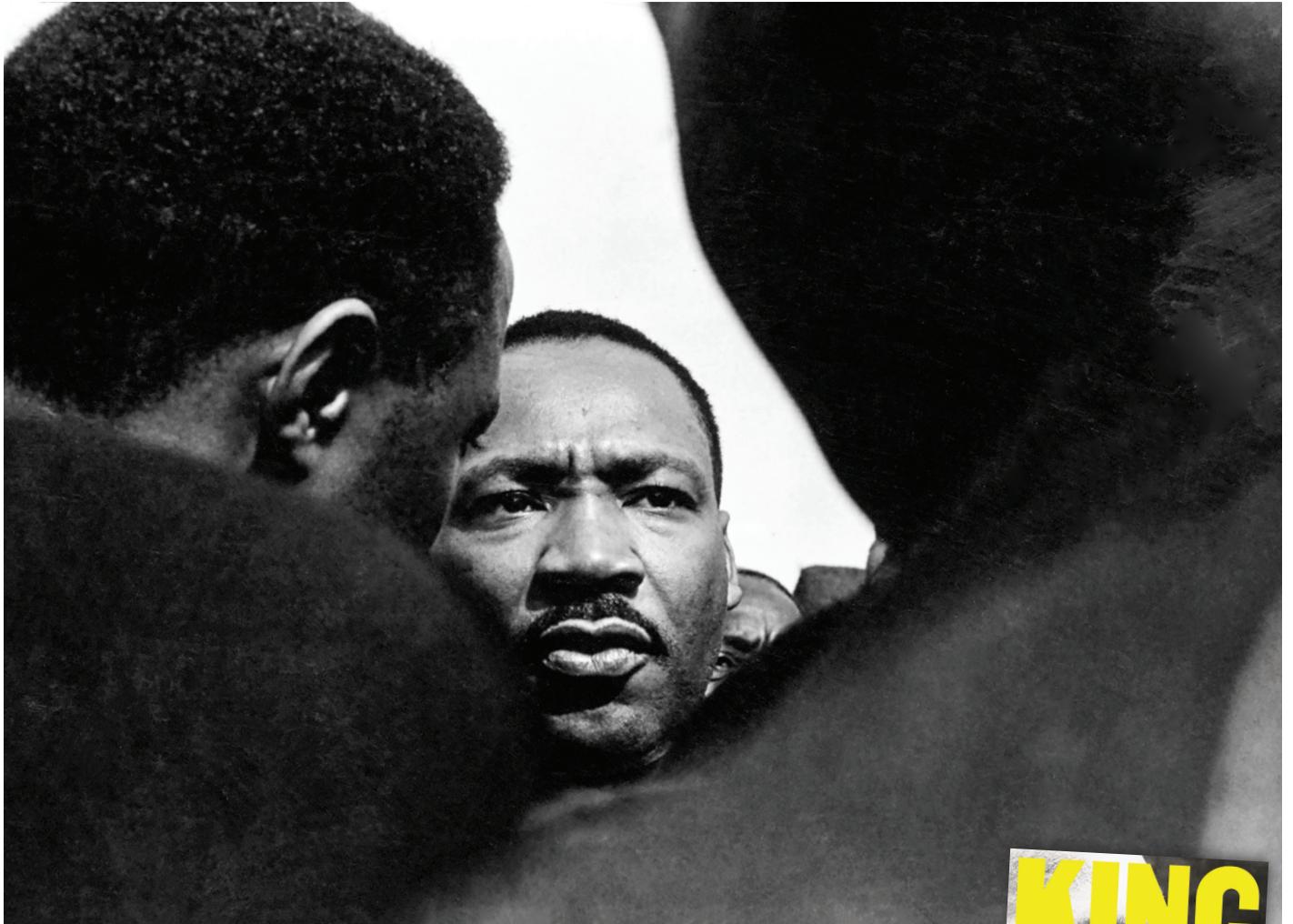


# SPOTLIGHT

Observations, insights & analysis from around the world on a medley of topics.



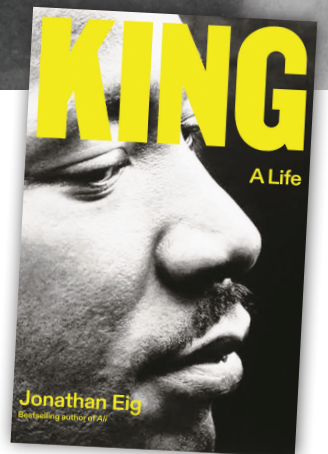
## MLK, Behind the Legend

In exposing his flaws, a new biography underscores his greatness.

Lyndon B. Johnson—by speaking out against the Vietnam War, an act that also irked many of King’s supporters in the media. A *New York Review of Books* article in 1967 dismissed King as no longer relevant. “Newspaper editorials questioned not only his patriotism

but even his commitment to civil rights,” writes Jonathan Eig in his new biography, *King: A Life*.

If MLK died under attack from former allies, and full of doubt about his own usefulness, *King* delivers a kind of justice. A finalist for the National Book Award, *King* is the story of a Christian minister determined to bring a peaceful end to centuries of racist violence and oppression. Emerging in 1955 as a leader of the Montgomery bus strike started by Rosa Parks, King in the years that followed endured beatings, a knifing and about 30 arrests and imprisonments, not to mention a maniacal



level of harassment and spying by Hoover. The first King biography since the ’80s, *King* rests upon a wealth of previously unpublished government documents, letters and oral histories, many from



sources Eig met when researching his previous bestselling biography of Muhammad Ali. On the cover of its Sunday book review, *The New York Times* called the King biography “supple, penetrating, heartstring-pulling and compulsively readable.”

Unlike the popular image of King as the protesting poet who voiced one of the most powerful speeches in history—“I have a dream!”—Eig depicts a fully human MLK. In the book’s index, under “extramarital affairs,” 30 pages are listed. Knowledge about many such affairs came from the FBI, which used the information to try extorting King to drop his protests. He wouldn’t, any more than he would remain silent about

**“He used peaceful protest as a lever to force those in power to give up many of the privileges they’d hoarded.”**

what he perceived as the injustice of the Vietnam War. When his interests collided with his values, his values prevailed.

“We’ve mistaken King’s non-violence for passivity,” Eig writes. “We’ve forgotten that his approach was more aggressive than anything the country had seen—that he used peaceful protest as a lever to force those in power to give up many of the privileges they’d hoarded. We’ve failed to recall that King was one of the most brutally divisive figures in American history—attacked not only by segregationists in the South but also by his own government, by more militant Black activists, and by white northern liberals. He was deliberately mischaracterized in his lifetime, and he remains so today.”

Universal Pictures has bought the rights to make *King* a movie, with Steven Spielberg as executive producer and Chris Rock as director. ♦

*Kevin Helliker is a Partner and Editor in Chief of the Brunswick Review.*

## Conspiracy of Cartographers?

**Great Britain, England, the UK ... JONATHAN FAULL looks at the varying definitions of his country.**

**F**ACING THE COMPLEXITIES OF Brexit and devolved COVID-19 rules, friends often ask about the UK’s constitutional arrangements. Those still awake after five minutes go on to ask about England. How does it work? Who represents it? Not easy questions, even for the greatest Englishmen.

Shakespeare’s John of Gaunt inaccurately describes England as an island: It is part of an island shared with Scotland and Wales, today known as Great Britain. Tom Stoppard, in his Shakespearean farce *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, wonders whether England is “a conspiracy of cartographers.” Well, it is certainly a real country, although the names get mixed up.

George Orwell remarked that “we call our islands by no less than six different names, England, Britain, Great Britain, the British Isles, the United Kingdom and, in very

exalted moments, Albion.” We can add the “British Islands,” defined in law as the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

Reference to “our islands” is controversial because it leads to consideration of the island of Ireland, which is divided between two sovereign states, Ireland itself and the United Kingdom, of which Northern Ireland is a part.

Sporting heroes are confused too: famous cricketer Lord (Ian) Botham said in 2016: “Personally, I think England is an island and we should remember that and be very proud.” His charity walks travel from Land’s End in England to John O’Groats in Scotland. He crosses no sea on the way.

Governance of the UK is complicated. Scotland has a devolved Parliament and Government; so does Wales, albeit with fewer powers. Northern Ireland has its own complicated system of self-government. England and Wales (together), Scotland and Northern Ireland are all distinct legal jurisdictions. England itself has neither a Parliament nor a government.

The Court of Appeal (of England and Wales) has held recently that, despite the dictionary and statutory definitions, the phrase “the United Kingdom” as used in a private instrument is capable of including the Channel Islands. The Interpretation Act 1978 meanwhile clearly defines it as “Great Britain and Northern Ireland.” The court’s ruling means that “the United Kingdom” is not immutable and can mean something different in private instruments—another nuance of the complex constitutional arrangements of these islands.

Foreigners are often full of admiration for less formalized British arrangements, but also somewhat bewildered. Britons themselves sometimes seem confused. It would help British self-understanding and communication with the rest of the world if these matters were debated, taught and expressed carefully within the UK and abroad.

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*Jonathan Faull is Brunswick Chair, European Public Affairs and former Director General at the European Commission.*



MAP: CHRONICLE/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



# Argument for Silence

Smart negotiators and leaders often say little, in favor of listening, says **DAN LYONS**, author of *The Power of Keeping Your Mouth Shut*. He talks to Brunswick's **KAVI REDDY**.

**D**AN LYONS HAS WRITTEN extensively about startup culture and Silicon Valley in his books, as well as for *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Fortune*, *Vanity Fair* and *Wired*. He has written for HBO's *Silicon Valley* series and was the creator of the Fake Steve Jobs blog.

Recently, Brunswick Partner and Co-General Counsel Kavi Reddy spoke with him about his new book, *STFU: The Power of Keeping Your Mouth Shut in an Endlessly Noisy World*. Lyon's experience of realizing that he was a "talkaholic" led him to examine how talking less and listening more can help us all.

**Your book says communicating too much is dangerous, and talking less is a powerful way to get more of what you want.**

When you talk less, you listen more. The big idea of shutting up is then to use that space to listen. Really listen. At one level, you avoid catastrophes and calamities, but you can also be a lot more successful. You can get more, negotiate better. In addition to helping yourself, what you can really do is improve the lives of those around you.

**Leaders being quiet is good for their team?**

At every level of leadership, the job is really to bring out the best in the people who work for you, or even around you. Your role is to help people unlock their potential and do great things and grow.

**It seems that what is valued now is putting every thought out there with no filter.**

There are 2 million podcasts, 48 million episodes and half of



these have just 26 downloads to them. We've created this culture where we believe that success is measured by your ability to attract attention—have 1 million Twitter followers, have a big podcast. We have so much content and stuff flying at us, and it is really taking a toll on our psyches.

Angry content gets more reaction and the system is gamified to reward follower count, likes, comments. So people want that rush again and they start realizing that the meaner and angrier they are, the more successful they are in that platform. You are being trained to overtalk.

Powerful people tend to talk less. As great a leader and speaker as President Obama is, he is an even better listener. He's said that when he was a community organizer, at first he would say, "I'm going to help," but listening was really the key. Angela Merkel is said to be a great listener, brilliant, but her speeches are terrible and it's almost on purpose. She kind of wants to put people to sleep.

When you're not out there publicly yammering, you can be listening, gathering information and deploying it really selectively. Silence is a way of both gaining power and wielding it.

**You say women are unfairly pegged as being overtalkers.**

Women are interrupted much

more frequently than men. Next time you're in a meeting, just sit and watch. Once you see it, you can't unsee it.

**Have COVID and Zoom made it easier or harder to use silence at work?**

Especially on group Zooms, one can just hit the mute button, and if you do want to say something, you have to actively do it. The raise hand function is great. There is a pause between someone calling on you and you speaking and it forces you to think about what you are going to say.

**Can shutting up serve as a tool to create a more inclusive workspace?**

Look at the future of work. Right now, the greatest and most pressing question for a lot of CEOs is, "Should we get everybody back into the office? How do we do

that?" Remember that communication doesn't mean talking; it means listening. It's not, "I'm going to sit here and go back and forth and tell you how to fix this." It's deeper. You have to have that conversation and really listen, build that trust and then build alignment. And only then, together, say, "OK, how do we figure out the future of work?"

In the book, I talk about Bill Marriott, who ran the hotel company his father created. He says something to the effect of "I didn't always decide in the way they wanted me to, but I felt that if I listened and they felt respected and heard, then they would buy into the decision."

You want to get the most productive, effective, happy and engaged company you can. The way to get that is quietly, by listening and creating space.

**It seems simple. Why is it so hard?**

We know we have to have difficult conversations, but we don't ever tell people how. We don't teach people how to listen. We do "show and tell" when you're a kid. What we don't do at the end of it is ask "OK, all of you write down, what do you remember? What did so-and-so say?" We don't teach how to really pay attention and listen.

People think it seems weak to just not have anything to say. They feel like it is incumbent on them to have all the answers. It is hard for people to have a conversation and not talk but listen.

There are many times in life where you should speak up. But when you do, do so intentionally. Know what you want to say, and what you want to get. But there are also many situations where you should say nothing. In a way, silence is also a form of communication. You are conveying something with silence.

**Finally, how can we practice STFU?**

Just listen. Remain present and connected, but quiet and listening. Listening is a superpower. ♦

*Kavi Reddy is Brunswick's Co-General Counsel, based in New York.*

**A** ROTTEN SEWER OF OPINION which is absolutely essential to everyday life.” That’s how one British Member of Parliament recently described social media.

In 2022, in support of a master’s degree in digital marketing, I surveyed British MPs’ use of social media. I spoke to eight experts including members of Parliament, special advisors, former digital strategy heads of political parties and political journalists. Here’s what I found.

**1. X is for party politics, Facebook for constituency.**

X (formerly Twitter) was the outlet of choice for politicians and political journalists. At time of writing, according to Politics Social, 590 British MPs were active—over 90%—with nearly 1,000 tweets from MPs in the previous 24 hours. X garnered the most attention from fellow MPs

and journalists, and tweets were shown to directly influence the news agenda, often substituting for press releases. For constituency engagement, however, Facebook and Instagram were used far more, with one politician saying nearly all of their casework requests now come in through social media. These accounts were typically run by an MP’s team, while X was run by MPs themselves.

**2. The abuse of politicians online is a downside.**

Every single interviewee brought up—unprompted—online abuse, and they were particularly aware of women and ethnic minorities as targets. One MP said we’re likely to see more MPs leaving politics after a short period of time as “it’s not worth it.” Ahead of the 2019 General Election, several female MPs stood down

citing the abuse they’d received. As a trend, this could leave Britain without diverse representation.

**3. Social media could cost you an election.**

A striking quote from a former party head of digital said that “social media can lose elections for you. It very rarely wins [them].” They spoke of comments being made that can later cause political harm—or old posts coming back to haunt an MP.

Yet there was little choice but to participate in social media.

**Social Media & the British MP**

**UK lawmakers fear it, need it and know how to use it, research finds. By BÉNÉDICTE EARL.**

One MP compared it to having a phone number or email. Findings also suggest that social media was effective for success within a party. An MP said a tweet would make it more likely for other MPs to see and potentially help you.

**4. Some MPs are addicted to social media.**

MPs talked of becoming obsessed with social media. One MP spoke of seeing fellow MPs replying late at night and had to speak to them to suggest they learn to put their phones down. They look to X as an example of how their messaging is landing. An advisor put it that many politicians “live in fear” of X. One anecdote related an MP on X while the MP was running a Select Committee, to see how his performance on the committee was being received in real time.

**5. Not a level playing field.**

While cabinet members will have large teams and budgets, most MPs must combine the roles of caseworker and content creator. This has led to hiring changes: curating and creating content are now core skills and integral parts of any role.

**6. Social media is changing MP behavior.**

The fundamental finding from my research was that social media has led to a change in MP behavior. All MPs interviewed spoke of how online expectations are influencing offline behavior. One MP noted that younger, more tech-savvy colleagues tended to stand in one of a few places in the chamber for a cleaner photo or video, to be used on social channels. Another noted that MPs were beginning to speak in soundbites because they were more likely to go viral. As one MP put it, “One of the primary reasons now that I make a speech is to get the video.”

On why MPs use social media, one quote stuck with me: “It enables you to talk directly without editorial interference or third-party opinion. It’s your own words in your own voice translated to the audience that you’re speaking to.”♦

*Bénédicte Earl is a Director in Brunswick’s London office*

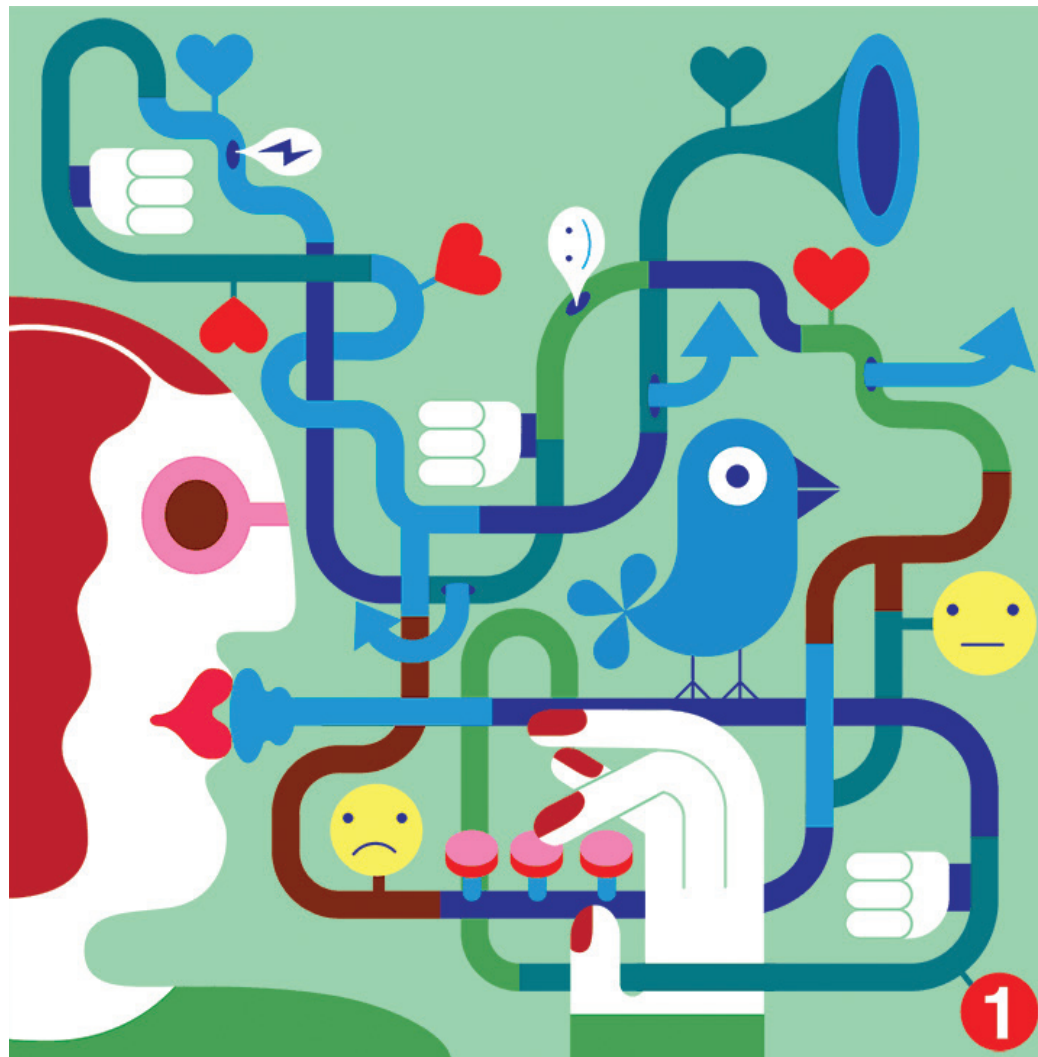


ILLUSTRATION: MELINDA BECK



# What do the Pope, Bill Gates, Oprah, Elon Musk, LeBron James & Tim Cook Have in Common?

REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS in Congress can agree, it appears, on something: whom to follow on X (formerly Twitter). Across party lines, six leaders and celebrities emerged as some of the most-followed:

- |                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1. <b>The Pope</b>     | 20% |
| 2. <b>Bill Gates</b>   | 17  |
| 3. <b>Oprah</b>        | 13  |
| 4. <b>Elon Musk</b>    | 12  |
| 5. <b>LeBron James</b> | 6   |
| 6. <b>Tim Cook</b>     | 4   |

X is a rich place to study the US Congress. More than 98% of its members are active on the platform. Every day these members collectively tweet hundreds—sometimes thousands—of messages.

Brunswick Insight analyzes those tweets to glean real-time insights about conversations, and to see and study broader trends—ones that can be obscured by the disproportionate focus that the loudest voices attract.

Through this lens, we can provide data-driven answers to questions like: What’s on Congress’s mind? Have members publicly taken a position on an issue—and if so, how many, and who might still be undecided? What reactions have taken place to a specific issue, event or company—and how do those reactions trend over time? Does the media’s coverage of Congress give a fair picture of what its members are talking about?

We analyzed Congressional tweets across a variety of healthcare-related issues, for example, to understand the topics driving Congressional conversations across party lines.

The topics eliciting the most tweets: Medicare, mental health, healthcare costs and drug pricing.



Some of those tweets were run-of-the-mill talking points. Yet there were also nuanced discussions of pieces of legislation, and how those pieces fit into

Congress’s agenda—useful for some of our healthcare clients to know.

We’ve analyzed how Congress was tweeting about content

moderation, big tech regulation, social media, ESG, COVID-19, China, infrastructure, cybersecurity, banking—along with many, many other issues, keywords or brand names.

We analyze not only what Congress is saying, but also the accounts that are making it into their feeds.

It’s not news that Republicans follow Fox News, or that Democrats read *The Washington Post*, but knowing the full list of those outlets and organizations—and how they vary for certain members—can help increase the chances of your argument or story actually reaching the people you want.

There are, of course, shortcomings to any research that relies on social media—X, as we’ve been reminded many times, isn’t representative of the wider world. But given that practically every member of Congress (or a staffer) is both on X and active on the platform, it is a fair representation of this influential group.

For clients, this type of analysis can extend to any group, not just Congressional members. How are conversations evolving among their peer companies, for instance, or within a specific sector? How are Fortune 500 CEOs talking about their businesses? Who are the “ESG influencers” driving the conversation? What about AI?

Threads, Meta’s social media platform that allows users to share text and photos, can’t be studied in the same way yet, and its senior leaders have said the platform isn’t for news and politics. Still, it might become another platform where politicians look to get their message out—and another place where analysis can help sift through the ever-present noise to find the all-elusive signal. ♦

*Zayd Mabruk is an Associate with Brunswick Insight in Dallas.*

## Most-followed NEWS SOURCES

### REPUBLICANS

1. Fox News
2. The Hill
3. Politico
4. CSPAN
5. The Wall Street Journal

### DEMOCRATS

1. The Washington Post
2. The New York Times
3. Politico
4. CSPAN
5. The Associated Press

## Most-followed THINK TANKS, ASSOCIATIONS & FEDERATIONS

### REPUBLICANS

1. The Heritage Foundation
2. Family Research Council
3. CATO Institute
4. National Association of Manufacturers
5. Business Roundtable

### DEMOCRATS

1. The ACLU
2. Brookings Institution
3. National Head Start Assoc.
4. Economic Policy Institute
5. American Federation of Government Employees

**I**N JULY 2021, ON SOMETHING OF A whim, I signed up for an 82-mile bike race, my first ever. It was also nearly twice as far as I'd ridden before. Seven months later, the robust training plan I'd envisioned hadn't exactly materialized. The lingering pandemic, coupled with a Washington, DC winter, weren't too motivating. To maximize the three months I had left to train, I bought a wearable fitness tracker.

Their benefits are clear: People who use fitness trackers walk, on average, 40 more minutes per day than people who don't. Records in endurance sports keep falling for many reasons, but surely one is the level of sophistication with which athletes now track their training.

But as anyone who's considered buying a device knows, figuring out which one to buy can feel overwhelming. There's Amazfit and Fitbit, Whoop and Wahoo, Garmin and Polar, Coros and Suunto and Oura—and, of course, Apple, which in 2020, sold more watches than the entire Swiss watch industry. Accompanying these devices are apps that allow you to explore your health data in tremendous detail—and some even offer personalized training recommendations.

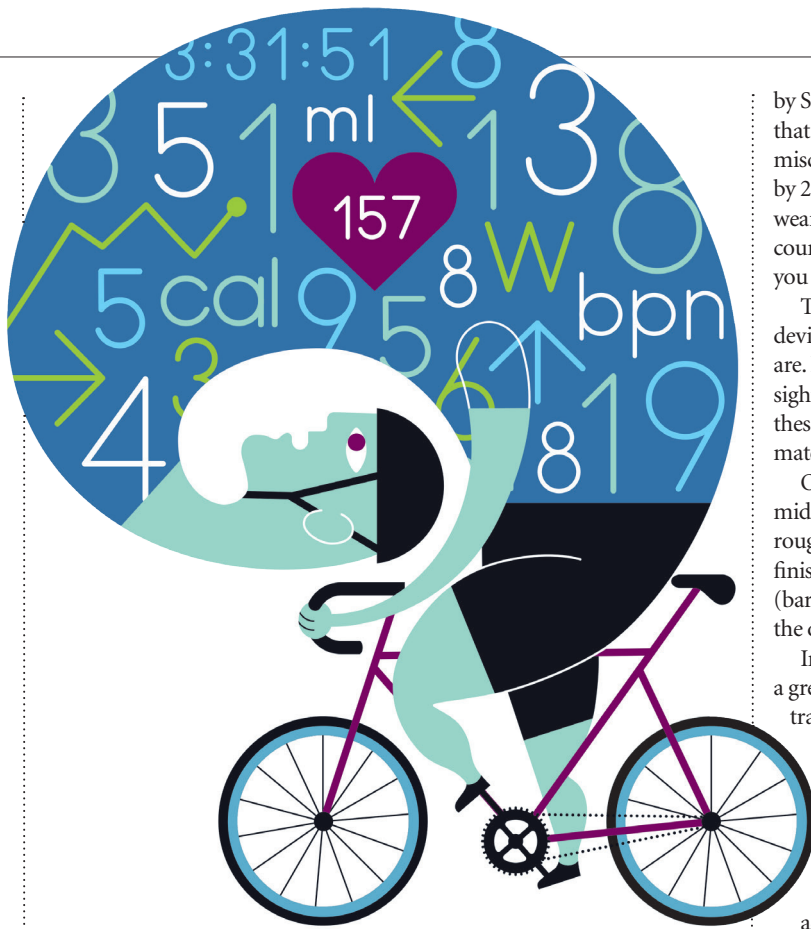
What ultimately sold me on the one I bought was that I saw a lot of professional cyclists and endurance athletes wearing them. If it worked for those superhumans, I figured it could work for me.

And it did—well, sort of.

I loved analyzing the numbers and tracking my progress. Training can be a constant game of second-guessing: Should I be going harder (or slower)? Am I doing enough (or too much, or too little)? The data, and the data-driven recommendations I got from the app, helped me train with confidence—and, very often, with restraint.

A former Division-1 college swimmer about 15 years past my prime, I knew I couldn't push myself like I once did. I felt confident that I was training at, but not beyond, my limits. And it helped me feel like my body was deciding the training, not my excuses.

But the more time I spent with



## Will DATA Help You Finish a Race?

those numbers, the more I became aware of their limitations.

There's the "nocebo effect," where the constant focus on your health data actually worsens your health—people who wake up feeling fine, for instance, report feeling tired after finding out they registered a low "sleep score." In 2022, *The New York Times* published an opinion piece where the writer, a 2:53 marathoner, confessed: "The more I used my watch to monitor my stress, the higher my stress levels rose."

I was constantly monitoring my app. At first, all the data was encouraging and enlightening. Gradually, it ceased being either. A new question hovered over most everything I did: "How is this going to impact my performance?" Cycling, once an escape, became homework. Gone was the simple joy of spinning along the road on a nice spring day. That the phrase "data junkie" even exists suggests an awareness of how addictive and unhealthy our relationship with numbers can become.

**Yes—but maybe not.  
It's complicated.  
SCOTT FOSTER reports.**

The data also made me prone to self-flagellation. If I met up with friends for a few drinks or had a beer at dinner with my wife, the app would indicate an exceptionally poor recovery and recommend a light workout the next day, regardless of how I felt. Rather than looking at the overall picture of the progress I was making, I would beat myself up for making a "bad" decision the night before—one I'd be reminded of every time I opened the app.

Data's power is closely tied to its quality. A growing body of research suggests that wearables are broadly accurate but far from exact. Tracking your heart rate through a sensor on your wrist, for instance, is less accurate than tracking it with a sensor strapped to your chest—and algorithms use your heart rate to calculate how well rested you are and how hard you worked. A 2017 study

by Stanford University found that the most accurate tracker miscalculated calorie expenditure by 27%. Other studies have found wearables aren't always precise at counting steps or measuring when you fall asleep.

The point isn't that these devices aren't useful—they clearly are. It's that it can be easy to lose sight of the fact that the numbers these devices produce are approximate rather than precise.

On race day, I finished in the middle of the pack, 215th out of roughly 500. I was glad to have finished, glad my legs held up (barely) and glad to have enjoyed the day itself.

In one sense, the wearable was a great investment. It helped me train for the race and finish it.

And along the way, it helped me make healthier decisions. I didn't need a device to tell me to limit late nights, unhealthy food and alcohol, but its data convinced me to actually adjust my relationships with those behaviors.

And yet, in another sense, was it a great investment to spend money to turn something I loved into something I started to dread?

Data can be magical when we're clear on what we want to measure and why. Yet that "why" question is one we seldom ask with our smartwatches or wearables, perhaps because the answer appears so obvious: I want to be faster, fitter, healthier, whatever.

But at what price? Something is gained with the watch and the data, but something—perhaps even more valuable—can be lost. The great explorer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt once observed that: "What speaks to the soul escapes our measurements."

I stopped monitoring my app daily in the spring of 2023 as the weather improved, the days grew longer and I was able to ride outside again. I glance at it every once in a while after a hard ride, but nowadays, far more important than maximizing my performance is enjoying the sheer delight of every ride. ♦

*Scott Foster is a former Associate with Brunswick Insight, the firm's data and analysis team.*