The title of the magazine, *Consume Away*, is playfully ambiguous, implying that it will encourage and support consumerism, while at the same time doing the opposite - suggesting that it wants consumerism to be gone. This article exemplifies the magazine’s purpose to inform readers about the merits and traps of online consumerism, in this case consumerism associated with digital virtual assistants. The article takes a considered tone and speaks with authority about these devices.

The article contends that even though digital virtual assistants have many attractive features, owners should be cautious and use their common sense about the ways they use these devices. It builds this argument systematically and finally exhorts readers to “research ways of keeping control over it” should they purchase one.

The first paragraph outlines some of the ways a digital virtual assistant can help the householder. It presents these virtues in lists, acknowledging, for instance, that the devices “look great, speak with a soothing voice and are endlessly patient”, like an compliant servant. This helps to explain why the device is “becoming increasingly popular”. Further lists outline the ways that the device can help: “purchase movies... home’s colour scheme”; “you no longer have to ...locking a door.” The article does justice to the attractions of digital virtual assistants as it enthusiastically piles on the positives in list after list. The exclamations at the end of the first paragraph, “How easy! How wonderful!” seem to offer total endorsement but the second paragraph introduces an abrupt shift in tone.

Immediately the word “Unfortunately” signals that all is not “wonderful” and the lists in this paragraph pile up concerns about the devices that can “tak[e] over your privacy, your bank account, your data and your life.” A series of sharp, stern statements warns against these devices and the malignant process that begins – “you begin to lose your autonomy. You start to rely on them. They subtly encourage you ...They predict your needs...” The term “gadgets” has connotations of something useful but insignificant- harmless. However, these gadgets “lead people into debt and steal their personal information”. They are capable of causing great harm.

The paragraph that quotes the Consumer Advocacy Centre adds to the authoritative tone of the article. This is because readers assume that such an organisation would have solid empirical evidence to support its conclusions. It suggests that middle-class people with jobs are constantly in debt because they have given in to the “urge to purchase”. The assonance in this expression means that “urge” and “purchase” echo each other. There is an implication that people are pressed to spend by subliminal impulses. The term “consumers- on-steroids” suggests that these people have levels of consumption that are extraordinarily high. They amass debt as a result of “impulse” buying initiated by their device.
The next paragraph underlines the vulnerability of such people to these temptations by claiming that digital virtual assistants exploit “four fatal factors”. The alliteration in this phrase strengthens the sense of foreboding and inevitable disaster suggested by the word “fatal”. The text states the factors specifically and then explains the links between the factors and the assistants. It explains what these factors mean in practical terms: “They make it possible to shop from home, they suggest purchases and pay for the goods by credit card so that ... you really don’t have to lift a finger.” The infographic shows how the factors link together snugly, like a jigsaw.

From this point the argument focuses on aspects of the digital virtual assistants that are extremely questionable and concerning. The article uses the word “spooky” to label some of these practices. This term suggests that thinking about them is likely to cause the reader to feel alarmed, if not frightened, by the manipulation being suggested. The reader is told that the “devices are also virtual spies” and the relentless power of their surveillance is suggested in “always listening, always recording...constantly compiling and coordinating” the information they gather. The question “And who knows how they will use their data” invites the reader to think about how their personal information could be used to damage them. Its vagueness is likely to maximise the feelings of threat. In this way the article aims to put readers on their guard.

The last two paragraphs of the text sound rational and restrained. As it did at the beginning, the text acknowledges the attraction that many people feel towards these devices, so that “In the first quarter of 2017, 3.4 million people globally set up these devices in their homes”. Referring to these statistics allows the writer to suggest that the motivation of people who buy these “gadgets” is rather superficial- they want to “be on trend” and are influenced by fashion and fads, rather than making a thoughtful decision to make an “investment” in the product. “Investment” suggests that the buyer is taking the purchase seriously and being responsible about it. The article acknowledges real positives in that “Digital virtual assistants can save you valuable time and money... keep your home secure”. It does this to seem balanced and fair so that readers will be inclined to take its warnings seriously. Finally, it reminds readers of financial scams that have tricked people into losing a lot of money after they sent “banking details to an unknown well-wisher” from a far away country. This shows that sometimes people behave foolishly and appeals to the good sense of readers who are invited to answer the question “would you?” with a resounding “NO!”