

HOLIDAY HAPPINESS IS HARD TO AFFORD

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The holiday season comes with lots of concerns about how exactly we'll enjoy the seasons without always having the constant reminder of how expensive everything is.

I spend so much time stressing about how we will afford everything. We forget about the joy that the holidays bring. Financial pressures burden the joy of almost every holiday. It's become such a sad reality and it's honestly not fair.

A great example would be the financial pressure of Valentine's Day, a holiday that is known to be full of love and is meant to show one another how much you love a person. I feel like society has made us think that the only way to show someone you truly love them is by buying them luxurious gifts, expensive trips and high-end dinners. We have forgotten about the real meaning of how to show someone you love them.

The internal part of us is more important than any gift you'll ever receive. But even though it's the internal gifts that most of us like, it's also okay to want to spend on someone. It's just now harder to do that when everything is so expensive.

I've had conversations with others and we all just talk about how we can't even do certain activities without spending \$50 or more. Many of us want to give back to our friends and family, and in order to do that we have to work. So there goes a lot of our time. I spend hours working to accumulate enough money for presents.

This is a tiring reality and most of the time we don't even realize it because we're all so focused on working to simply provide for ourselves and others.

Inflation and economic problems aren't the only reason

why the joyfulness of the holidays feel less special. All of the poverty, counterterrorism, immigration issues and Epstein files controversy are hard to ignore. I believe this has a lot to do with why we can't really celebrate much. It has made it harder for people to feel festive.

With prices going up on simple things, families have to focus more on the important things and prioritize safety rather than the celebration and gifts. Which is sad because kids don't deserve that. Any holiday is supposed to be magical and fun.

Thinking about my childhood and how different things are now compared to how they used to be makes me think about the holidays I experienced. For any holiday, my parents always make sure that me and my siblings feel loved and also make sure we know the importance of holidays.

For kids to not have a good holiday experience because of all of the issues in our world makes me sad. It shouldn't be like this, and it is very unfair. We're supposed to be able to afford a simple gift and spread the joy of the holidays.



A graphic shows a thin Christmas tree with different holiday items underneath. Graphic by Wyatt Bible.

DOCS VS WORD

Google and Microsoft are two of the largest companies in the world. They make a variety of products but they both have made applications for office use. These include examples like Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Slides, Microsoft Excel and Google Sheets but the two I'm focused on are Microsoft Word and Google Docs.

These types of applications are called "word processing tools," and there are many of these out there. Apple Pages and Adobe InCopy just to name a couple, but there's an abundance of word processing tools. Microsoft Word and Google Docs are the most prominent on the Fresno City College campus.

Docs and Word at FCC

When it comes to writing assignments or general work, students and faculty have many options as to which applications they can use. Two big examples on campus are Google Docs and Microsoft Word.

Fresno City College offers Word for free for students through Microsoft 365, while Docs is already free and accessible to anyone with a Google account.

Many students and faculty use both applications to work, all having their reasons for using said applications.

The Rampage ran a poll on our website and instagram showing that 82.9% (63/76) of people use Docs while 17.1% (13/76) use Word.

Alissia Christman, a studio arts major at FCC, said she uses Docs because she's been using it since high school.

"It's been working well so I don't know why I would change what I use," Christman said.

She believes that most freshmen use Docs because they've also been using it

throughout their high school years too. She also thinks it's easier and simpler to use than Google.

Full-time English professor Joseph Voth at FCC said he prefers his students use Word and that he uses Word outside of class.

"We have this Canvas system, which we're not required to use, but we default to," Voth said. "It has sometimes given us trouble with things like Google Docs in terms of opening it [assignments]."

Privacy online for students is another reason he prefers students use Word over Docs. In Google's privacy policy they do state that they collect and have access to content you create like emails or documents.

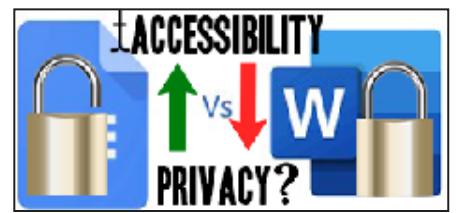
Voth said Docs has its positives, like community editing and the easy accessibility of it, but said Word is freely available to students too and has privacy that Docs doesn't.

There are no regulations at FCC for which applications students or faculty should be using for assignments and work, so everyone is free to pick their respective word processing tool.

Which Is Better?

As a student who used Docs throughout all 12 years of school, I am biased towards Docs. I never got to use Word as a student growing up and Docs seems like the easier tool to use. I tried using Word for a little but it didn't stick for me.

I do agree with the sentiment that most students use Docs because they used it throughout their early school years. It really depends on the school, if they used Microsoft or Google to create student emails.



It makes sense that faculty leans towards Word, considering the fact that FCC uses Microsoft to make student emails. It's just easier using Word than using a product outside of the Microsoft bubble.

Personally, I don't think you should pay for some of Microsoft's products, like Excel, which is a spreadsheet program. Google Sheets is also a spreadsheet program but it's free, a lot of Google's products are free actually.

The only issue I have with Google's products is that they don't keep things truly private. As I mentioned before, Google's privacy policy says that they have access to all documents you create, like emails. But if it means I get quality products for free then I have no problem with that privacy issue.

Some people do have a problem with that privacy issue though, which makes things tricky for most. Do you pay for a product that's free everywhere else for the sake of being safe online, or do you give up your privacy for free and quality products? I think it all really depends on what bubble you're in. If you already have a handful of Google products you use daily, then Docs is just easier and more convenient to use, and the same for Word.

There are many options besides just Docs and Word though. There's so many word processing tools waiting to be found, so maybe try something new and look at what these other applications have to offer.

THE FIRST-GENERATION ROADMAP THAT DOESN'T EXIST

Sometimes I feel like I'm supposed to be proud all the time. Being the first in my family to graduate from college should automatically mean I'm strong, happy and thriving. But the truth is, being a first-generation student is hard, confusing and lonely. It's honestly exhausting.

When people talk about transferring to a university, it sounds simple. Just apply, send your transcripts and register for classes. But no one tells you what it's like when you have to figure out everything by yourself. I didn't have anyone to look over my application or explain what "upper-division general ed" is and I still don't even know what that means.

Half the time, I feel lost and overwhelmed. There are so many steps, and it's honestly embarrassing to go see a counselor and have to explain your parents' level of education. It feels like they'll be judged.

I watched my friends get help from their parents, filling out forms, helping to choose schools, helping them move. And me? I just stared at my laptop for hours, trying to make sense of things that should've come with a guidebook. There were nights I cried out of frustration because every step felt like a test I didn't study for. I felt like an idiot, all this education I completed couldn't help me complete a simple application.

What makes it harder is that people assume you're doing fine because you've "made it this far." They see the acceptance letters, the grades, the late nights spent at the dinner table and think you've figured it all out. But being first-generation means learning how to survive in spaces that were never built for you.

It means pretending you're okay when you're barely hanging on, smiling through exhaustion because you don't want anyone to see how close you are to breaking. Being the oldest sibling makes it even heavier. I'm not only carrying my family's hopes on my back, but

also trying to set an example for my younger siblings. Showing them that it's possible to rise, even when the path is steep.

You teach by doing, surviving and holding yourself together, even when you feel like you're falling apart on the inside. It means pushing through tears when you don't have time to cry because someone is always looking up to you, depending on you, trusting that you'll show them the way. I created that roadmap for them so they won't be in my position and their transition will be smooth.

I say, "I'm good" because it's easier than explaining the mix of pride, fear and exhaustion that runs through me every day. But deep down, there's that quiet, aching worry that maybe you're not enough, that maybe all the effort will fall short. You want to make your parents proud, to protect and guide your siblings, to prove that all the sacrifices were worth it. And still, in the middle of it all, you wonder if anyone realizes how much strength it takes just to keep going, just to carry everyone else while barely keeping yourself afloat.

Being first-generation often means juggling more than just school. Between classes, homework and family responsibilities, there's also the pressure of balancing multiple jobs just to help make ends meet. It's exhausting, and it doesn't leave much room to breathe. Every shift, every hour, feels like another balancing act on top of all the other pressures to please a company that doesn't care about you.

I feel like I have no time to breathe, and it honestly feels like there's this giant brick I carry on my back. I don't have time to spend with family and friends, and it honestly sucks. It's so hard to get me out now because I'm so mentally exhausted and all I want to do is lay in my bed and drown myself in my pillows to mute the

world for six hours until I have to get up and do it again

I'm proud to be first-generation, I really am. But pride doesn't make it easier. It just means I keep going, even when I'm scared, even when I have no idea what I'm doing in this world I'm still getting used to as an adult.

And maybe that's what being first-gen really is, not a story of automatic success, but a story of persistence. It's showing up when no one else is watching, carrying burdens that aren't yours to carry, and still finding a way to move forward. It's learning to celebrate the small wins, even when the bigger ones feel impossibly far away.

Being first-gen means growing up fast, carrying your family's dreams on your back, and realizing that strength isn't about never breaking, it's about picking yourself up every time you fall. It's about teaching your siblings that it's okay to struggle, to feel scared, to not have all the answers, and still keep trying. It's about quietly proving that where you come from doesn't limit where you can go.

But then I remember why I keep going. Not for perfection, not for applause, not for the idea of "success" everyone talks about. I keep going because every time I show up at work, in class, or at home, I'm proving something to myself. Proving that I can survive, that I can endure, and that I can carve a path where there wasn't one before.



Digitally altered photo of reporter Victoria Resendez's family in black and white, with a circle around Victoria's head with "Big Sister" pointing at her.

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