

Sensitization workshop on digital overuse

BEING CONSCIOUS

Assessment : digital technology has invaded every private and public sphere of our society : our pocket, our bedroom, our house, our car, the street are full of it.

And such an excessive exposure is problematic, not to say harmful — especially for young people whose brain is not matured until 23-25 years old, meaning that emotions take over any analytic thought (reading a post on a social network, a youngster feels an emotion, which can be strong sometimes, and only afterwards, he may wonder whether what he read is true and trustworthy).

So what concretely do we have to worry about ?

- the mind

> attention, concentration (complementary cognitive abilities that are needed to think, to comprehend a situation with a critical mind and also to cool down, are attracted, drawn and short-circuited by all the digital screens that surround us)

> memory (our phone finds & keeps everything for us, making our memory lose sharpness)

> creation, imagination (digital encourages us to passiveness, and we become captive consumers of an algorithmic loop)

> sleep (this episode we want to watch to the end, that video game we can't stop, or these notifications we're afraid to miss, together with the blue light of our screen holding melatonin will push forward bedtime and steal some precious minutes / hours of sleep)

- the body

> the eyes (short-sightedness)

> the posture, excess weight and other health problems like diabetes (we're not moving enough and while we watch and stare, we don't know what and how much we are eating)

- emotions

> All strong emotions are appealed to, too much too often, causing first a burn-out, then an habituation of drama and violence : nothing shocks us anymore (our brain goes in defense mode like in wartime) ; especially true and powerful for young people.

- integrity

> Internet is an ocean full of invisible dangers awaiting to have more data on you, so as to steal your bank account, visit your home when you're geolocated somewhere else, swindle children and teenagers when not abusing them. It's not an overstatement : 1 child pic on 2 posted on social networks lands into pedocriminal data base / 1 account

on 2 is a fake one, a bot, to help support ideas or persons using all means especially fake news and hatred messages, for they are the most popular and shared ones.

- **society**

> empathy (the relation to the other fades away as we more and more communicate with him through a screen without seeing and feeling him)

> togetherness (what the point of fighting for our rights in an anxiety-inducing and constantly-changing society when everything seems more easy, comfortable and challenge-free in our virtual bubble ? What the point of making integration efforts when I can feed my narcissic needs and get some dopamine shoots only with a few clicks ?)

> democracy (the algorithm closes us up in a loop and shows us only binary and more likely shocking content because that's what's the most spread)

> the planet (digital technology pollutes more than the aeronautics industry, with all the equipment, that is to say production and extraction in poor exploited countries, network infrastructures, especially underwater cables & data centers working and heating 24/7...)

Icing on the cake > the dependency

We lose our free will and that can have negative not to say dramatic consequences on us and our family / close members (emotions out of control, missing life opportunities..)

UNDERSTAND

Digital technology works like a drug : sugar, alcohol, gambling, nicotine.

It all starts in the brain and a whole team of neuroscientists & IT designers work hard to make us hooked on it, for technology industry is the most lucrative business thanks to advertisement contracts with two expensive clauses : the number of users and their connected time, enabling these companies to send targeted advertising to the largest audience possible. But how do we get caught ?

> **salience**, the compulsive use of addictive content like social networks calls on our prehistorical brain and overworks it, short-circuiting our reflective attention.

> **dopamine** floods in in the most effortless way when you can get likes and nice comments without doing something remarkable, with only two clicks of the finger.

> **adrenaline** makes us feel invincible and trample on the world around if needed, for instance in a fictive mission of some video game, and we get easily used to it.

> the great **practicality** of the smartphone replacing 30 or more devices / people (from the taxi, sports or love coach, bank assistant to the alarm clock, agenda, camera, thermometer, memo...)

> **specific buttons and practices** such as the *flame* in Snapchat, *likes* and *hearts* in Facebook and Instagram, the neverending scrolling in all, *autoplay* on Youtube making us stay more and more without even noticing it, for it's effortless and entertaining (even though there's too many things to watch and so short-timed that you won't remember anything in the end).

REACT

We need to take the control back ! Digital technology is already so pervasive in our everyday life (professionally, administratively, logistically...), that we shouldn't use it in other spheres of our life simply as a default choice or without any thought, making us passive consumers instead of active human beings, citizens and parents.

- > Don't let the almighty devices being seen or handed easily > [out of sight, out of mind!](#)
- > [Strip out our smartphones](#) of all the notifications, social networks that interrupt us now and then, cutting us from the real world and making us feel we'll miss something if we don't check (the FOMO syndrome).
- > [Protect the youngest](#), who are the most vulnerable and the most exposed.
Organize tech-free moments, especially before school and before sleeping.
Set convivial family moments, where screens are replaced with music and games. We must remember children react through mimicry ('do what I say, not what I do' is a no-go).
Make home a safe place where communication, warmth and creation are welcome again.
- > [Be creative and equipped with analog devices](#) we can find cheap because they are forgotten, like a clock, a timer, a notebook etc, all these things to avoid the systematic use of tech devices.
- > [Boost our cognitive abilities](#) : let's work our memory, our attention and concentration, thanks to meditation, the Pomodoro Technique, creative and playful challenges.
- > [Raise the eyes, watch around and breathe](#) : digital technology is full of stress, anxiety and makes us feel low, inappropriate or overwhelmed. We shouldn't let digital win over us !