT THINK OF IT LIKE YOUR SITE MANAGER. IT DECIDES WHAT GOES WHERE, WHAT GETS SEEN FIRST, AND WHICH CONTENT GETS THE MOST ATTENTION [8]. BUT HERE'S THE TWIST: THIS SITE MANAGER IS INVISIBLE, AND IT'S ALWAYS LEARNING FROM YOUR BEHAVIOUR!

 LET'S SWITCH HATS FOR A SECOND – IMAGINE A LIBRARIAN.

BUT NOT JUST ANY LIBRARIAN – THIS ONE WATCHES WHAT YOU READ AND ONLY GIVES YOU MORE OF THE SAME. LOVE COOKBOOKS? THAT'S ALL YOU'LL GET. READ A GARDENING MAGAZINE ONCE? BOOM – TEN MORE TOMORROW. THAT'S HOW INSTAGRAM'S ALGORITHM WORKS. IT'S CONSTANTLY TRYING TO GUESS WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE BASED ON WHAT YOU'VE DONE BEFORE.

 SO WHAT DOES THE ALGORITHM LOOK AT WHEN CHOOSING YOUR “FEED” [9]?

- INTEREST, RECENCY, RELATIONSHIP, FREQUENCY, FOLLOWING AND USAGE
- WHO YOU FOLLOW – FAMILY? NEWS? HOBBIES? IT KEEPS TRACK.
- WHAT YOU LIKE, COMMENT ON, OR SAVE – A DOUBLE TAP HERE, A HEART THERE, IT ALL COUNTS.
- HOW LONG YOU LOOK AT SOMETHING – EVEN IF YOU DON'T CLICK, IF YOU PAUSE TO WATCH A VIDEO OR READ A POST, THE ALGORITHM TAKES NOTE.

 THE GOAL? TO KEEP YOU SCROLLING BY SHOWING YOU MORE OF WHAT IT THINKS YOU WANT. BUT JUST LIKE ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE, IF YOU FEED IT THE WRONG BLUEPRINT, YOU MIGHT END UP BUILDING SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T ASK FOR (HELLO, ENDLESS CAT VIDEOS OR ADS FOR KNEE BRACES YOU DON'T NEED) [10].

STICK WITH ME, AND I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO TWEAK THAT BLUEPRINT SO YOU'RE IN CONTROL. LET'S BUILD A FEED THAT ACTUALLY REFLECTS YOU, YOUR VOICE, YOUR INTERESTS, AND YOUR CONNECTIONS

SHAPING THE STRUCTURE: TRAINING THE ALGORITHM

ALRIGHT, APPRENTICE—GRAB YOUR GLOVES! NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT THE BLUEPRINT, IT'S TIME TO START SHAPING THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR INSTAGRAM FEED. BELIEVE IT OR NOT, YOU HAVE THE POWER TO "TRAIN" THE ALGORITHM [11] KIND OF LIKE TEACHING A NEW WORKER WHAT YOU WANT BUILT ON YOUR TIMELINE. WANT MORE GRANDKID PHOTOS AND FEWER CELEBRITY GOSSIP POSTS? THAT'S TOTALLY DOABLE.

9 STEPS TO BUILD YOUR FEED THE RIGHT WAY [12,13]:

- 1. **LIKE** PHOTOS AND VIDEOS YOU ENJOY (DOUBLE-TAP OR **HIT THE HEART**)
- 2. **COMMENT** ON POSTS THAT MAKE YOU SMILE OR FEEL CONNECTED
- 3. **SAVE** POSTS TO YOUR COLLECTIONS IF YOU WANT TO COME BACK TO THEM LATER
- 4. **FOLLOW** ACCOUNTS THAT MATCH YOUR INTERESTS (FAMILY, HOBBIES, NEWS YOU TRUST)

⊘ AVOID TAPPING ON OR WATCHING THINGS YOU DON'T LIKE THINK OF IT AS SAYING, "DON'T BUILD THAT HERE!"

THE MORE YOU INTERACT WITH WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY, THE BETTER YOUR DIGITAL "CONSTRUCTION CREW" GETS AT BUILDING A FEED THAT FEELS LIKE HOME.

SO, LET'S KEEP THOSE GOOD BRICKS COMING. LIKE IT? TAP IT. LOVE IT? FOLLOW IT. NOT INTO IT? WALK ON BY. YOU'RE THE FOREPERSON OF YOUR FEED NOW—BUILD IT YOUR WAY.

*** HINT ***
**MATCH THE COLOURS
ON THE PHOTO WITH
THE WORDS TO SEE
WHERE EVERYTHING
IS !-FOREMAN
BRICK**



CUSTOM TOOLS: HASHTAGS, SEARCH, AND WHO YOU FOLLOW



BUILDING
INST

LET'S OPEN UP THE TOOLBOX, CREW! YOU'VE GOT SOME POWERFUL TOOLS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS ON INSTAGRAM AND USING THEM THE RIGHT WAY CAN HELP SHAPE YOUR FEED INTO SOMETHING THAT FITS YOU LIKE A WELL-WORN WORK GLOVE [14].

🔍 THE SEARCH BAR = YOUR DIGITAL TOOLBOX

THINK OF IT LIKE RUMMAGING THROUGH YOUR GARAGE FOR THE RIGHT WRENCH. TYPE IN WORDS LIKE "KNITTING," "CLASSIC CARS," OR "GRANDKIDS", AND INSTAGRAM WILL HAND YOU POSTS, PEOPLE, AND HASHTAGS RELATED TO THAT TOPIC.

SEARCH

📌 HASHTAGS = LABELS ON THE SHELVES

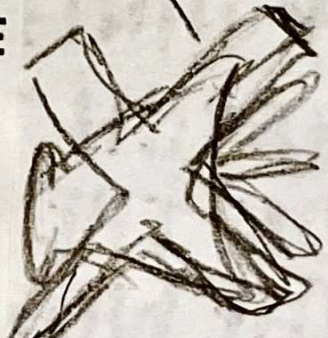
EVER USED MASKING TAPE AND A SHARPIE TO LABEL

WHAT'S IN EACH DRAWER? THAT'S WHAT HASHTAGS DO. WHEN YOU SEARCH SOMETHING LIKE #KNITTINGCLUB OR #FAMILYPHOTOS, YOU'RE PEEKING INTO LABELED BINS FULL OF CONTENT FROM OTHER FOLKS WHO LOVE THE SAME THINGS.

👤 WHO YOU FOLLOW = BUILDING YOUR CREW

EVERY TIME YOU FOLLOW SOMEONE, YOU'RE TELLING THE ALGORITHM: "HEY, I WANT MORE LIKE THIS." SO GO AHEAD — FOLLOW YOUR GRANDKIDS, YOUR FAVORITE TRAVEL PAGE, OR THAT LADY WHO TEACHES BREAD BAKING ONLINE. THE ALGORITHM TAKES NOTE AND STARTS "BUILDING" YOUR FEED TO MATCH.

🔧 BONUS TIP FROM FOREMAN BRICK: NOT LOVING SOMEONE'S POSTS BUT DON'T WANT TO RUFFLE FEATHERS? USE THE "MUTE" BUTTON. IT'S LIKE SOUNDPROOFING YOUR DIGITAL SPACE NO DRAMA, NO OFFENSE, AND NO MORE POSTS YOU DON'T WANT TO SEE.



BUILDING A PRIVACY FENCE. INSTAGRAM SETTINGS



ALRIGHT FOLKS, TIME TO BUILD YOUR DIGITAL PRIVACY FENCE! JUST LIKE YOU WOULDN'T LEAVE YOUR BACKYARD WIDE OPEN TO STRANGERS, YOU DON'T WANT YOUR INSTAGRAM PROFILE WIDE OPEN EITHER. SETTING UP DIGITAL BOUNDARIES KEEPS YOUR SPACE COZY, SAFE, AND JUST THE WAY YOU WANT IT.

HERE'S A SIMPLE PRIVACY CHECKLIST FROM YOUR FOREMAN, BRICK:

 **FOREMAN BRICK'S DIGITAL PRIVACY FENCE CHECKLIST [15] (YOU CAN EVEN CHECK THESE OFF AS YOU GO!)**

☒ **SET YOUR PROFILE TO PRIVATE KEEPS YOUR POSTS VISIBLE ONLY TO PEOPLE YOU APPROVE.**  **GO TO: SETTINGS → ACCOUNT PRIVACY → SWITCH "PRIVATE ACCOUNT" ON**

☒ **CHOOSE WHO SEES YOUR STORIES SHARE DAILY MOMENTS WITH CLOSE FRIENDS NOT THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD.**  **GO TO: SETTINGS → WHO CAN SEE YOUR CONTENT → HIDE STORY FROM / CLOSE FRIENDS**

☒ **TURN OFF LOCATION TAGGING DON'T BROADCAST WHERE YOU ARE ESPECIALLY IN REAL-TIME.**  **WHEN POSTING, JUST DON'T SELECT A LOCATION, OR TURN OFF "LOCATION SERVICES" FOR INSTAGRAM IN YOUR PHONE SETTINGS.**



WHO'S WATCHING THE SITE? SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM

HEADS UP, TEAM! SOMEONE'S WATCHING THE JOB SITE...
AND IT AIN'T JUST ME! ☹☹

EVER FEEL LIKE YOUR PHONE "KNOWS" YOU TOO WELL? LIKE YOU MENTION

GARDEN GNOMES ONCE AND SUDDENLY SEE ADS FOR THEM EVERYWHERE? THAT'S NOT MAGIC IT'S SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM, A TERM COINED BY SCHOLAR SHOSHANA ZUBOFF [16]. IT MEANS COMPANIES LIKE INSTAGRAM ARE COLLECTING DATA FROM YOUR EVERY CLICK, SWIPE, AND LIKE AND THEN TURNING THAT INFO INTO DOLLARS BY SELLING ADS.

 SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM = TURNING YOUR ATTENTION AND ACTIVITY INTO A PRODUCT.

THEY'RE NOT JUST WATCHING WHAT YOU POST—THEY'RE TRACKING [17, 18]:

- WHAT YOU LOOK AT
- HOW LONG YOU LOOK
- WHO YOU FOLLOW
- WHAT YOU TAP ON (EVEN BY ACCIDENT)!

 YOU POST A PHOTO



 INSTAGRAM COLLECTS INFO (LOCATION, TIME, LIKES)



 INSTAGRAM ANALYZES YOUR BEHAVIOR



 DATA SOLD OR USED TO TARGET ADS



YOU SEE ADS THAT "SEEM" PERSONALIZED

REMINDER
YOU CAN'T STOP
ALL DATA TRACKING
BUT YOU CAN LIMIT
YOUR AD PREFERENCES
(EXPLAIN NEXT)
- FOREMAN BRICK

ADS ON SITE: WHY AM I SEEING THIS AD?

BUT HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS, BUILDER: YOU'VE GOT SOME SAY IN WHAT GETS BUILT.

 FOREMAN BRICK'S QUICK FIX GUIDE:

1. WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU'RE SEEING AN AD?

2. TAP THE THREE DOTS (...) ON THE CORNER OF THE AD

3. TAP "WHY AM I SEEING THIS AD?"

4. WANT TO CLEAN UP YOUR AD FEED A BIT?

5. GO TO SETTINGS → ADS → AD PREFERENCES

6. CHOOSE WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE LESS OF

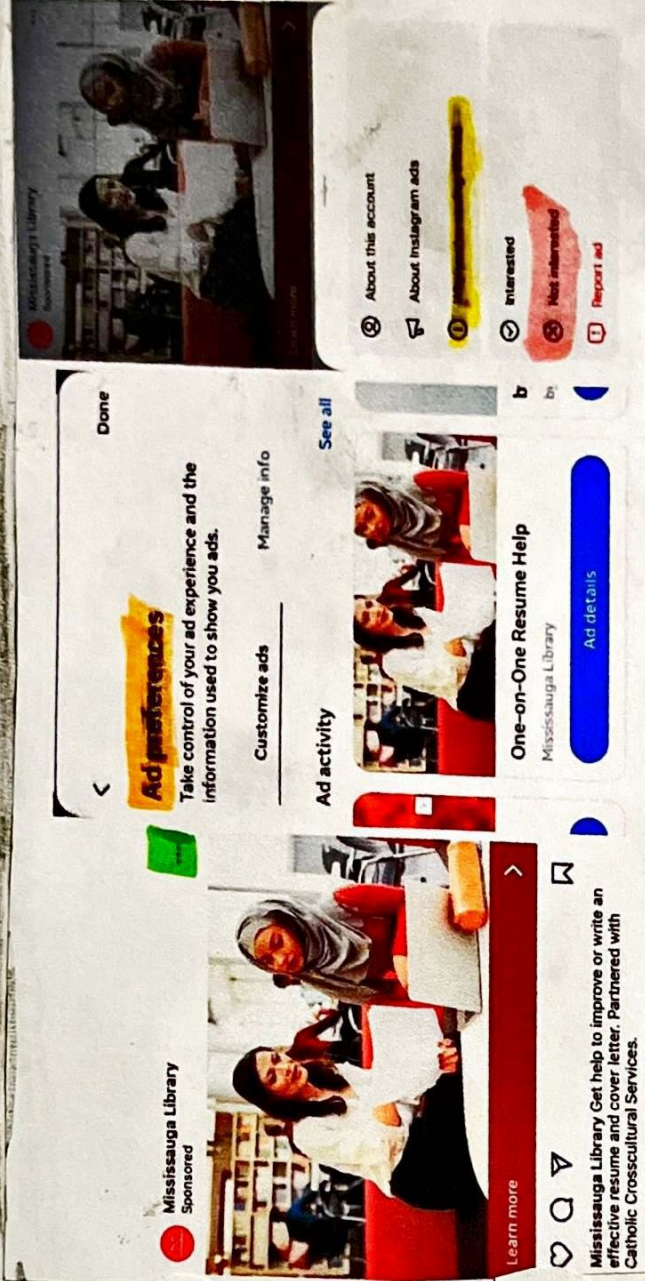
7. TAP "SEE FEWER ADS LIKE THIS" ON ANYTHING THAT DOESN'T

 SPARK JOY

FOR "NOT INTERESTED" - FOREMEN BRICK

WELL, WOULD YA LOOK AT THAT ANOTHER BILLBOARD JUST POPPED UP ON THE JOB SITE! EVER WONDER WHY YOU'RE SUDDENLY SEEING ADS FOR ORTHOPAEDIC SHOES, GARDEN MULCH, OR THAT BLENDER YOU ONLY MENTIONED OUT LOUD ONCE? THAT'S INSTAGRAM AT WORK, PLACING CUSTOM ADS BASED ON WHAT IT THINKS YOU'RE INTERESTED IN [19, 20] [21]

INSTAGRAM'S AD SYSTEM IS LIKE A CONSTRUCTION CREW THROWING UP BILLBOARDS WHEREVER YOU GO — BASED ON: WHAT YOU SEARCH WHAT YOU BUY ONLINE WHAT YOU CLICK, LIKE, OR EVEN PAUSE TO LOOK AT



SAFETY GEAR: PROTECTING YOURSELF



BEFORE YOU STEP ONTO ANY JOB SITE, YOU GEAR UP AND THE INTERNET'S NO DIFFERENT! JUST LIKE YOU WOULDN'T OPERATE A JACKHAMMER WITHOUT A HELMET, YOU SHOULDN'T SCROLL THROUGH INSTAGRAM WITHOUT YOUR DIGITAL SAFETY GEAR ON. THESE TOOLS KEEP YOUR ONLINE SPACE SECURE, YOUR INFO PRIVATE, AND THE SCAMMERS OUT OF YOUR DMS.

FOREMAN BRICK'S SAFETY CHECKLIST: [22]

☒ **USE STRONG, UNIQUE PASSWORDS:** MIX UPPER AND LOWERCASE LETTERS, NUMBERS, AND A SYMBOL OR TWO. AVOID BIRTHDAYS OR EASY-TO-GUESS WORDS (LIKE "PASSWORD123" NOPE!).

 **TIP:** WRITE IT DOWN AND STORE IT SOMEWHERE SAFE LIKE YOUR FAVOURITE RECIPE BOX!

☒ **TURN ON TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (2FA):** IT'S LIKE ADDING A DEADBOLT TO YOUR DIGITAL FRONT DOOR. EVEN IF SOMEONE GUESSES YOUR PASSWORD, THEY'D STILL NEED A SPECIAL CODE TEXTED TO YOU.

 **GO TO:** SETTINGS → SECURITY → TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

☒ **WATCH OUT FOR SCAMS IN YOUR DMS:** IF SOMEONE MESSAGES YOU ASKING FOR MONEY, CODES, OR PERSONAL INFO—EVEN IF IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE YOU KNOW—THAT'S A RED FLAG. IF IT FEELS FISHY, DON'T CLICK, DON'T REPLY—REPORT IT!



you can
also 
WRITE DOWN
A HINT INSTEAD
OF THE PASSWORD
-FOREMEN BRICK

BRICK'S CONSTRUCTION
PASSWORD HINT! (INST

OUR FIRST PROJECT
&
YEAR

USE THE TOOLS FOR JOY:

[illegible]

PEOPLE (AND THINGS)

**JUST LIKE A
NEIGHBOURHOOD CAFE,
COFFEE SUPPLIES**

A HUB FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

A PLACE FOR YOUR STORIES

A SCRAP

YOU'VE NOW GOT THE SKILLS TO SHAPE YOUR EXPERIENCE. YOU'VE SET BOUNDARIES. THAT REFLECTS THE SYSTEM, AND BUILT SOMETHING LEARNING TECH IT'S ABOUT RECLAIMING YOUR PLACE IN A WORLD THAT'S ALWAYS CHANGING. SO GO AHEAD. SHARE THAT SUNSET PHOTO. LIKE YOUR NIECE'S GRADUATION POST. LEAVE A COMMENT ON A FELLOW GARDENER'S TOMATO HAUL. THE DIGITAL WORLD IS WIDE. BUT IT'S NOT OUT OF REACH. ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU BUILD IT BRICK BY BRICK.

— FOREMAN BRICK



TIME TO BUILD: REFLECTION & ACTION PAGE

WELL DONE, BUILDER YOU'VE MADE IT THROUGH THE BLUEPRINT, LAID YOUR DIGITAL FOUNDATION, AND EVEN PUT UP A PRIVACY FENCE. NOW IT'S TIME TO GRAB YOUR PENCIL AND SKETCH OUT YOUR NEXT STEPS.

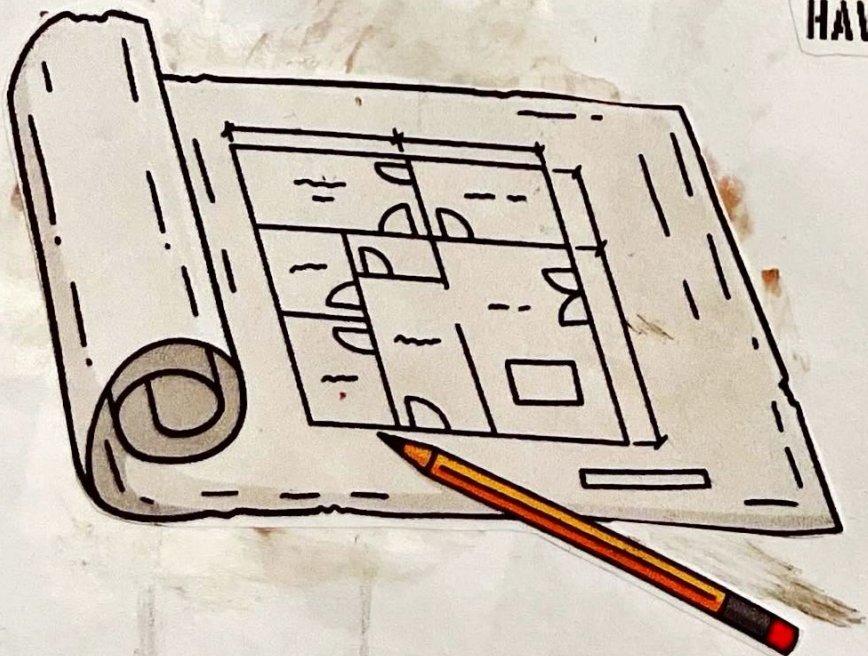
THIS PAGE IS YOUR PERSONAL CONSTRUCTION PLAN. YOU'VE GOT THE KNOWLEDGE, THE TOOLS, AND THE CONFIDENCE TO MAKE INSTAGRAM WORK FOR YOU. WHETHER YOU'RE HERE FOR CONNECTION, CREATIVITY, OR JUST CURIOSITY, THESE QUESTIONS WILL HELP YOU BUILD WITH PURPOSE.

 **YOUR DIGITAL BLUEPRINT:**

 **WHO DO I WANT TO FOLLOW? (FAMILY, FRIENDS, HOBBIES, INSPIRING VOICES... WHO BRINGS JOY TO YOUR FEED?)**

 **WHAT STEP WILL I TAKE TO FEEL SAFER ONLINE? (TURN ON 2FA? SET YOUR PROFILE TO PRIVATE? STOP CLICKING WEIRD LINKS?)**

 **WHAT SURPRISED ME ABOUT INSTAGRAM'S ALGORITHM? (DID IT MAKE SENSE FOR THE FIRST TIME? DID YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH CONTROL YOU ACTUALLY HAVE?)**



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

HEY FOREMEN BRICK HERE!

THANKS FOR READING

IF YOU WANT MORE
INFO CHECK OUT
THE FOLLOWING
RESOURCES:

MetriCool (2025). What you need to know about the Instagram Algorithm in 2025. [video]. YouTube.

- A short 5 minute explaining key features in the new Instagram algorithm

Samarth Eldercare (2024). How to use Instagram - Easy Steps for Seniors [video]. YouTube.

- A short 5 minute video explaining how to use Instagram.

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HOW TO CITE THIS ZINE:

**PAUL, LAUREN. (2025). BRICK BY
BRICK. HAMILTON, ONTARIO.**

CREATED FOR:

**CNMCS 720: DATA CULTURES.
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION
STUDIES AND MEDIA ARTS. WINTER
2025. DR. ANDREA ZEFFIRO**

