Setting Healthy "Digital Boundaries": Instruction Aimed at the Reflective Use of Technology by College Students

Morris Library
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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About Me

- ↗ 10 years as a Health Sciences Librarian

- ↗ Currently Assessment & User Experience Librarian

- ↗ Working on my PhD in Public Health

"Digital Wellness"

↗ Incorporates all aspects of a person's well-being with regard to digital technologies, including but not limited to their:

- ↗ use of and level of attachment to their devices
- ↗ impulsivity in responding to device notifications
- ↗ multitasking patterns, cross platform and device
- ↗ screen time duration
- ↗ propensity to search for health related information online
- ↗ posture (McMahon & Aiken, 2016)

Instruction

- A graduate workshop
    - Fall 2016 and Spring 2017

- A module for "Media and Information Literacy" course
    - Fall and Spring semesters: Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Fall 2018

- A guest lecture for "Understanding Media" course
    - Spring semesters: Spring 2017, Spring 2018

Rationale for Program

↗ Understand the relationship between the overuse of digital technologies and negative physical, psychological, and academic outcomes

↗ Apply techniques to avoid and cope with digital burnout and to promote digital wellness during time in college

↗ "Healthy digital boundaries"

Negative Aspects of Digital Technology

Physical

- Carpal tunnel, neck/back problems, eye strain, sleep disturbances, headaches.

- Lower levels of physical activity and higher BMI.

Psychological

- Higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.

- Lower satisfaction with life.

(Li et al., 2016; Derbyshire et al., 2013; Samaha and Hawi, 2016; Thomee, Harenstam, & Hagberg, 2011; Lepp et al., 2013; Lepp, Barkley, & Karpinski, 2014)

Negative Aspects of Digital Technology

<u>Educational</u>

- High Internet use is associated with lower GPA.

- High social media use is associated with lower GPA.

- Digital multitasking has a negative impact on learning.
  - Adds little to no value to your productivity.
  - Can't focus on the task at hand or a single task for very long.

(Wood et al., 2012; Rosen at al., 2013; Derbyshire et al, 2013)

Avoiding Digital Burnout: Technology, Balance, & Grad School

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Learning Objectives

↗ Rethink the concept of "work-life balance"

↗ Define digital burnout and digital wellness

↗ Understand the relationship between the overuse of digital technologies and health problems

↗ Apply techniques to avoid and cope with digital burnout and to promote digital wellness during your time in grad school

Practical Steps Towards Digital Wellness

1. Notice your motivations for going online
   - ↗ Are you bored, anxious, lonely, or otherwise trying to fill an emotional need?

2. Establish your digital boundaries
   - ↗ How many times a day are you going to check Facebook? 1, 10, 50, 100?

3. Unplug often
   - ↗ Take a digital fast once a week or once a month.

The Unplugging Exercise: Information, Media, and Your Health

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Learning Objectives

- Understand how information, media messages, and the overuse of electronic devices can affect their health (i.e., how scientific/medical research can be misconstrued in the media, etc.).

- Become aware of current issues related to media messages and health (i.e., effects of social media on self-esteem, etc.).

- Students will unplug from their electronic devices (i.e., smartphones, social media, etc.) for 24 hours and observe and report the effects of this exercise on their physical, mental, and social health.

The Unplugging Exercise

Step 1: Unplug

Abstain from using one more apps or devices for a 24 hour period or longer. You can chose to stay off social media, your phone, or everything. Chose something that you use often so that you will notice the effect of not using it.

Step 2: Observe what you are doing and feeling

Pay attention to the impulses and feelings that arise in response to being unplugged.

Step 3: Summarize your observations (Write at least 3 complete sentences per question)

↗ What is the effect of you being unplugged?

↗ What does this tell you about your relationship to the media and technologies you're abstaining from?

↗ What do these patterns suggest about how to use media and technologies in healthier and more effective ways?

Practical Steps

↗ Limit your multitasking when online – Focus on one task at a time.

↗ Notice your motivations for going online – Are you just bored, anxious, lonely, or depressed?

↗ Establish digital boundaries – How many times a day will you check Facebook? 1, 10, 50?

↗ Unplug often – Take a digital fast once a week or once a month.

↗ Find things you enjoy doing in real life and commit to doing them.

↗ Have more conversations face to face with people.

↗ Power down and get at least 7 hours of sleep – Put away devices 1 hour before bed.

How Digital Technologies Can Affect Your Health and GPA

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Learning Objectives

- Understand how information, media messages, and the overuse of electronic devices can affect their health (i.e., effects of smartphone addiction, etc.).

- Students will unplug from their electronic devices (i.e., smartphones, social media, etc.) for 24 hours and observe and report the effects of this exercise on their physical, mental, and social health.

Smartphone Addiction

⬈ Not a medical diagnosis.

⬈ Average person checks phone 150x's/day, launches 10 apps/day.

⬈ Extremely heavy user checks phone 900x's/day, launches 60 apps/day.

TAKE THE TEST!

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/18/nomophobia-smartphone-sep_n_7266468.html

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
• I would feel uncomfortable without constant access to information through my smartphone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would be annoyed if I could not look information up on my smartphone when I wanted to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• Being unable to get the news on my smartphone would make me nervous.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would be annoyed if I could not use my smartphone and/or its capabilities when I wanted to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• Running out of battery in my smartphone would scare me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• If I were to run out of credits or hit my monthly data limit, I would panic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• If I did not have a data signal or could not connect to Wi-Fi, then I would constantly check for a signal or a Wi-Fi network.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• If I could not use my smartphone, I would be afraid of getting stranded somewhere.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• If I could not check my smartphone for a while, I would feel a desire to check it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

If I did not have my smartphone with me …

	Completely Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Mostly Agree	Completely Agree
• I would feel anxious because I could not instantly communicate with my family and/or friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would be worried because my family and/or friends could not reach me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would feel nervous because I would not be able to receive text messages and calls.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would be anxious because I could not keep in touch with my family and/or friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would be nervous because I could not know if someone had tried to get a hold of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would feel anxious because my constant connection to my family and friends would be broken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would be nervous because I would be disconnected from my online identity.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would be uncomfortable because I could not stay up-to-date with social media and online networks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would feel awkward because I could not check my notifications for updates from my connections and online networks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would feel anxious because I could not check my email messages.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• I would feel weird because I would not know what to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Smartphone Addiction

How You Score:

↗ **0-20:** Not a smartphone addict. You have a very healthy relationship with your device!

↗ **21-60:** Mild smartphone addiction. You get a little antsy when you forget your phone, but the **anxiety isn't too overwhelming.**

↗ **61-100:** Moderate smartphone addiction. **You're pretty attached to your device and you often feel anxious when you're disconnected.**

↗ **101-140:** Severe smartphone addiction. **You can barely go for 60 seconds without checking your phone.**
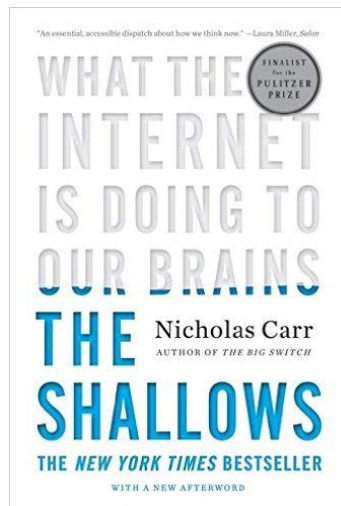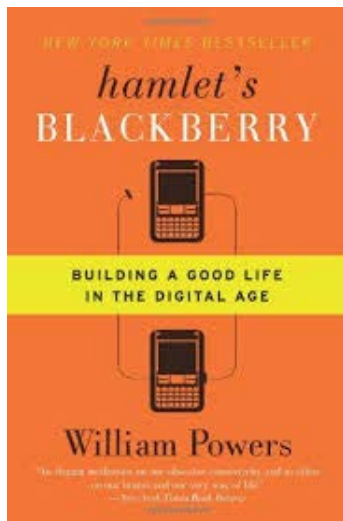
Current Status

↗ Don't do graduate student workshops in order to focus on undergraduate instruction

↗ Collecting assessment data currently and will do a qualitative analysis of students' unplugging exercise reflections

Questions?

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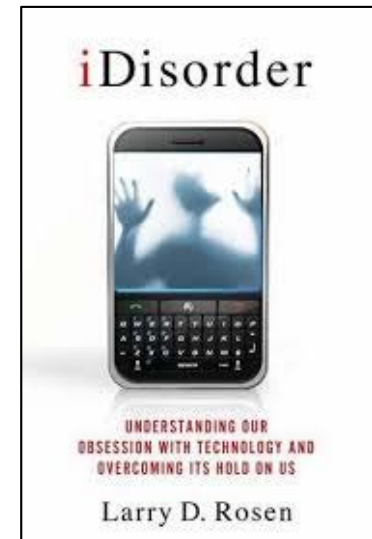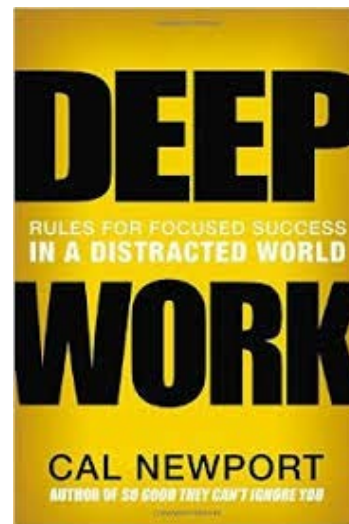
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