

**TECH THIS
TECH THAT**



A Technological Crisis: Stuck in the Screen.

Created by Lola Gomez

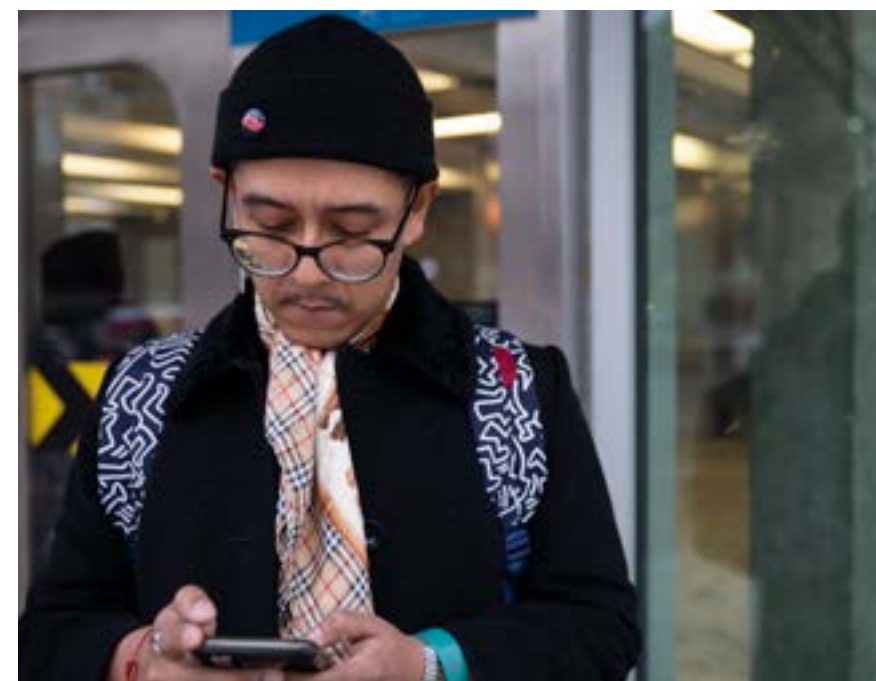


A couple of weeks ago, I was riding my bike and listening to music. As I was at the light, I started biking when a random woman walking her dog yelled “GET OFF YOUR PHONE” from across the street. She then proceeded to tell whomever she was on the phone with “Honestly, kids cannot let go of their phones even when they ride their bikes. It’s ridiculous.”

It isn’t a secret that technology and our devices have engrained their way into our lives making it nearly impossible to live without them or simply take a break from them. People use technology at almost every moment in their lives. Being alone has become synonymous with sadness, unpopularity and desolation. It has become unfamiliar territory to walk down a street without a phone or music playing or some form of distraction.



I recently broke my phone and being the lazy person that I am, I decided not to fix it for a while. The difference in my life was astonishing. There were so many new uncomfortable and awkward feelings arising from just the idea of walking home without a device. It is uncomfortable because there are so many questions that create an awkward feeling. Where do you look? Do you stare at the person walking towards you? How long is too long to stare? Can you smile in admiration of the beauty around you or will people think you are a creepy person smiling to themselves without any visible reason? Living without my phone felt like a part of me was missing but I also recognized that a part of me was unburdened. Mostly because of the notion that you have to be accessible to every message, every email and every call. You must respond in real time or people get upset...and I was free of that.



Recently, there has been a lot of scrutiny for the Gen Z'ers and how much we are addicted to technology, phones specifically. Gen Z is the generation born from 1996 until now. We are the only generation born into and brought up alongside technology. While technology has helped us greatly, it has also contributed to making us dependent and addicted to it.

**BUT HERE
ARE THE
FACTS**

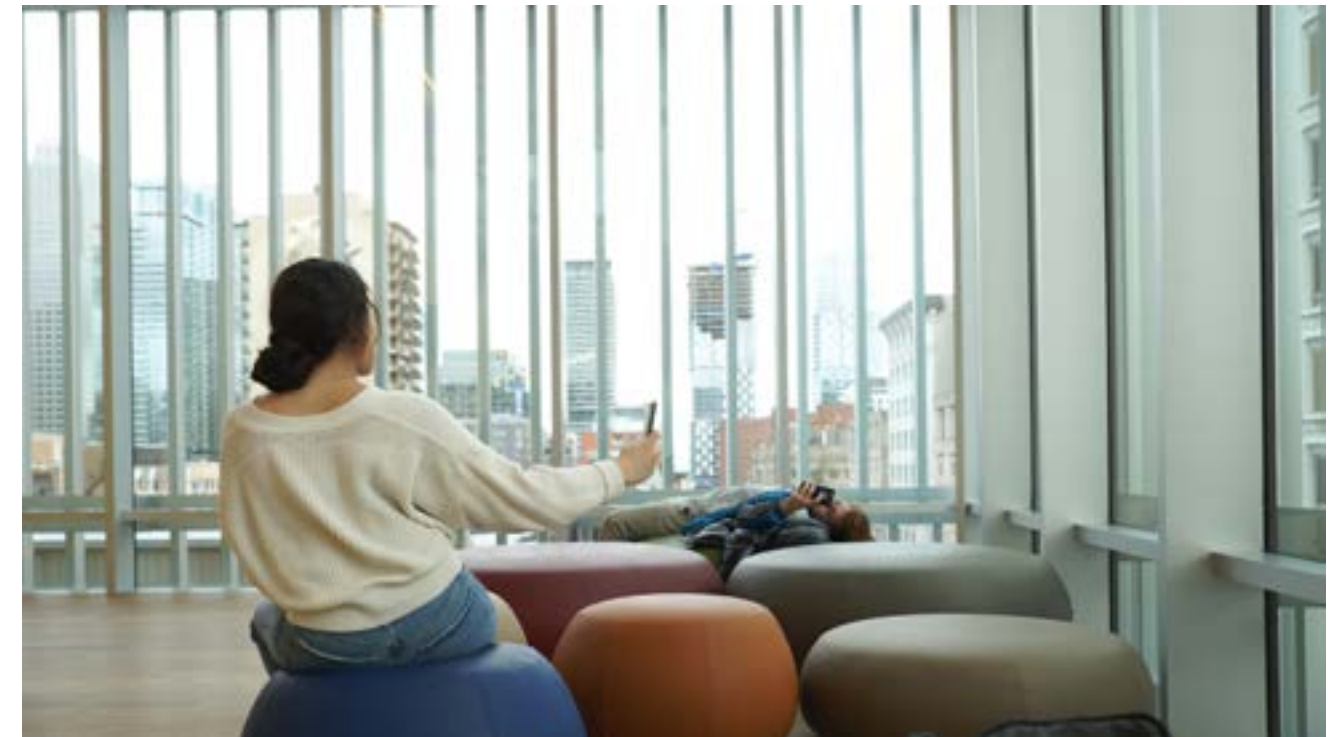


95% of teenagers have or have access to a smartphone. Gen Z spends on average 11 hours a week on their phones. 55% of Gen Z uses their phones for 5 hours a day. (99firms.org) These numbers, while extremely high, are not surprising.

For the elder generations, the numbers might not reach the same levels but are surprisingly high themselves. Over 25% of Boomers, the generation born between 1946 and 1964, consume twenty plus hours of social media and the internet per week. Gen X, the generation born between 1961 and 1981, spend 21 hours a week on the internet compared to

One of the many reasons people are so addicted to technology is because they crave social interaction, approval and communication. Companies who create apps and websites use psychologists and scientists to help create something so addictive that people will not be able to break from it. They market their products as a tool needed to communicate better with people and become more sociable. The fact is that an enormous percent of the population feels lonely, an issue technology has no doubt helped fuel, and the feeling of missing out or being praised becomes addictive. The science shows that social media is based on behaviour designs. By nature, people will continue doing things they enjoy. If an app leaves them with a positive experience, they will gladly return without thinking twice. The issue is also that while people may be able to distance themselves, it doesn't mean they want to necessarily.

“50% of Gen Z stays connected to the internet for 10 plus hours a day.”



Technology has engrained itself into the very fibers of our being.

There are countless disadvantages to being addicted to technology such as information overloads, blurred eyesight, narcissism and more. Technology doesn't only affect the physical but the mental and psychological as well. Too much information in short periods of time can lead to decreased productivity and less attention paid to conversations. The attention span for the average human is now 8 seconds, 2 seconds less than a goldfish. There are also headaches, migraines, backaches from sitting in uncomfortable positions for long periods of time. “Text neck”, a term coined over the past years, is when people are hunched over their devices for long periods at a time. While it may not seem dangerous, the risks are quite monumental. When you stand or sit straight, your head weighs 10-12 pounds on average. However, with the slightest tilt of 15 degrees or more, the head becomes 27 pounds. The weight increases until finally your head weighs 60 pounds at a 60-degree angle. This can lead to a number of health issues such as chronic neck pain, increased compression and severe headaches.

All of this is to say that you can stop your addiction. There are many ways to help limit your technology usage such as turning off all notifications, taking off addicting apps, leaving your phone in other rooms and making schedules for yourself.

By now, most people have been informed about the dangers of social media overload and excessive availability to phones and computers. We have been told the negative effects of constant usage, but nobody cares.



Over the last decade, there has been a shift in accountability. People think that confessing to their issues and problems is just as good as doing something about it. It isn't fine to just acknowledge our flaws; we have to take action. Think of phone usage as our planet, in a sense it is our world. Our planet is overheating and now after 15 years of warning, we have begun taking minimal efforts. Everybody told us about the dangers of not taking care of our planet, scientists told us how many years we have left. But did that stop Trudeau from putting in a pipeline, absolutely not. Did it stop us from using Starbucks cups or from using plastic bags? Some of us yes but the majority has not evolved.



No More.

This article is to bring to your attention our reality and how endangering it is to ourselves. We can no longer accept our flaws and not try to change them. We can no longer read the facts and carry on with our lives. The fact is, most people only care about something when it's too late. In 2020, people need to try harder to distance themselves from their devices, to try and be alone with themselves and understand why the deeper parts of themselves crave company and appraisal from others. People should set timers for themselves, turn off notifications and enjoys dinners with friends and family without the constant beeping and dinging of their phones. We cannot turn back time, but we can change the future.