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Social Science Catch Phrases

There's a name for everything. Suppose you just can't remember the name of a movie, novel or favorite food you ordered at some name restaurant. It's called the "Google effect." Do you want to know some others?

Above Average effect: The manner in which most people judge themselves superior on desirable traits such as driving and leadership skills. It's a subjective psychological viewpoint that makes us susceptible to self-serving bias;

Bystander effect: Most notably apparent when bystanders fail to act in an emergency situation in a public place. The probability of help is inversely related to the number of bystanders.

Cheerleader effect: The tendency for people to appear more attractive in a group than they do in isolation.

Cognitive dissonance: Discomfort caused by holding two conflicting beliefs or a belief and a behavior (ie., smoking even though you know it's bad for your health).

Counterfactual thinking: Or another way of saying that I'm right but circumstances prevented it from happening. It's a tendency to look for facts that would have made an incorrect prediction correct.

False equivalence: A fallacy where there appears to be equivalence between two opposing arguments when

there is none – one is supported by evidence or fact and the other is not.

Gambler's fallacy: The tendency to think that future probabilities are altered by past events, when, in fact, they are unchanged (e.g., 10 straight "heads" in a coin toss doesn't mean "tails" is more likely on the next one).

Groupthink: When the desire for harmony and conformity in a group outweighs the importance of decisions made by that group.

Halo effect: The tendency of the positive effects from one person to boost the perception of the entire group.

Hindsight effect: The belief, which forms after an event, that the chain of events leading up to the event was inevitable, when, in fact, it was not.

Outcome bias: Similar to the hindsight effect, it is the tendency to judge a decision based on its outcome instead of on the quality of the decision made at the time.

Lookingglass self: The concept that how we see ourselves does not come from who we really are, but rather from how we believe others see us.

Recency bias: The tendency to think that trends and patterns we observed in recent years will continue. ■



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A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP MEANS PRODUCTIVITY

In Scandinavia, there are days filled with 24 hours of sunlight. But that doesn't mean they don't get their shut-eye. In a recent Finnish study, researcher concluded that those who sleep eight hours a day miss fewer days at work and get sick less often.

The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health processed data accumulated in a survey of Finnish workers across all fields of industry. They were aged 30 and over: 1,875 women and 1,885 men who were asked questions about sleep disturbances, drowsiness at the workplace and received medical exams to delve into their mental and physical condition.

Eliminating insomnia, apnea and sleep disturbances would increase productivity 28 percent. Those who slept between seven and eight hours per day experienced the fewest sick days.

Spokesman Paula Salo of the University of Turku in Finland reported: "People who get the sleep they need may in general take better care of their own health and well-being, which obviously maintains work ability, too." ■



Science and Art Merge Chronologically

IF you want to know when Impressionism began in the art movement, it was precisely at 7:35 am on Nov. 13, 1872! What?

According to Donald Olson, physicist at Texas State University in San Marcos, that's when Claude Monet put brush to canvas to paint a hazy sunrise at his hotel room in Le Havre.

The painting, "Impression, Soleil Levant," has been acknowledged as the beginning of a period where artists marked their work with imprecise and subjective depiction of commonplace scenes with loose brush strokes and vivid hues.

Olson, who considers himself a "celestial sleuth," pored over hundreds of photographs and historical maps before determining the precise room, time of day and weather conditions that Monet observed. He was helped by 19th century weather conditions in Le Havre harbor that went on-line recently.

"All of the times I was considering were between 7:30 and 8:30 am," Olson said, "So, on exactly the time of day I want to know about, we have a guy looking at the water and looking at the sky. The guy was out there every day at 8 in the morning." ■

Mobile Hotspots on the Road



You're in a pinch and you want to find the best WiFi hotspots at a public facility to which you are traveling. Well, you're in luck. Turn to www.opensignal.com, and you will have your answer in seconds.

"We feel our data is very representative of the current state of WiFi in the United States," says Samuel Johnston, of the British firm, Open Signal, whose smartphone app has run millions of speed tests on WiFi hotspots.

Johnston says there is a difference in hotel chains, for example. Quite logically, he states that "as hotels get more expensive, they provide better services to their customers." Johnston says Hilton is the speediest of the major chains.

Half the hotels surveyed have performed below the 5 megabits per second that Netflix holds as the minimum for high definition streaming. Chains that don't make the cut are: Motel 6, La Quinta, Holiday Inn, Days Inn and Comfort Inn.

Crowdsourced results indicate that among favorite eateries, McDonald's holds a strong advantage over Dunkin' Donuts and Panera Bread. Among coffee shops, Johnston notes, "Starbucks has made a move to really boost their Internet connection," by switching from AT&T to Google, resulting in an 80% boost in speed.

Open Signal will give you results across the country to determine which carrier has the strongest signal in a regional area and how the strength of signal compares to the average signal in the U. S. ■