



Use or Abuse of Technology

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Technology

- Benefits
 - Problems
 - Consequences
 - Solutions
 - Conclusions
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- "...when well-used, these media can be helpful connecting family members who live apart from one another... We know that sometimes they can keep people apart rather than together, as when at dinnertime everyone is surfing on a mobile phone, or when one spouse falls asleep, waiting for the other who spends hours playing with an electronic device..." Amoris Laetitia 278

Benefits

- Keeping in touch with loved ones (here you see one example).
- It is a convenient tool to coordinate often complicated family schedules.
- Workplace functioning and communication
- Socializing
- Global awareness.

Problems

- Cyber bullying
- Exhibitionism
- Addiction to
 - Gaming
 - Social Media
 - Pornography
 - On-line shopping
 - You-tubing
 - Gambling

Addiction

- It starts in the brain. Our brains produce a chemical called *dopamine* and it drives everything we do. It is referred to as “the molecule of motivation”. Without it we would never go seeking food even if we were hungry or starving. Dopamine floods the brain in anticipation of pleasurable experiences, urging us to repeat the behaviour. One of the most powerful pleasures humans experience is related to sex. The brain produces dopamine during sex so humans will want to engage in it again.
- When a child sees porn, that child’s brain will begin to release large amounts of dopamine, creating a drive for more, even in a child who did not like seeing pornography in the first place.
- Addiction to pornography generally starts at a young age, even as young as 8 years old.

Consequences

- Neglect
 - Family – Children and spouse
 - Study
 - Work
 - Personal health – Sleeping, Eating
- Social withdrawal
- Alternative view of reality
- Financial trouble

Group Activity

- Your son Nicodemus is 13 and he argues that he needs a smartphone to survive in this day and age. How do you determine whether he is really ready to have one. (he is driven to and from school)
- Come up with 4 ways to take control of, or keep control of, technology in your life.
 - Remember children learn from parents and peers
 - Consider different age groups
 - Include yourself

Do Smart Teens need Smartphones?

- One of the key factors to determine whether your child should have a smart phone is “do they have the strength of character to have a smart phone and not abuse it?”
- Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good and doing the good. It is a strongly established habit.
- To gauge their strength of character consider the following;
 - Are they able to keep their room and personal belongings in order?
 - How do they manage their own schedule? (do they do what they want or what they should?)
 - Do they have disciplined work habits?
 - How is their sociability?
- A pre-requisite to having a smart phone is having **self control**.

Solutions

- Temperance –Moderates the attraction of pleasures, assures the mastery of the will over instincts and provides balance in the use of created goods.
- Restrict Use
 - Consider e-fasting - abstaining from electronic devices and services, such as smartphones and social media.
 - Self-regulate – set some rules that only allow you to connect to social media at specific times of the day.
 - Disable alerts & notifications – so you are not constantly reminded of messages by your social media platform.
 - Remove social media apps from your smartphone.
 - Another suggestion: turn away from the internet for an hour a day, a day a week, a week a year.
- Monitor – Know what access family have and what it is used for. Ensure you have internet content filters such as K9 installed on devices used by children.

The role of the family in managing technology

- The family is where the crisis can be averted. Parents can have, if they decide to exercise it a much bigger immediate authority and influence over their children than can other social leaders.
- It requires commitment.
- Working on character and the 4 cardinal virtues: prudence (wisdom), justice, temperance and fortitude (courage).
- Little to no screen time for those under 10, the use of “car time” as conversation time, and total transparency where internet is concerned, both between the spouses and for all the children living in the home (ways of preventing pornography).

Conclusions

- Technology is here to stay and it's good.
- We need to be in charge of it and use it wisely.
- We need to make sure our children use it wisely.

Sources

- MercatorNet.com
 - Confessions of a Millennial mum with a smartphone habit. Veronika Winkels. Sep 29 2017
 - What's destroying the kids – smartphones or distracted parents? Carlolyn Moynihan. Aug 15 2017
 - Addiction Alert! 3 Facts Every Parents Needs to Know – Kristen Jensen Sep 28 2017
 - Addicted to social media? Try an e-fasting plan – Ritesh Chugh. Apr 4 2016
 - Should smart teens have smart phones? – Alvaro de Vicente. Jun 7 2017
 - Our addiction to technology – Christopher O. Tollefsen. Jul 7 2017
- Parenting for character – Andrew Mullins
- Amoris Laetitia – Pope Francis 2016

We are not alone in this challenge!

- Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates has revealed that he limits his children's exposure to technology.
- The world's richest person says his kids clamoured for mobile phones as young teenagers, but he and his wife Melinda ignored their complaints until they turned 14.
- Mr Gates, like many other parents, also imposes rules on gadget use in the house, and is constantly trying to figure out where to draw the line.
- Apple co-founder, Steve Jobs, was strict about how much time his daughters were allowed in front of a screen. Even as the iPad was flying off the shelves in 2010 Erin (12) and Eve (15) weren't allowed to have one.