

Make Me Smart September 11, 2021 transcript

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Molly Wood: But she looks freaking awesome as you might imagine. She is so cool. She probably made this. I cannot even. Oh, hi. Hello.

Kai Ryssdal: Oh, my Lord. Hang on. I was turning on my backup recording. Molly was oohing and aahing over the Met Ball.

Molly Wood: We'll get there. Not time for that yet. I'm Molly Wood. Welcome back to Make Me Smart. The podcast where we help today make sense. Just not right when the show starts.

Kai Ryssdal: Just not, I mean, we were busy people, as are we all. I'm Kai Ryssdal. Monday today also known as what did we miss Monday, some of the stories you might have missed over the weekend or early this morning in my case. And then you know a little other stuff too. Little other stuff.

Molly Wood: Yep, exactly. But we are going to start with the story of the day before we get to our headlines from the weekend, which I am happy to say I totally agree. This is the story of the day, because the myth of Apple's security impermeability has been shattered into a bajillion Pegasus shaped pieces. So I can explain.

Kai Ryssdal: So explain the story. What, no, I need you to explain. zero click NSO group Pegasus spyware. Go ahead, you go.

Molly Wood: So Pegasus, of course is, I don't know if you saw this. But the Pegasus was the spyware that was revealed to be in use. It was created by this Israeli security group, a spyware company, essentially that that is like spyware for hire. So governments had been using this, this software called Pegasus to spy on activists and journalists and all kinds of people. And it was pretty controversial. And then it sort of kind of went away, until it turns out, that researchers at citizen lab found that in fact, this spyware also affected Apple devices, iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch, or Mac computer. And when you say no click, you mean this stuff can just burp, turn on your camera, you don't have to do with things. You just it's your innocent user, you could get a text. I'm like, afraid I got it. Because I got this weird text the other day yesterday, that was like your apple ID has been deactivated for security reasons. And I was like, well, that's obviously not real. I'm not gonna click it. But let's say that was a text carrying this highly invasive spyware. And for all I know, it was, I don't know, it could have without me doing a single thing, once that text appeared, invisibly infected my iPhone. And then it could do basically anything, it can turn on the camera and mic, it could record a message. It could send a text, email, call. Somebody,

oh, yeah, here it is, the quote from the security senior researcher at citizen lab, the ones who found it said this spyware can do anything an iPhone user can do on their device, and more. Yeah, it's really bad, it's bad that this exists is bad that this was made like as a commercial product. I mean, I wonder if Apple knew that this was a possibility. But this is like, in terms of Apple products, specifically, huge.

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah. Yeah. So the, the piece I read, so I have to tell you, I saw Nicole's tweet, she covers tech for the New York Times, I saw her tweet and like, dug into it for about 30 seconds and then updated every single one of my devices, because honestly, it's terrifying. Apparently Apple found out about this, now you raise a really good point about whether they knew it was possible. But they found out about it like Thursday, and have spent 72 hours their engineers have tried to figure it out this patch. So the patches out there, update your iOS software. And holy cow, just holy can. Truly terrifying.

Molly Wood: Because it's been reported for a long time that this NSO spyware existed on iPhones had been used on iPhones could be potentially disseminated through iMessage, it seems like the thing that we didn't know necessarily was that there could be this zero click exploit.

Kai Ryssdal: Zero click, that's the part, man, you know, because we all know, like on the latest and don't, don't pick up the, don't pick up the thumb drive in the parking lot and put it in your laptop all this jazz, but zero click? What do you do?

Molly Wood: And people, and security experts have been saying for years that Apple, you know, was basically touting its impenetrable security on a wing and a prayer, right, with fingers crossed behind their back like we help. We just pray it lasts. We just pray it lasts because it was always hope springs eternal situation and that hope is gone. Story of 2021, am I right?

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Okay, what else? Yeah, some other things. Yeah, other things that caught my eye news wise over the weekend and I'm just gonna read you what I have written here in our rundown, I'm going to skip over the September 11 stuff because I figure all y'all either saw it or are aware of it or don't need to be reminded of it. And I appreciate that and will respect it, it just, you know, it happened and it's real and that's that. Two more straight up my alley, one from American shipping. And then the other one from ups, which is also an American shipping company more to the point as global reach. US ports, and their log jams, they're going to go into 2022 far into 2022. So if you haven't ordered your Christmas stuff yet for this year, you might want to start thinking about next year, because it's going to be jammed up. And the head of UPS international said this is going to scar the global economy forever, forever, which is kind of terrifying. Kind of terrifying. I mean, I think you know, we talked earlier, this pandemic about main streets with shuttered up storefronts and all that jazz and the lasting scars that's going to bring, and I think if global shipping and, and supply chains get messed up, that's gonna be really bad. That's gonna be really bad. And the other thing really--

Molly Wood: I mean, I just imagined it reshaping global manufacturing production, you know, it's gonna take a while, I'm making it all sci fi here, but we're gonna look back and be like, yep, that's when we on-shored everything.

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah, yeah, I don't think it's actually going to take a while, I think I think as we saw when the Trump tariffs came in, right, American companies were really quick to resource rehyphen source, their supply chains, because it was costing too much from China, right? So they got leather goods from Vietnam or, you know, whatever. I think that will happen way faster than we think. And it's going to be an interesting dynamic to watch in this global economy. And it will cost consumers, more just for the record, time stamping that one. And then I just want to point out that for the next two weeks, all the news of business in the economy out of Washington DC is going to be about taxes, and the debt limit, and government funding and \$3.5 trillion versus, versus a trillion dollars worth of, of infrastructure because the government runs out of money in 17 days. The house is not back in Washington for 10 more days, another week, seven more days. And they've got a boatload of stuff to do and they're miles apart. And so just as you read the political news of the politics of this economy, bear that in mind, it's gonna get ugly for the next two weeks and just that's it.

Molly Wood: Oh, good. Great, so I can't wait for there to just be like more acrimony and illogic and, yeah, I'm already seeing all these, you know, people being asked like, well, how come you don't support this bill if it pays for itself? And it's revenue neutral? Because numbers? Good times. So yeah, thanks. I have a little bit of science Monday.

Kai Ryssdal: I am. Yeah, I'm sorry, I'm scrolling through the slack as I, as I was, you know, we were segueing here. And before we turn on the microphones, we're talking about the Met Gala. Ella looks great. You're absolutely right.

Molly Wood: I know. She's so cool. But I'm going to get to that in a minute actually. Yeah. Okay. All right. Sorry. I was literally no, no, I was literally like engaging in my make me smile as I was trying to start the show, but I couldn't. It's like science Monday, there were all these interesting and pretty, pretty shocking headlined studies that all dropped today, one claiming, and this is absolutely fascinating, that overeating is not in fact the primary cause of obesity. These scientists put this study out today, entitled The Carbo, it was published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, talking about the carbohydrate insulin model and essentially saying that we have in the CDC and everybody has obsessed on this idea that you have to eat less and exercise more, that it's all about calories. And this is so interesting, cuz I feel like everybody already knew this. Because it's really not, it turns out what it's about is sugar. What it's about is simple carbohydrates that just, like, make you think that you're not getting enough food. And, this is actually what's remarkable, is that that's all the case. But what these researchers found is that because of the way those carbohydrates interact with insulin, it does over time fundamentally change our metabolism. So that even though you have all of these Americans who might be eating less and exercising more, we may have changed our metabolisms because of these highly processed carbohydrates. And that's why we still feel hungry even though we're continuing to gain weight. Fun. But super interesting. And hopefully we'll just like turn this

conversation on its head because over, you know, there's still all this fear about like, fat, when in fact, like, fat is fine. That is, okay.

Kai Ryssdal: On the sugar thing, David Leonhard. Yeah, David Leonhard, who writes for the New York Times, does a thing every January where he does a no sugar January. And he says, you have to be really careful because like, you think you're having a glass of orange juice, and you think you're being good. But there's sugars in there, man. And you got to be really careful. It's really hard. It's really hard in this, in this dietary economy, we have to avoid sugars, so hard.

Molly Wood: I've spent like the last few years trying to sort of do the no added sugar thing, where you just try not to, you know, like, well, like you said, it's impossible. When you start to look at labels, you'll just get furious about how much sugar is in everything, let alone just like bread and how processed it is. Yep, and how not complex. So yeah, it's really interesting. And hopefully it will change a lot about the way we eat. Also, on the food tip, big study that came out today, a major new study published in Nature Food, saying meat accounts for nearly 60% of all greenhouse gases from food production. So there's production overall and it's greenhouse gas emissions, and 60% of those emissions are related to meat, which emits 28 times as much as growing plants. Which, yikes, is just gonna have to, we're just, by the way, the entire system of food production, causes 17.3 billion metric tons of greenhouse gases a year, that is more than double the entire emissions of the United States. And 35% of all global emissions is just raising cows and pigs and chicken and other animals. We need to get on that Petri meat like stat, and then the other fun study, science Monday is so fun. also published in the journal Nature. This is the really bad one, I really, I don't know what happened. I know, I was just like, really down the science rabbit hole today, for a livable future, 60% of oil and gas must stay in the ground. And 90% of coal must remain buried. And that is just to achieve the goals of the Paris agreement, which many people say is still gonna lead to some pretty severe warming and major weather changes.

Kai Ryssdal: So, so is that sorry, I'm clicking on this link now as we speak, but is that like from now on, like, starting today?

Molly Wood: Today.

Kai Ryssdal: But can't well, but we can't get there right now. Right? If we started today, we're already, you know, 15 years behind or whatever the hell it is.

Molly Wood: What it means if we start today, then global oil and gas production must decline 3% on average every year until 2050. So we don't have to go to zero extraction today. But we need 3% less this year, 3% less next year, 3% the year after that, which, which when you put it that way seems very doable, right? Like Come on. But it relies on us decarbonizing stat. And it relies on, you know, states in this very country, not saying, hey, crypto miners, I know who got kicked out of China because China is actually trying to set some climate goals but come to our state so that we can keep our coal economy alive. Yeah, looking at you Kentucky, Montana, West Virginia. It relies on things like that, like the coal market is dying and it needs to die.

Otherwise, we die. Science Monday. Okay, finally before we go, and then before we go to make me smile, I want to point you toward this thread from representative Katie Porter, who I'm not gonna lie, I love because the whiteboard thing is so incredible. But she has this thread about, from the US Mexico border. And she just reports on her experience there what she saw and, and the takeaway, which is remarkable is that, like, wow, we're telling people that they need to wait in line for an asylum process that doesn't exist. She was like, turns out we don't have that. So migrants are in these camps, and they're really dangerous and it's this really terrible experience because we, we literally have never created a lawful orderly process for people to apply for asylum, which is, she points out, against our own laws. But what I really find remarkable about this and why I think you should go look at it is that I had this moment of being like, wow, this is like exactly what Twitter should be for. This is the highest best use of social media, it's like, person on the ground, pics or it didn't happen. It's not an opinion about a thing that she has not, that nobody's seen or is thinking about or was told about by an economic, you know, an economic academic. It's like, when I find Twitter so valuable, it's because it's a person on the ground that I would never otherwise hear from. And that's exactly what this is. But it's a sitting member of Congress. And it's, it's, uh, it's as reliable firsthand report as you could possibly get. Good job Twitter. Like, that's what it should be. I just thought it was really interesting. And why don't people do that all the time. Except for like, the time those members of Congress were like, we're flying to Afghanistan in the middle of the thing. They don't do it that way.

Kai Ryssdal: Exactly. Right. But the fun on Twitter is, is do it, throw in the red meat. That's the fun on Twitter for so many people. Which is the lowest and most destructive use of social media. If we could just juxtapose here for a second.

Molly Wood: Which is a story we skipped today by the way that one where the researchers were like Oh, yeah, no, it's definitely made everything worse. The end. Yeah. Okay, smile time.

Kai Ryssdal: Alright, I kinda I kind of bogarted your, your make me smile, so you go first.

Molly Wood: No, it's actually like totally appropriate because all throughout, sorry if you can hear these noises, by the way, some metal is being sawed in my driveway outside of my office. Profoundly unpleasant sound. All through this podcast I have been returning over and over to my most favorite is hashtag of the entire year. Hashtag Met Gala. It's the Met Gala tonight. And it's the greatest hashtag, speaking of Twitter being great. Twitter is so great on Met Gala day. That theme apparently is in America, a lexicon of fashion, people aren't doing great with it for the most part, but there are some standouts, such as our favorite poet Amanda Gorman. And where there was one other one but I can't remember, anyway, just go, just, just enjoy your Monday evening refreshing Met Gala.

Kai Ryssdal: She looks lovely. She looks very 1950s Marilyn Monroe. Wow.

Molly Wood: Right? Yeah, she looks like a princess. I love her. In Oscar de la Renta. Yeah. Met Gala. Okay, I'm sorry, I lost focus. That's what happens. And then there was this great poll on the real reason that workers want to keep working from home. I mean, it started, reading all

these things about why workers want to work from home makes me realize like God, workplaces are crappy and abusive, and they have dress codes, and everybody's like, looking at you all the time, anyway. 75% of remote workers want to just stay home because of their pets. 75%. 72% want the freedom to nap or exercise during the day. Agreed. But honestly, that pet thing? Seriously? I'll get it done. Okay, just believe me. That's right. Number one. Honestly, reason. Yeah. Like the pets is not the number one reason, the number one reason was to spend more time with your kids and save money and time on your commute right and be more effective and productive for your day. But number three was caring for your pets. I love it. Good job, people. Totally.

Kai Ryssdal: Yes. All right. Well, we go from high minded to cow pee, an article in Bloomberg, which made me chuckle today scientists are toilet training baby cows to cut emissions. Apparently, cow pee has a lot of nitrate in it. So they're running a test with 16 baby cows. And this thing, I kid you not, called a moo lou.

Molly Wood: I just opened the link, that's amazing.

Kai Ryssdal: Right? And apparently, and I'm quoting Bloomberg, which is a reputable news source. That toilet training program for calves is not dissimilar to how young, young children are potty trained according to the scientists. So you know, there you go. Tony will have it on the show page, or maybe Chris or somebody. How about that. But redo. Yes, it ties exactly back to the whole meat thing. It would take care of like 10 to 20% of greenhouse gas emissions. Sorry, if we could collect 10 to 20% of urinations it would affect greenhouse gas emissions. So look, we should do that.

Molly Wood: I love that. We should do that. Spectacular.

Kai Ryssdal: Yeah. That was yes, that sound was Bridget telling me that Marissa writes the show pages now because Tony's doing something else.

Molly Wood: I mean, look at this woman! Never not on it. Speaking of on it, you, our dear friends, you our dear friends are totally on it. We are half full to the \$250,000 fundraising goal, we need to be all the way full by Friday. But hey, at this pace, we believe, we do not expect just one person to get us there. None of us is as generous as all of us. Thank you so much to all of you who have given so far. Eric from Santee, California, Andrea in Lombard, Illinois, Russell in Marshalltown, Iowa, Ernie in South Carolina, Meredith and Gail is very Connecticut and over 1000 other people who have gotten us this far and at least half of you want the banana pants.

Kai Ryssdal: You can have banana pants, there are ringtones, give what you can. We would just, I mean, we need it. That's it marketplace.org/givesmart and we'll, you know, we'll see but we appreciate all you can do. We got this.

Molly Wood: We got this team. Alright, thanks for everything, that is it for today. Tomorrow deep dive on the upcoming 10-year anniversary of the occupy wall street protest. If it changed at all the way you thought about inequality, please tell us about it.

Kai Ryssdal: You can do it by sending us your comments, your questions, makemesmart@marketplace.org, or call us, leave us a voice message. Our number's 508-827-6278, 508-827-6278. UB-SMART is how we spell that. I'm not so smart because I was trying to read and I could not do it. Anyway, Brian, please!

Molly Wood: Marketplace.org/givesmart.

Kai Ryssdal: Make Me Smart—well, it was the, it was, it was the Met Gala. Make Me Smart is produced and directed by Marissa Cabrera and Marque Greene joins us now the production team today too. Today's program is engineered by Brian Allison in downtown LA.

Molly Wood: Bridget Bodnar is our senior producer, the executive director of on demand is Sitara Nieves. Maybe the problem is our new Monday format stuffed full of 100 stories.

Kai Ryssdal: That could conceivably be. Here's another thing we have to discuss. Yeah, that's fair. That's fair. We did it to ourselves. Is that what I'm hearing?

Molly Wood: Yeah. But it was so good.