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Project 3: Long Form Article

Very few professional researchers believe they effectively balance family life and academic responsibilities. Dr. Yu Hao Lee of the University of Florida's Telecommunications Department, however, works hard to achieve this balance.

Dr. Lee has two small children, teaches three classes at the University of Florida, and does many projects to further his research in media psychology.

Dr. Lee began his adult life wanting to work in economics. He received his B.A. in Economics from National Taiwan University in 2003. He said he decided too far into his undergraduate career though that he didn't want to work in economics. So, following his B.A., he pursued a M.A. in Journalism from the same university in 2005.

After graduating with his M.A., Dr. Lee worked as a reporter for a magazine for three years. "I learned a lot from that job itself," Dr. Lee said, "to be confident in who you are and not to feel that you're just this young kid who doesn't know anything."

Dr. Lee had the idea of going for a Ph.D. when he realized he wasn't accumulating expertise or knowledge in the specific field as fast as he would have liked. He received his doctorate in Media and Information Studies in 2013 from Michigan State University.

After beginning his teaching and researching career at the University of Florida, Dr. Lee and his wife started a family, they now have two toddlers. "You have less time to work," Dr. Lee said, "but the opposite is that we work much more efficiently."

He spoke about how in the past, he would need "an hour or two of continuous time to do reading and writing." But now if he has 15 minutes to work, he will use every second of that time to get things done.

In the interview, Dr. Lee explained how there are two types of faculty at the University of Florida: teaching faculty and research faculty. Both types teach, but their loads are different. Research faculty do not teach as many classes as teaching faculty because they spend more time doing research. He is a member of the research faculty.

Media psychology, how people process information, is the general field Dr. Lee does he research in. His main medium? Video games.

One example of a project he has in the works is funded by the National Science Foundation. He and his team "designed a game to teach police officers or law enforcement officials how to detect lies."

He says it was the longest study he has performed at the university. His long-term goal with this study is to design "video games or social media forms or communication technology, and launch it to help people."

A 2016-2017 study has been made possible because of a grant that Dr. Lee won. The Emerging Scholars Research Grant is awarded by the Association for Educators in

Journalism and Mass Communications. It is awarded to 4 junior faculty members across the nation who are within their first five years of professorship.

“We propose something that we are working on,” Dr. Lee said, and they look at criteria based on the project: “how likely you are to accomplish what you proposed, does your record show you have the ability to complete something like that, etc.”

The project that Dr. Lee proposed deals with “customizing and tailoring news headlines based on people’s psychological traits to increase engagement with news.”

He suggests that there are two types of motivated people, those who face situations with a gain approach and those who face situations with a loss prevention approach.

Let’s say a student is preparing for a final exam, a motivated student can prepare in two ways. “One is to read all of the materials over and over again, read lots of materials and look for additional materials so that you know everything about everything.” That is called gain approach because the student is looking to gain knowledge on everything (s)he can.

Loss prevention approach is where a student focuses on certain information so that (s)he does not miss anything. “So you don’t expand your resources,” Dr. Lee said, “instead you hold onto the ones (you have) and prevent losing the ones that you already have a grasp on.”

The idea behind the research is that the people who write the news could input multiple headlines for articles, and an algorithm could decide which headline to show people

based on their viewing habits. People that lean towards the gain approach would see headlines based on gains while losing who hate losing things would see something about prevention. The goal is to create more engagement with the news.

But how does this theory apply to people who aren't motivated to read the news? Dr. Lee says "we frame the headline the opposite way" of their approach. This way it disrupts the viewer's thought process and they stop and think "does this sound right?" Therefore, they stop and read the news.

The Emerging Scholars Research Grant is a one-year grant that gives a little less than \$2000. With that Dr. Lee is planning on starting his research at the Innovation News Center on campus (WUFT). The I.N.C. sends out a newsletter every morning to its subscribers, informing them about current events around the Gainesville area and around the state. His plan is to start with the newsletter because "it is a lot easier to just change the lead instead of revamping the whole (I.N.C.) website." Eventually, Dr. Lee wants to find "more funding and revamp the I.N.C. website."

A Ph.D. in Media and Information Studies and a job in Telecommunications could not be further from what Dr. Yu-Hao Lee thought he would do as a career. "I wanted to be a park ranger," he said, "My yearbooks from middle school and high school were all filled with words from my classmates saying, "you will become a great park ranger one day!"."

However, he loves what he does. "I like interacting with students," Dr. Lee said, "sometimes when I teach students things, they come up with ideas I have never thought

of and that's motivation for me to learn more." He can't see himself anywhere else in the future.