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The Innovation Plague: Is Technology Taking Over?

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Spring 2023
T SOC 165 C
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Image: (pngtree, 2023)

How Does Technology Affect Us?

We are currently living in an age where technology is advancing at a very fast pace. Due to this, factors such as social media have the potential to greatly affect the way we feel and react.

There is no doubt that our brains keep developing and evolving throughout our early childhood, but there are specific parts of our mind that evolve through the various events we experience.

Using digital technology in our everyday lives, our brains are maturing and adapting without us even realizing it. Individuals will start to take notice of how they are performing certain tasks in the same way, even when they were used to performing the same task without the assistance of technology.

For instance, some of us may sporadically scan through the pages of a book, instead of making the conscious decision to read it line-by-line. Rather than analyzing and fully interpreting a piece of writing from one point to another, like previous generations prior to us, we unconsciously scan for keywords that provide us with little chunks of information (Khalid, 2021).



Image: (Cole, 2019)

Although functioning in today's world without the utilization of technology is almost unavoidable, the best option we can choose is to use day-to-day technology with both a purpose and the intention to rightfully protect our minds from the negatives (Khalid, 2021).

Day-to-day utilization of modern technology enables constant reshaping of our thoughts, feelings, and actions. A few common examples include:

- Smartphones
- Smartwatches
- Computers
- Self-driving cars
- At-home devices (Amazon Alexa)
- Cloud technology (Internet)

Our attention spans can even be greatly affected by the numerous uses of technology. According to Alexandra Michel, in a study observing the behavior of information workers, Gloria Mark, a psychological scientist (University of California, Irvine,) found that on the job people had a median attention duration of about 40 seconds, similar to the amount of time they spent on each opened window before deciding to switch to something else (Michel, 2018).

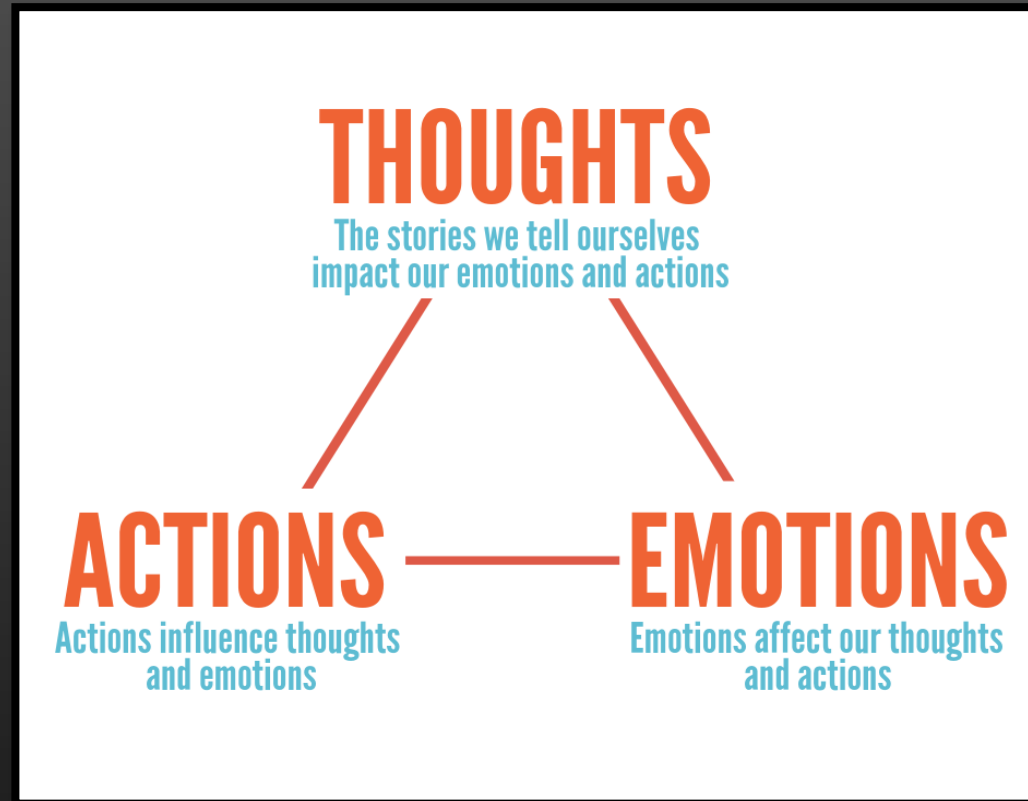


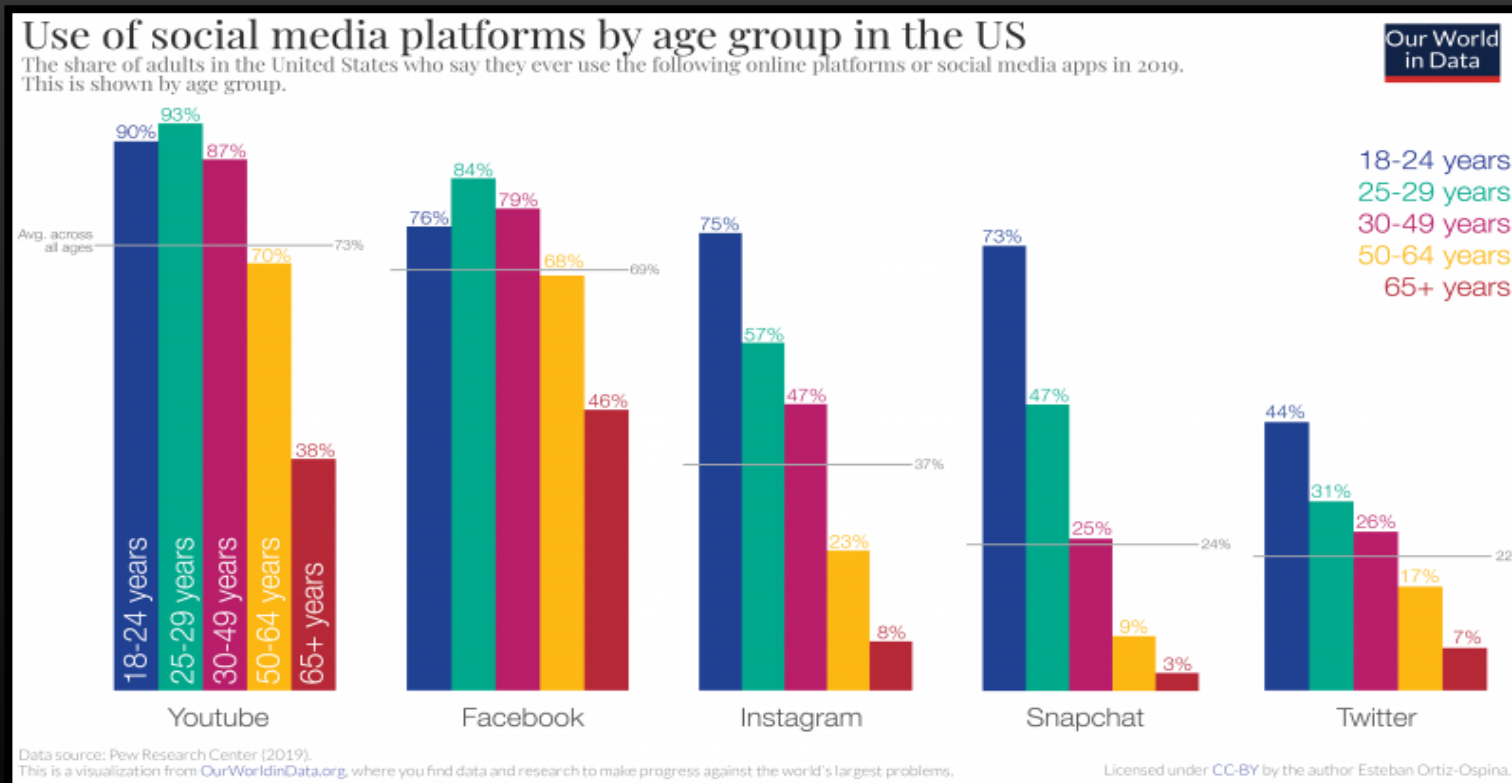
Image: (MyBodyTutor, 2023)

Three Important Aspects: Our Thoughts, Feelings, and Actions

Additional studies have learned that technological interruptions, take frequent emails from your co-workers for instance, can gradually condition the individual to work with a much shorter attention span.

Are Young Developing Minds More Vulnerable to Technology?

When it comes to the topic of vulnerability relating to technology in our modern society, rates of technology use ranging from smartphones to the Internet are significantly lower among older adults compared to younger generations (Michel, 2018). This is primarily due to the fast-paced growth of modernized technology within the past three decades.



Also, most social media apps require the user to be at least 13 years old, however, in recent polls, parents shared that 50% of children 10 to 12 years old and 33% of children 7 to 9 years old use social media apps (Cleveland Clinic, 2021).

Starting around the age of ten, young children's developing brains experience a fundamental shift that motivates them to seek out social rewards, such as attention and approval from their similar-aged peers.

Image: (Ritchie, 2023)

Effects of Social Media On Children

Social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat have allowed each of these individuals an opportunity to interact with various social environments, which greatly benefited young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, they've also been shown to greatly increase the likelihood of developing mental health complications, including anxiety, depression, and body image concerns (Abrams, 2022).

When it comes to the more dangerous influences social media platforms have the possibility to present, there are numerous instances, such as:

- Cyberbullying
- False marketing
- Dangerous viral internet trends

One study shows that children younger than 11 years old who regularly use Instagram and Snapchat are more likely to have problematic digital behaviors, like taking the opportunity to participate in online harassment (Cleveland Clinic, 2021).



Image: (Cleveland Clinic, 2021)

The Relationship Between Social Media and Materialism



Image: (Kroonenberg, 2023)

At the end of the day, what these social media posts won't capture is the amount of credit card debt these same individuals could be dealing with, which now exceeds a total of \$986 billion globally (Schulz, 2023).

Social media has also been correlated too how materialistic you are as an individual. Materialists, those who seek and value possessions highly, tend to experience destructive consequences like lower levels of one's well-being.

This intriguing correlation is caused mainly by advertisers. In today's world, influencers are the new advertisers. Therefore, while influencers flaunt their products, various social media platforms encourage us to flaunt our own (Nova, 2020). For instance, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter each have the element of "likes."

Likes are placed right beside all of our posts, basically serving as a marker of success. While we see these same advertisers get thousands of likes and comments on posts capturing them with their luxurious lifestyle, we feel as if that's the new "norm."

Conquering Digital Distraction

If you can't hurdle over the obstacle of conquering your digital distraction, then you can say goodbye to improved productivity and engagement. Both Larry Rosen, a psychologist, and Alexandra Samuel, a technologist, believe that us individuals, must find possible solutions to completely turn away from various streams of digital information and focus more of our mind on energy-enhancing activities, such as exercising outside (Rosen, 2015).



For someone to take the next step in attempting the challenge of a digital detox, they must work on developing some positive habits, such as the following: (Murray, 2020)

1. Consume more positive media
2. Don't scroll on phone right before going to bed
3. Ask others for help
4. Put your phone down and enjoy the moment in time
5. Spend more time with people than scrolling on your phone
6. Turn off phone notifications
7. Limit check-ins to only once an hour
8. Put your phone in another room while studying
9. Inform friends of why you're choosing to detox
10. Avoid terrible news

Image: (Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar, 2023)

Annotated Bibliography

Khalid, H. (2021, November 3). *The effect of technology on the brain*. Our Technology Planet. <https://ourtechplanet.com/the-effect-of-technology-on-brain/>

- To begin my visual presentation, I want to make sure that I explain how much of an impact technology has on our brains. This explanation won't be brief, but it also won't be packed with information.

Michel, A. (2018, July 17). *How technology shapes thoughts, feelings, and actions*. Association for Psychological Science - APS. <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/how-technology-shapes-thoughts-feelings-and-actions>

- Now, I will start to elaborate more thoroughly on what specific aspects of our mind/brain are then affected by the use of technology in our daily lives. By doing this, the audience will then be able to connect specific aspects of their day, and the possible changes that might've occurred in their very own brains!

Abrams, Z. (2022, February 3). *Why young brains are especially vulnerable to social media*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2022/social-media-children-teens>

- For this aspect of my presentation, I will put an emphasis on a certain group of individuals and why their brains are more vulnerable to change than others. This same group of people are younger children whose brains are still developing rapidly.

Pediatrics. (2021, December 2). *Effects of social media on children*. Cleveland Clinic. <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/dangers-of-social-media-for-youth/>

- Then, I will put social media, a widely used aspect of technology in our society, under the microscope and explain how it gradually manipulates young developing minds in negative ways. Therefore, the audience will not only learn more about the effects of technology in general on our minds, but they will then have the ability to pinpoint a specific example, known as social networking.

Nova. (2020). *How does social media make us more materialistic?* Nova. <https://novamoney.com/blog/how-does-social-media-make-us-more-materialistic>

- One big factor that always seems to arise when discussing the potential hazards of social media on the individual, is the topic of materialism. Young children having the ability to see other kids near the same age have a life that they wish they could experience, can be very unhealthy for them. This has the potential to lead them to being much more competitive, manipulative, and especially selfish.

Schulz, M. (2023). *2023 credit card debt statistics*. LendingTree. <https://www.lendingtree.com/credit-cards/credit-card-debt-statistics/>

- Another factor to consider is the likelihood that these same individuals who are showing off their “wealth” and possessions, have tremendous amount of credit card debt

Cohen, J. B. and J., & Samuel, A. (2015, May 29). *Conquering digital distraction*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2015/06/conquering-digital-distraction>

- This article mentions an individual named “Marco,” who starts everyday off on his smart phone device. One of the creators of this great article, named Larry Rosen, states to Marco that if he accepts the invitation, he would in fact help him successfully alter his bad habits when it came to technology in his personal life. Knowing that other individuals are making the decision to fix their negative habits, the audience might possibly be a little more motivated to change theirs as well!

PhD, D. M. (2020, July 17). *11 practical ways to reduce digital consumption*. Crossway. <https://www.crossway.org/articles/11-practical-ways-to-reduce-digital-consumption/>

- It would be wrong of me to leave the audience in their seats without explaining the diverse number of ways to successfully master the art of limiting technology use in our everyday lives. There’s a total of eleven solutions, in which I will mention all. After doing this, I will go even more in-depth on five specific resolutions.

References Page (Images)

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Cole, L. (2019, May 15). *Positive and negative effects of technology on children: Mentalup.* MentalUP.co. <https://www.mentalup.co/blog/positive-and-negative-effects-of-technology-on-children>

7 steps to crush all-or-nothing thinking. MyBodyTutor. (2023). <https://www.mybodytutor.com/blog/all-or-nothing-thinking>

Ritchie, H., Mathieu, E., Roser, M., & Ortiz-Ospina, E. (2023, April 13). *Internet - Our World in Data.* Our World in Data. <https://ourworldindata.org/internet>

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