BOWLING GREEN DAILY NEWS

Are you being stupid on social media?

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Ever felt like you're not able to get your point across effectively on social media? That people aren't taking what you have to say seriously? Possibly even making fun of you in the comments section?

If so, then consider, just for a second, the likelihood that it's not them. Maybe it's you.

When you're advocating for your point of view – which is obviously correct – do you go about it in a credible, systematic way? Do you provide evidence to back up your claim? Do you respond effectively to challenges to your viewpoint?

Or do you resort to what stupid people do when they try to argue for their preferred perspective?

But you may be asking yourself, how would I know if I am being stupid? How would I know if it was me instead of them?

If you've ever had that kind of introspective moment, then this is your lucky day! Because I'm about to explain how stupid people argue. All you have to do is reflect on each of these practices by asking yourself one simple question: Do I do that?

To set the stage, let me begin by describing how intelligent people argue their positions. It typically goes as follows:

You present your assertion, followed by verifiable proof - stuff other people can independently confirm - from credible sources. Your Uncle Bob doesn't count. Then you answer questions about your declaration, again including data in your responses. At the conclusion of the process, your claim will either hold up to scrutiny or be rightfully dismissed as nonsense.

Sounds pretty straightforward, right? And it is. Unfortunately, this is not how stupid people go about trying to advance their cause. Instead, they consistently make the following mistakes.

First, stupid people already know what they are going to find before they start looking for it. "We know that windmills cause acne." Then they do an exhaustive Google search to find the one discredited study that seems to support their inane contention.

Second, stupid people tend to emphasize the source instead of the content. "Oh, you saw that on CNN, so we know it's biased." Huge mistake. The truth is the truth, regardless of whether it's in the Bible or written on the restroom wall. Stop evaluating efficacy based on where something originated.

Third, stupid people tend to resort to data-free thinking. "I just feel it in my gut." Well, unless you can quantify that feeling in ways that can be checked for legitimacy, that feeling you have could very well be the extra piece of chess pie you should have avoided.

Fourth, stupid people fixate on statistical anomalies. "Yeah, I got that Covid shot and now I can't remember how to spell stuff anymore." There's a very good chance the vaccine didn't cause your illiteracy. You've probably been challenged by the alphabet your entire life.

Fifth, stupid people like to respond with irrelevances. I was conducting training at a company not long ago and we were discussing the morale problem they were having on third shift. One

enlightened team member spoke up and said, “First shift is fine.” Glad it is. But completely beside the point.

Sixth, stupid people are prone to jumping to conclusions. Years ago, I had a colleague who would never let me get out a complete sentence before declaring matter-of-factly, “I know what your problem is.” No, he didn’t. Not a clue.

Seventh, stupid people tend to over-think things when faced with a tough decision. I’ve also heard this one referred to as paralysis by analysis. “I don’t think we should do anything until we’ve thought of everything.” Hopefully this person is not in charge when the fire department shows up to put out the first at your house.

Eighth, a lot of stupid people seem to be infected with a disease called whataboutism. You tell someone that you don’t like conservatives because they seem to be obsessed with guns. They respond with “What about the Nazis? They took guns away and look what happened.” Apples and oranges.

Ninth, stupid people have a habit of confusing silly AI generated memes with productive discussion and civil discourse. You say the president’s health is declining and they respond with “Oh yeah? Just look at this picture of the president deadlifting 500 pounds.” Idiotic and insulting.

Finally, when all else fails, stupid people usually employ the 3D’s: Deny, deflect, defer. “Our democracy is not at risk, you’re just biased and time will show I’m right.” This word salad is essentially devoid of any real meaning and adds nothing to the conversation.

So there you have it. If you find yourself using three or more of these childish tactics in your next social media battle, you might be stupid.

But don’t take my word for it. Go have someone administer one of those cognitive tests we’ve all heard so much about lately. Maybe you can distinguish between an elephant and a jackass.



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