

Info-Savvy: Managing Information Overload in Stressful Times

Carolyn Parsey, PhD

University of Washington, Memory
and Brain Wellness Center

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Today's Road Map

- Managing information intake
- Anxiety in the presence of information overload
- Practical advice
- Proactive activities for your own information security



Media Time is Increasing

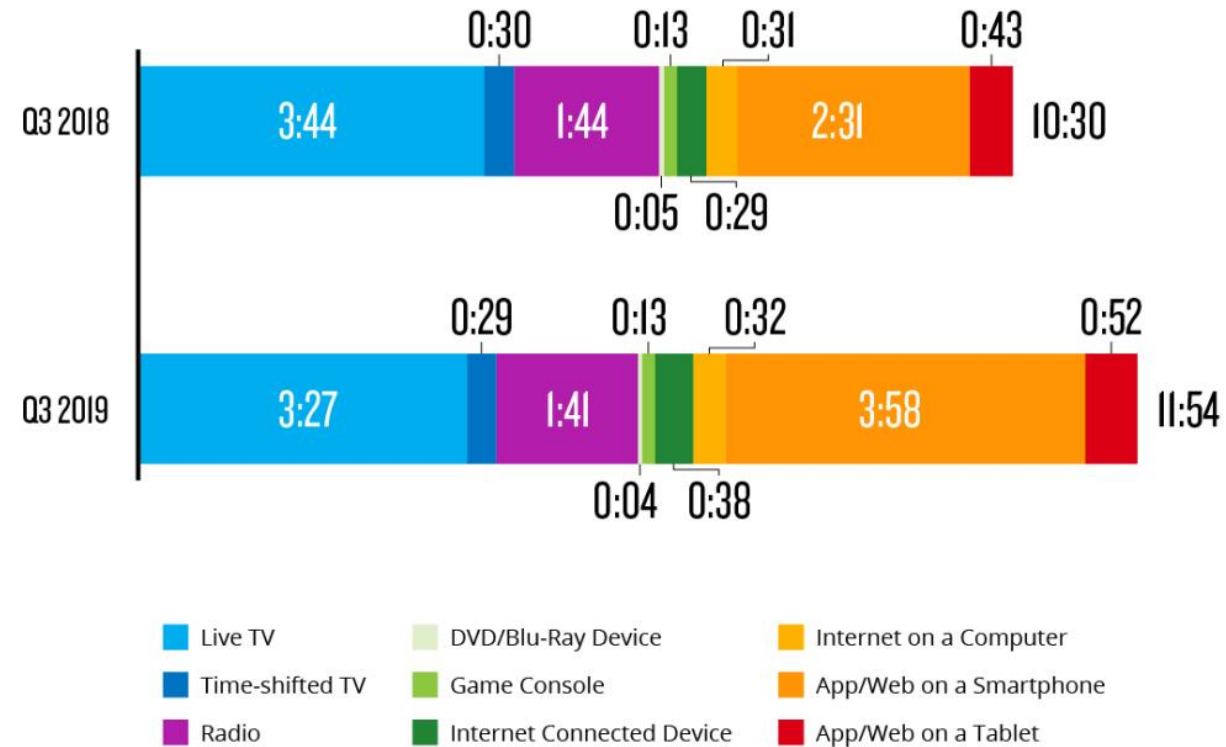
- The average American takes in 12+ hours of digital media per day
 - Not including printed materials
- Up almost 8x the daily info from 1980s
- 60% increase during current pandemic



Drinking from a Firehose

MEDIA CONNECTED CONSUMERS

Average Time Spent Per Adult 18+ Per Day, Hours:Minutes
Based on Total US Population



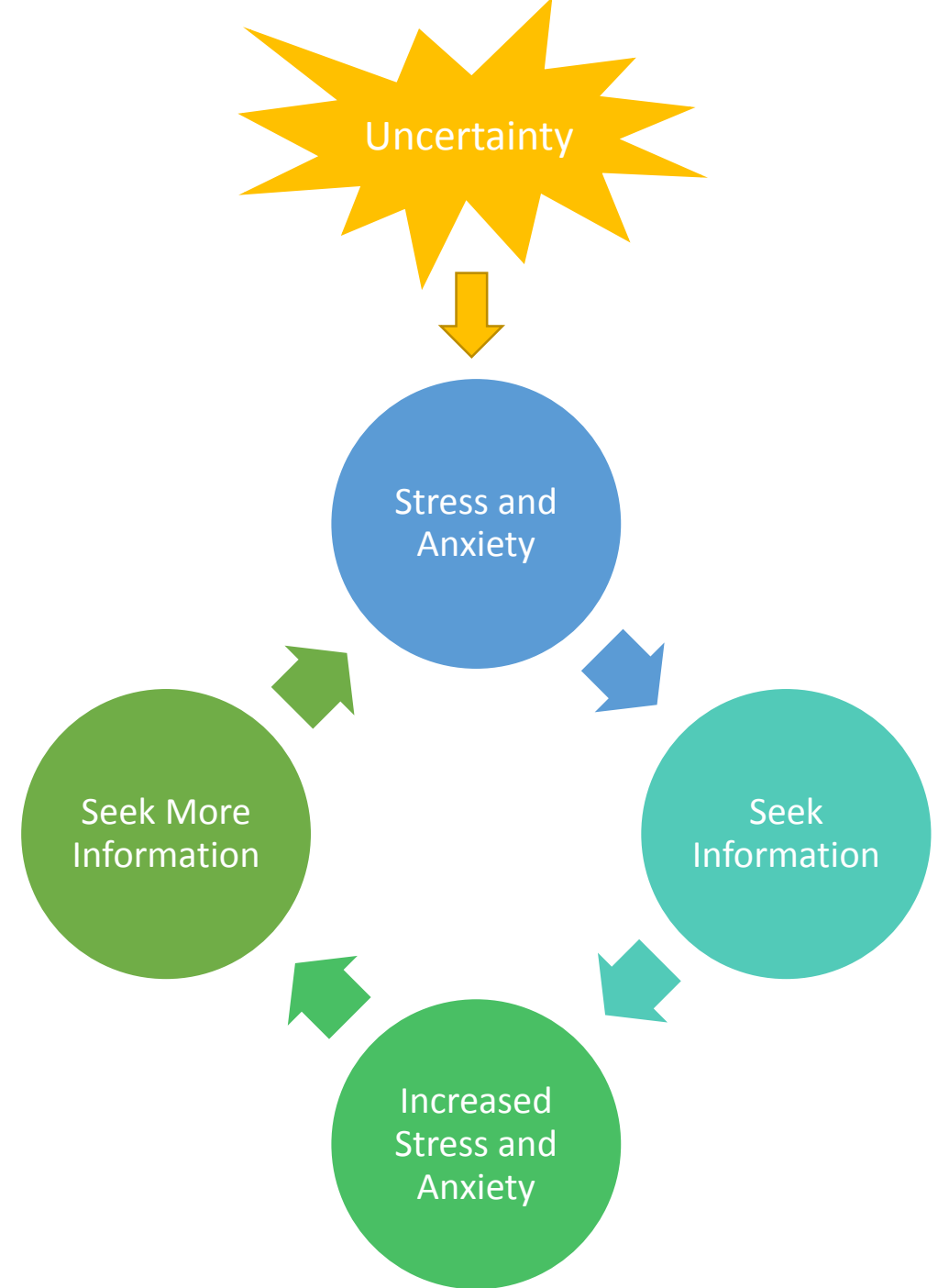
Note: Some amount of simultaneous usage may occur across devices. Internet Connected Device is inclusive of Smart TV app usage. Measurement enhancements to the mobile panel contributed to increases in usage levels beyond pure organic growth.

Source: Nielsen Total Audience Report.

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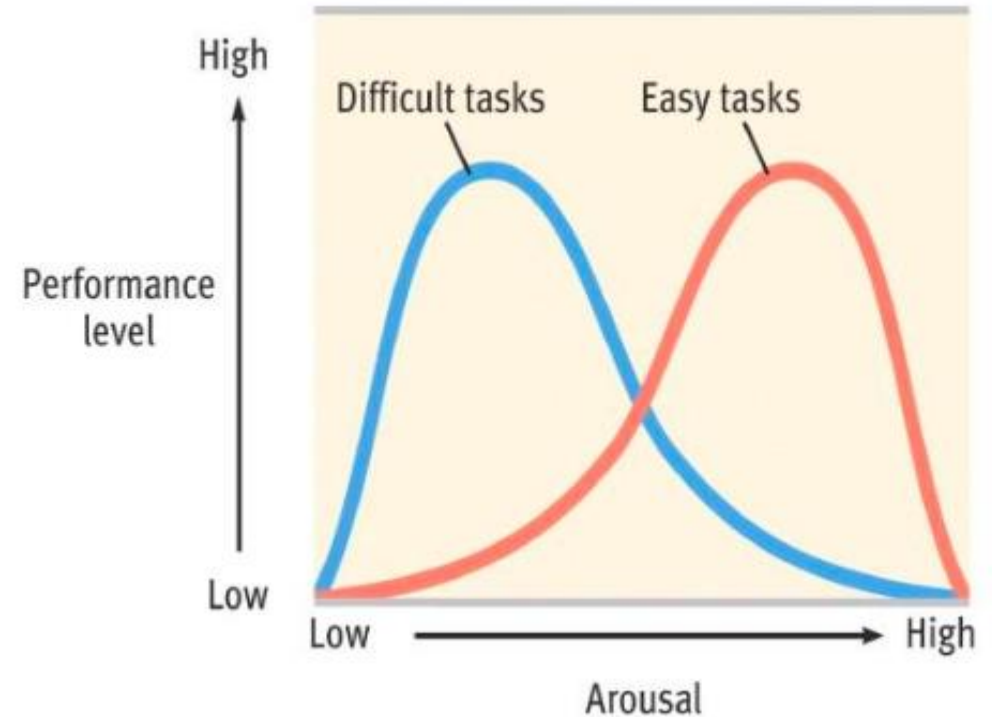
Information Overload

- Uncertainty fuels anxiety
 - Seeking answers: “Tell me what to do”
- “Law of Diminishing Returns”
 - More is not necessarily better



Anxiety Impacts Thinking

- Cognitive efficiency declines with increased arousal (for difficult tasks)
- Reduced focus
 - Thoughts pulled in many directions
- Decline in processing information
 - Missed conversations and details
- Poorer judgment
 - Panic-buying?
- Stop. Breathe. Think.

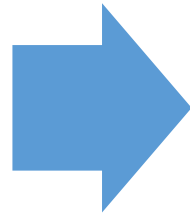


Yerkes-Dodson Law (1908)

Reframing for Stress Management

Unhelpful Thought

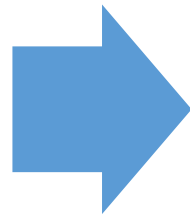
“This virus is out of control and there’s nothing that I can do!”



Alternative Thought

“I am staying home to keep myself and loved ones safe. I will take this one day at a time.”

“I need to know ALL the latest information. I can’t miss anything or I might be at risk!”



“I’ll seek out scientifically-backed information. I’ll reduce the amount of news and social media I take in. I’ll do my best to find reputable sources.”

COVID-19 Research is a Work-in- Progress

Typically, medical research takes years to properly test and report

- Remember: COVID-19 was defined in January 2020
- Research goes through rigorous peer review prior to publication

Much of the COVID-19 data is **Preliminary**

- Currently, scientists sharing preliminary data allows for other scientists to learn from each other and avoid dead ends
 - Outside of novel situations, this information usually does not reach the public

What we know about the virus is changing daily

- What you read last week may now be out of date
- Be cognitively flexible with new assumptions and findings

Perils of Misinformation

- Consider the source
 - Expert? A friend?
 - A forward from a friend via a stranger's post on Twitter?
 - Funding sources of the information (i.e., who is benefitting from this story? What might their biases be?)
- Fact Check
 - Does this information sound like a rumor or scientific?
 - Consider fact-checking from multiple sources, or a fact-check website
 - Snopes.com, Factcheck.org
- Stop to think before you share



António Guterres ✓
@antonioguterres



As the world fights #COVID19, we are also fighting an epidemic of harmful falsehoods & lies.

I'm announcing a new @UN Communications Response initiative to spread facts & science, countering the scourge of misinformation - a poison putting more lives at risk.



♥ 5,839 9:17 AM - Apr 14, 2020



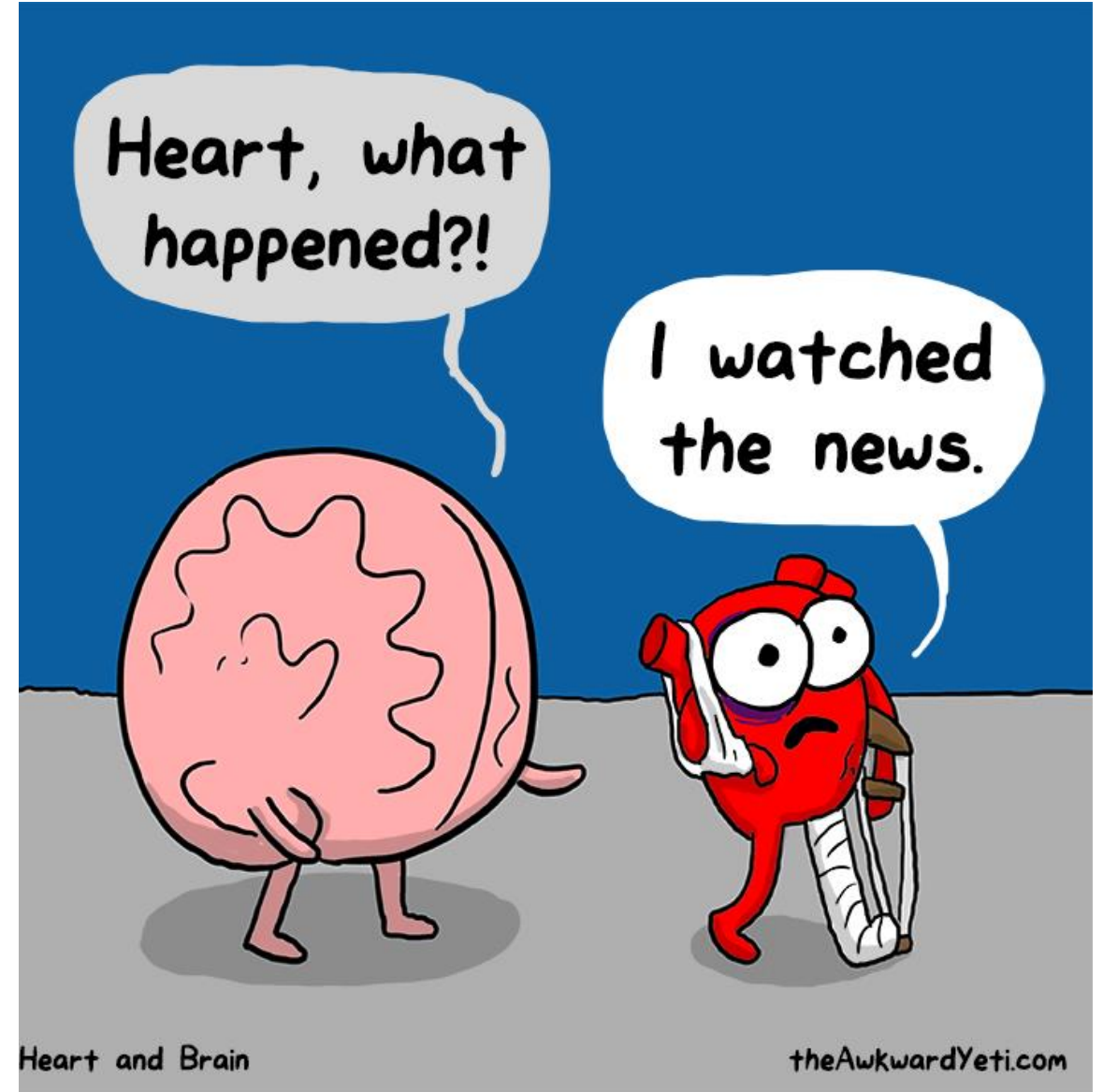
Practical Advice

- Limit news about COVID-19 to once per day
 - Schedule a time to catch-up on this information
 - Read the paper in the morning *or* Watch the evening news
 - Consider a “screen time” app on your phone to monitor time spent
- Quality over Quantity
 - Consider the source to avoid misinformation
 - For virus-related information, go to the experts
 - World Health Organization (WHO)
 - U.S. Center for Disease Control (CDC)



More Practical Advice

- Turn off notifications on your phone for media-driven apps
- For better sleep hygiene, avoid reading the news or headlines right before bed
- When talking with friends or family, limit the time spent discussing the virus.
 - Focus the conversation on other topics. Conversation prompts can keep you on track.
- Slow down before you share



A Self-Care Strategy: “STREAM”

- S: Social Connections
- T: Time Out
- R: Relaxation
- E: Exercise and Entertainment
- A: Alternative Thinking
- M: Mindful of Others

*Courtesy of Flinders University, Orama Institute for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Neuroscience:
<https://www.flinders.edu.au/institute-mental-health-wellbeing-neuroscience/stream>



Information Security

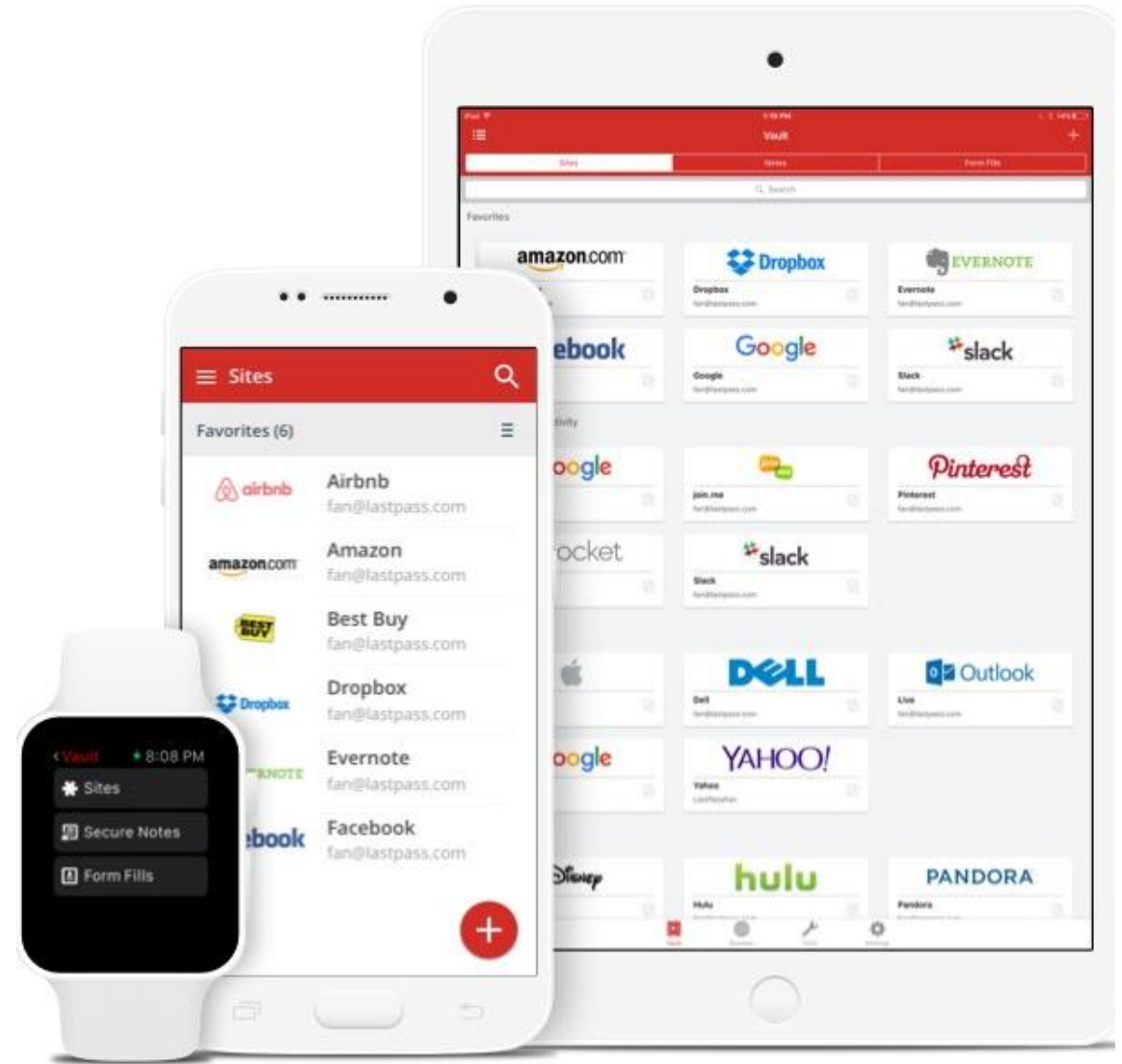
- Check your privacy settings on apps and web browsers
 - Helpful tips are available online
- Create Strong Passwords
 - Use phrases
 - Include characters, upper and lower case
 - Avoid personal information
- Change passwords regularly
- AARP offers a [helpful article](#) on building better passwords

I don't normally do this but here goes:

- First job - STOP
- Current job - SENDING
- Dream Job - YOUR
- Favorite food- POTENTIAL
- Favorite dog - PASSWORDS
- Favorite footwear - OR
- Favorite Chocolate bar - MEMORABLE
- Favorite Ice Cream- DATA
- Your Vehicle color – TO
- Favorite Holiday - PEOPLE
- Night owl or earlybird – WHO
- Favorite day of the week - COLLECT
- Tattoos - THIS
- Favourite colour - INFORMATION
- Do you like vegetables - FOR
- Do you wear glasses - SOCIAL
- Favourite season - ENGINEERING

Protect Your Passwords

- Password Managers offer a “vault” for your passwords
 - One password unlocks the vault
- Generate secure passwords and save them automatically to your vault
- Examples:
LastPass, DashLane, 1Password



Resources and Tutorials

COVID-19 Resources

- [World Health Organization](#)
- [Center for Disease Control](#)
- [WA Department of Health](#)
- [UW Medicine](#)

UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center:
<http://depts.washington.edu/mbwc/>

Information Security

- AARP: [Internet Safety](#) and [Password Security](#)
- How to Choose a [Password Manager](#)

Stress Management

- [STREAM recommendations](#)
- [UCLA Mindfulness](#)
- [Sleep Hygiene by Harvard University](#)

Virtual Community Wellness Talks

4/3 - Dementia Caregiving in the Midst of Covid-19: Health, Safety and Communication

4/8 – Staying Connected During Social and Physical Distancing

4/10 – Exercise for Brain Health: Staying Active with or without a Home Gym

4/15 - Helpful Strategies for Stress Management

4/17 - Info-Savvy: Staying Sane in the Era of Information Overload

4/22 - Mind over Matter: Cognitively-stimulating activities for everyone

4/25 - Doing Good from a Distance: Volunteering Opportunities from Home

4/29 - Enjoying the Arts from Home

5/1 - Virtual Nature for the Soul