

# Digital Technology: Its Use and Abuse

Shaun Willcock

*“But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that... they that buy, [be] as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away” (1 Cor.7:29-31).*

*“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph.5:16).*

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We live in the Digital Age, and we have been told that it is a wonderful thing, changing our lives for the better. But this is only partly true. Although there certainly are many positive aspects, there are also many negative ones, which are very serious and potentially extremely dangerous to our spiritual well-being.

## ***Computers, Tablets, Smartphones: Redeeming the Time? Or Wasting It?***

Computers certainly are extremely useful, and indeed are virtually indispensable in the modern world. They are part of this world; and although, as the text above says, we may *use* the legitimate things of this world, we are never to *abuse* them! We are to redeem the time. And this is precisely where these things are being abused, instead of being used legitimately, by so many Christians; for they can be massive time-wasters, and many are guilty of wasting precious time on them. If the reader is a child of God, and yet comes home from work and proceeds to frit away his evenings playing with his various electronic “toys”, hour after hour and night after night, it is time to stop and take a good, long, hard look at exactly what is happening.

Many Christians used to *read* much; but it is safe to say that probably the majority of professing Christians do not read anywhere near as much anymore. Why is this? They will say, “I don’t have the time.” Oh, but you do, brother or sister: you do! It is not that you lack time, but rather that you are not using it properly. You are wasting it away on other things; and many of you know that what you are wasting it on is your laptop or your smartphone! You come home, and instead of picking up a book containing sound doctrine, or the life story of one of the servants of the Lord of the past, you surf the net, or play mindless, pointless, even sinful video games, or watch movies online. Reading is now neglected in favour of electronic time-wasters.

Furthermore, many believers, who used to have much time for family and friends, now have so little of it. Why? Again, for many it is their slavish dependence on their electronic “toys”. They used to teach their children the Holy Scriptures, and read them a bedtime story; now they do not. It seems a lifetime ago when they used to sit in their living rooms with their family gathered around, and enjoy those quiet evenings together; now they do not, for television destroyed that decades ago, and laptops, tablets and mobile phones have just made it worse. They used to spend time visiting their friends, their brethren in the Lord; now they do not.

Computers, smartphones, etc., can certainly be very useful tools; but if we love them inordinately, then they have mastered us, and not we them. Misuse and over-use of technology is the problem, not technology itself. The Bible tells us to redeem the time. If used properly and for legitimate purposes, these tools can save time; otherwise they do *not* save time, but actually waste it.

There is *so* much more to life than technology and gadgets! As Christians we have so much to do, and we should not waste a moment of the precious time the Lord has entrusted to us. “*For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*” (Jas.4:14). “*The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.... So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*” (Psa. 90:10,12). How many believers, as their life draws to a close, will look back and say, “I wish I’d spent more time on my laptop, or tablet, or phone”? When it comes time to die, the fact that they did not spend more time with their “toys” will surely not be one of their regrets.

The fact is, digital technology *is* addictive. Christian: use it for legitimate purposes, within reason, and within strictly controlled time limits; then shut it down, get off your chair, walk away from it, and go and do something else!

Ask yourself this: am I the master of my laptop or smartphone? Or has it mastered me?

## *The Internet*

The internet is an amazing thing. It is one of the greatest technological inventions of all time. Christians can and should make use of this wonderful tool. But *tool* is the key word. It is a great tool; but that is all. It can be an instant worldwide library at your fingertips. It can be so many useful things. But it is also a world of danger! Here are some of the dangers it poses:

*Firstly*, it is a threat to your time. How easily, and how quickly, it can become all-absorbing, and before you know it you have idled away hours of precious time.

*Secondly*, it is a place of great temptation. Well over half the world’s internet use is for accessing pornography. The devastating effects of porn are wreaking havoc across all societies, especially when it is so easily accessible.

*Thirdly*, it is riddled with false doctrine and false religion. It seems as if it should be unnecessary to even say this, but sadly it is not: not everything that calls itself “Christian” on the net is truly Christian! Not every website is sound. Not every “fact” is truly a fact. It is astounding how gullible people are. “I read it in the papers, or I saw it on TV, so it must be true” has now also become “I read it online, so it must be true.” But anyone with a computer can create a website! They do not have to know what they are writing about. They can make lies sound like truth. Although electronic publishing has been a tremendous boon to Christians as they seek to take the Gospel to the world, it must always be borne in mind that the same marvel which is such a blessing to them, also allows anyone and everyone else to publish whatever they like as well. As a result, the internet is flooded with rubbish.

Even in the pre-internet days, people had to exercise discernment when going to a public library and researching anything, for not all books providing information are created equal. But it seems that when it comes to what is available online, so many people – even those professing to be Christians – show absolutely no discernment whatsoever.

*Fourthly*, another great danger of the internet is that it may so easily cause an absolute information overload. The internet age is also the information overload age. There is just so much information flowing into people’s heads every single day. This is *not* a good thing. It exhausts the brain, and unfits us for more important things. So many people are just far too exhausted, going through each day barely half alive; and a major cause of this is that their brains never rest. They are constantly taking in information. Their heads swirl with information. They never relax. Everywhere one looks, one sees people bent over their tablets, or phones: in restaurants, as they walk down the street, even on the beach.

And this is true of believers as well, for they are allowing themselves to be swept along with the tide.

This affects the Christian's prayers, for even if he is faithful in setting aside time each day for private prayer, all too often his mind is swimming with information overload. It also affects his time with family and friends.

And the technology is moving relentlessly towards everyone being even more "connected" than ever before. But this technology will make people *less* intelligent, not more so; and just in proportion to how much more connected they will be, they will be far more *disconnected* from the real world – zombies living in their "virtual world" all the time, their brains and senses completely overloaded with information and images. It is a constant bombardment, and it is not good. It is very, very bad. The fact is, our connected world is destroying us.

In his book, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, author Nicholas Carr pointed out that all this technology renders people less capable of deep thinking. He found this to be so by personal experience, as he was trying to do the research for his book: he was constantly being distracted because he was so "connected". "So, I abandoned my Facebook and Twitter accounts and throttled back on email, so I was only checking a couple of times a day, rather than every 45 seconds," he said. "I found those types of things really did make a difference."<sup>1</sup> He said that at first he felt "befuddled" by his sudden lack of online connection, but that after a couple of weeks he was able to stay focused on one task for a sustained period of time. Millions of others, if they were honest, could testify to that feeling of "befuddlement" when not "connected". This just proves how addictive this technology can be. In fact, as explained in the DVD, *Digital Cocaine*,<sup>2</sup> these devices most certainly *are* addictive, just like a drug. Dopamine is released in the brain by their use. "Digital dementia" is an induced form of Alzheimer's in children: they begin to forget the little things, and as time goes on their ability to retain information deteriorates.

Christian: you simply *do not* have to be connected every minute of every hour of the day! You should not even want to be. There is so much more to life than surfing the net! Are you master of your internet usage – or has it mastered you? Is it a tool, or is it a tyrant? Are you so busy "surfing the net", that you haven't noticed you're actually a *serf* of the net?

### *Cellphones/Smartphones*

These phones are amazing things, and they are becoming smarter all the time. But as with everything, their use must be controlled within proper limits. They can waste so much money and so much time. Most people do not control their phones – instead their phones control them. People are slaves to their phones.

You *do not* have to be in touch 24 hours a day! No-one does. It is tragic to see people joined at the palm to their phones, eyes always downcast, gazing at their little hand-held electronic handcuffs. Is this what people have been reduced to – their lives controlled by their phones, always waiting for the next call, the next text message, so devoted to inane comments, etc., that they virtually have no real lives of their own anymore? Watch people in the street, in shops, even in their own homes with their families around them: conversation is constantly interrupted, people are endlessly tapping away on their phones. Much of the time people are only half-listening when someone is talking face to face with them – they always have their ears and hands attuned to that buzz from their phones. Even with parents, children or friends *in the same room* with them, they still prefer to "communicate" with someone else, far away, via their phones. What strange addiction is this, that people are more concerned with what someone has to say to them from across the city or country, than what a person in the same room may be saying to them?

Proper conversation is a lost art today. People are dumbed-down robots, automatons, living to see what some "friend" has tweeted or whether they have been "liked" on Facebook or who has sent them yet another "selfie". How utterly sad!

Every Christian should ask: am I addicted to my mobile phone? And if so, why? What *real* value does it add to my life? Use it, but do not abuse it. Control it, or it will control you.

And remember: most addicts do not even realise they are addicts!

## *Facebook*

Facebook has become all-pervasive – and this is certainly not a good thing. Is it sinful to be on Facebook? No – not in and of itself. If Christians may use the internet (and they may), then they may make use of Facebook as well. But there are great dangers, which every child of God who elects to use Facebook needs to be well aware of, and to guard against.

*First:* as with the internet in general, the use of Facebook becomes sinful when it wastes time. Again, remember the Scripture: “redeeming the time”. Life on this earth is so short, and there is so much to do that really matters:

*Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.*

Believers must carefully use their time, and not frit it away on frivolous things. There is a time and a place for legitimate relaxation; but this must be kept within reasonable bounds. For many, Facebook consumes their time. It is virtually the first thing they check in the mornings, the last thing at night, and they go into it many times in the day as well – and for what? To see who has said what, who has made some inane comment about nothing of value, who has contacted them, or who has “liked” their pictures or statements! This is truly trivial, brethren! How many professing Christians who spend so much time in trivial pursuits on Facebook ever read a solid doctrinal book?

*Second:* it can so easily replace proper writing to friends, and even proper friendships! When someone “likes” you on Facebook, is this real friendship? Those same people may not even like you in person, but they “like” you on Facebook! People who were not your friends in the past become your Facebook “friends”. But face it: an online “friend” who was not, or is not now, your friend in the real world, is not your friend online either! If they do not like you face to face, why do you think they “like” you on Facebook? For many of them, becoming your fake Facebook “friend” is simply because they are nosy, and they want to poke around in your personal life and personal details and see who you are “friends” with and what you are doing. *These people are not friends!* They are the fake “friends” of Facebook, and they are not worth having. Truly, if Facebook is what “friendship” has been reduced to, then the word has no meaning anymore.

As for finding long-lost friends via Facebook: yes, one may be able to track down a few in this way. But again, think about it: the reason you were out of touch with most of those you may have now accepted as “friends” on Facebook is because they were no longer friends in real life! So has your life really been enriched by re-establishing contact with them again?

Facebook has also made people too lazy to write a proper email, of some real length, to a *real* friend; or even to call them for a proper conversation. Once upon a time, friends wrote lengthy letters to each other. Then came email, and friends made use of this wonderful tool to keep in touch, as they had previously done with letters. True friends still do so, for in an email one can say so much, and moreover with the added benefit of sending and receiving almost instantly. But when Facebook arrived on the scene, so many people simply became “one-line friends”, “conversing” (if such it can be called) in short sentences of no depth. It has truly created a culture of shallow, “Hello, how are you”-type messages, no better than the kind of hurried exchange between two people passing in a street. People have become so shallow, and real, deep friendships have suffered.

Facebook can be compared to constantly being in the company of a group of people: if you only ever have conversations in a group, then by its very nature that group is only going to encourage a very shallow, flippant kind of “friendship”. It is no substitute for real, in-depth conversation with people who are truly close to you. And this is what Facebook “friends” are, for the most part. It is an online “group” activity that is no substitute for closer relationships with real brethren and friends.

*Third:* Facebook is so often nothing but a high-tech equivalent of the “peeping tom”. Does this come as a shock? Think about it. Why does anyone *care* what so-and-so had for breakfast, or what they are eating in which restaurant at any given moment, or what they are wearing, or who has a relationship problem with their spouse/friend/boyfriend/girlfriend? And why would anyone even feel the need to share such facts with all their Facebook “friends”? Has life become so shallow? And yet Facebook is full of rubbish like this. If this is not trivia, what is? Such information is utterly irrelevant, it adds nothing to one’s life, it is meaningless, it is drivel, and it even verges on voyeurism at times.

*Fourth:* Facebook is a massive surveillance tool for governments; a giant global spy system. There is no doubt whatsoever about this. In the past, Facebook has revealed personal information about millions of its users to many companies and advertisers through their apps; and according to the Electronic Privacy Information Center, it had no intention of stopping this practice, but would provide users’ addresses and mobile phone numbers to third-party app developers. As Dennis O’Reilly, longtime technology writer, stated: “Companies can combine the ‘anonymized’ information from your [Facebook] profile with personal data gleaned from tracking cookies and other online traces to create dossiers about you that offers a level of personal detail the [U.S.] National Security Agency would envy.”<sup>3</sup> All this is bad enough. But it gets worse. It did not take long, after Facebook was created, for it to become a global spying machine. Think about the Roman Catholic confessional: priests tell their duped followers that the confessional is private, and that what is said within its enclosed space will never be repeated by the priest to anyone. And yet for centuries Rome’s confessional has been a worldwide, sinister information-gathering system, the greatest intelligence-gathering network on earth! The private details of unsuspecting Roman Catholics have found their way into the Vatican via this iniquitous data-collecting system, and this information has so often been used to blackmail people.

And this is precisely what Facebook is as well, for certain governments. Imagine if you had a surveillance camera mounted on your living room wall, whereby a government agency was able to spy on you and whatever went on in your house 24/7. George Orwell, as far back as 1949, wrote of just such a device eventually being created, in his book, *1984*. Well, it is here! It is not a camera mounted on your living room wall, but it amounts to the same thing. Facebook is a sophisticated surveillance tool in the hands of globalists. It is destroying what little privacy is left in the lives of millions. It has become the world’s most comprehensive database about people, their relationships, addresses, locations, and communications. And all this information is available to government intelligence agencies.

It would be naive in the extreme to assume that Facebook’s privacy statements are to be trusted. Nik Cubrilovic, an Australian entrepreneur and writer, revealed that Facebook tracked and stored the internet browsing of its hundreds of millions of users even after they had logged off the Facebook site!<sup>4</sup> Facebook then claimed to fix the issue, but Cubrilovic wrote: “I believe Facebook when they describe what these cookies are used for, but that is not a reason to be complacent on privacy issues and to take initiative in remaining safe.”<sup>5</sup> He recommended using a separate browser.

It would be just as naive to assume that intelligence agencies have not harnessed the massive potential value of Facebook for whatever purposes they deem fit. It was in fact revealed by the Associated Press that the CIA had an entire center – the Open Source Center – dedicated to monitoring Facebook and Twitter. It was established in 2005 by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The CIA claimed it was only monitoring foreign activity, but there is no reason whatsoever to trust them on this. But even if there is no *official* relationship between Facebook and a government (and in the case of the U.S. government, this is a very big “If”), it would be a relatively simple matter for a government intelligence agency to pressurise Facebook officials by blackmail – and then they would cave like a sinkhole and cough up any data desired by that agency on anyone they choose.

If you are prepared to live with this kind of surveillance or potential surveillance, you are not sinning in having a Facebook site. Many Christians are in fact using it for evangelising. And, for certain tasks

at any rate, it has become virtually essential to using the internet itself, leaving believers with little choice but to use it in certain ways. But every believer should be aware of the dangers, and take reasonable and sensible steps to protect himself if he chooses to make use of this medium.

## *E-Books*

The following is excerpted from an excellent article entitled *The Dumbest Generation: Tech-Savvy, But Unable to Think*, in the March 2010 issue of *The McAlvany Intelligence Advisor*:<sup>6</sup>

“Defenders of the electronic society point out that tech-savvy people do read online. They say it’s just a different medium than books and other ‘obsolete’ devices such as newspapers and magazines. Different for sure, but not necessarily better.

“It can be a maze of flashing images designed for visual appeal over substance. Concentrating on one item or article is strongly discouraged. ‘Surfers’ may gaze over headlines on several topics while also multitasking on their iPhones or other devices. The medium allows for a virtually unlimited amount of images and factoids at the expense of depth and focus.

“Writers who once handled magazine assignments and books have to drastically change their style for online audiences. Word counts usually have to be cut to the bone. Facts are pruned to the bare minimum, while creative literary nuances and deep thinking are strongly discouraged.

“So how do authors make up for such emaciated content? Photos and color – the more, the better – and other eye candy take the place of in-depth writing and thought....

“While many books are available via Kindle and online, new technology discourages that kind of reading. Books are meant to be absorbed at a pace that allows for thinking and reflecting on the content. The fidgety style and ever-present special effects found on computers can be incompatible with the quiet and calm mindset needed to enjoy traditional reading.”

The inability to focus and concentrate for any length of time on one subject, to read and study it carefully, is all too evident everywhere. One sees the symptoms of it when one tries to hold a decent conversation with people these days. *They simply cannot concentrate; they cannot focus.* They have sound-bite concentration spans. Their minds constantly flip from one subject to another. Their eyes betray their minds: they are never still, they flit from one object to another and take nothing in. They glaze over when anything lasts longer than a few minutes, and they are very easily distracted by every little thing. This is just the symptom of a generation addicted to TV, surfing the net, smartphones, scanning rapidly over bright pictures and eye-catching headlines but never actually stopping to properly take something in, something worthwhile, *and think about it.*

Others have noted the same dangers. Nicholas Carr, in his book, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, stated that reading on the internet fundamentally changes how our brains are used. “Facing a torrent of text, photos, video, music and links to other web pages, combined with incessant interruptions from text messages, e-mails, Facebook updates, Tweets, blogs and RSS feeds, our minds have become used to skimming, browsing and scanning information.... now most of us infrequently read books, long essays, or articles that would help us focus, concentrate and be introspective and contemplative, Carr writes. He says we are becoming more like librarians – able to find information quickly and discern the best nuggets – than scholars who digest and interpret information. That lack of focus hinders our long-term memory, leading many of us to feel distracted, he said.” And: “‘What we are losing is a whole other set of mental skills, the ones that require not the shifting of our focus but the maintaining of our focus,’ Carr said. ‘Contemplation, introspection, reflection – there is no space or time for those on the Internet.’” “If writers cater to a society that is chronically distracted, they will inevitably eschew writing complex arguments that require sustained attention and instead write in pithy, bite-sized bits of information, Carr predicts.”<sup>7</sup>

Carr said people should slow down, turn off the internet, and practise the skills of contemplation, introspection and reflection. “‘It is pretty clear from the brain science that if you don’t exercise particular cognitive skills, you are going to lose them,’ he said. ‘If you are constantly distracted, you are not going to think in the same way that you would think if you paid attention.’”

We use e-books. They have a place. In addition to publishing my own books in the good old-fashioned way, they are also available as e-books. We also upload all our articles to our website. But we will not cater to a generation of click-happy, concentration-impaired computer-cowboys who want everything in bright colours, with lots of pictures and very little substance. Those who truly love the Lord and His Word will seek to train themselves to *read*, to *ponder*, to *think*, and to *prayerfully meditate* on what they read. We strongly encourage people to either print the articles out and read them slowly and carefully, without other distractions; or if they are read online, to train themselves to focus solely on the article at hand, reading it from beginning to end, without being sidetracked to other things. And if you are reading an e-book, then *read* it: start at the beginning, take your time, read it properly, ponder what you read, think, and train yourself to avoid distractions.

## *Children, Computers and Phones*

Christian parents: are your children spending hours surfing the net? You are exposing them to great danger! Have you bought them their own laptops, tablets, phones, etc., and left them to use these things as they like, whenever they like? Then you have failed in your sacred parental duty! As shown above, the internet is a very useful tool, if carefully controlled; but it can be a deadly trap as well. At their very fingertips is a world of wickedness, immorality, filth, false doctrine, such as you never had access to when you were a child. Would you drop your children off at a nightclub, or a strip joint, or a brothel? No good parent would think of doing such a thing. Why, then, instead of dropping them off at such places, do you drop an electronic device into their hands instead, and allow them to use it in whatever way they please?

Your children should *only* use the internet under *very strict parental supervision*, in a public part of the house where they can be monitored and not behind the closed or locked door of their bedroom; and even then, only for a very limited period of time each day, and for a clearly defined and useful purpose.

A child with a computer in the house, where a parent is able to strictly monitor its use, is one thing; but what about your children and phones? These can provide them with instant access to all kinds of immorality, to sexual predators, to a thousand and one dangers. What are you *thinking*, parents? Your children do not need, and should never have, unrestricted, unsupervised access to mobile phones. Otherwise you, by your negligence and foolishness, have placed a world of iniquity in your own child's hands.

There is no need for a pre-pubescent child to even have his own phone, except for absolute emergencies when separated from his parents for a time.

And even apart from those dangers, the other major problem with mobile phones is that your children learn to be chatterboxes, gossipers, and in fact end up spending more time either talking to or texting their friends than they spend communicating with their own parents. Just think back to your own childhood, if you are old enough to remember those pre-internet, pre-mobile phone days. Remember how your parents would never allow you to sit and gab on the phone to your friends for hours? They were right! You were wasting time and money! But we live in an age where self-discipline and self-control have gone out the window. An age when parents, wiser in their own eyes than the generations before them, see nothing wrong with letting their children fritter away precious time, jawing on and on into their phones, or texting endlessly. It is just another indication of a society that has lost its moorings, imposes no limits or rules on children, teaches no self-control, and is in the process of raising a generation of spoiled, self-centred, know-it-all, arrogant, "I want it all and I want it now" young people.

And are your children endlessly playing video games? A simple question for you: *why*? What possible purpose do they serve? They waste time. They waste money. They cause their brains to atrophy. Time was when kids played on their bikes, in the outdoors, or if indoors they played sensible

and decent games, or were given chores around the house. No longer! Now they sit like junkies, playing mindless video games. Many of them *are* digital junkies, slothful layabouts with a concentration-span of no more than a few seconds at most. And many of the games are introducing them to things with which their young minds should never be filled. If you (correctly) keep them away from the filth on *TV*, but allow them to waste away their lives gazing at a *laptop or phone screen*, you are failing them. I will not mince words on these things: you as a parent are failing your children, and you are disobeying the Lord you profess to love and serve.

But of course, if the *parents* are not setting an example, the children will quickly discern what hypocrites they are!

### ***Children: Dumber, Not Smarter***

Please, parents: let's not hear this nonsense about today's children being smarter than previous generations. It is absolute hogwash, yet we hear it all the time: "Kids today are so smart!" No, they are not. Their "smartness" is an illusion. Mark Bauerlein, an English professor, was the author of *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future*. This is correct. The digital age has not made children smarter; quite the opposite, in fact. Consider the following, taken from *The McAlvany Intelligence Advisor*, March 2010, which summarises some of the points in Bauerlein's book:<sup>8</sup>

"One of the main points of *The Dumbest Generation* is how skill and familiarity with computers, text messaging, blogging, and other devices are often confused with wisdom and intelligence. Equating Twittering skills with brainpower goes beyond comparing apples and oranges. Even those who are a part of the electronic generation sometimes recognize their shortcomings in basic skills.

"A 20-something poster on *USA Today's* Generation Next blog summed up the problem. He wrote, '*Today's young people don't suffer from illiteracy; they just suffer from e-literacy. We can't spell and we don't know synonyms because there's less need to know. What smart person would spend hours learning words that can be accessed at the click of a button? Spellcheck can spell. Shift + F7 produces synonyms. What is wrong with relying on something that is perfectly reliable?*' ...

"So what happens to the person who is without their laptop while it is being repaired, or what are the results if they need to handle something that involves other skills? If they never learned to spell or use the language with any depth, those weaknesses will surely be exposed at crucial times. Face-to-face meetings can be especially embarrassing for the electronic whiz kid with gaping deficiencies in other areas (such as social skills; thinking on their feet; or making quick, well thought-out decisions)."

Furthermore: "Despite the information explosion of recent years, '*young Americans of today are no more learned or skillful than their predecessors, no more knowledgeable, fluent, up-to-date, or inquisitive, except in the materials of youth culture,*' Bauerlein observed. 'They don't know more history or civics, economics or science, literature or current events. They read less on their own, both books and newspapers' ...

"So what do young techies have to show for all their hours online? As Bauerlein points out, modern electronics allow this generation to disengage from and avoid contact with their parents and other elders.

"Endless hours of Facebook and Twittering only serve to feed a self-centred obsession with ever-changing youth culture and socializing. Time that could be spent accessing the vast amount of true knowledge online is used instead for endless and mindless chats (often filled with poor spelling, incorrect grammar, and profanity)."

It has been demonstrated that what has been called "digital dementia" in children is a real danger. Children, addicted to their digital devices, start to forget the little things. And as time goes on, their ability to retain information actually deteriorates. It can be described as an induced form of Alzheimer's in children. Furthermore, children now get very bored, very quickly, because they are used to being constantly "entertained" and amused with instant digital stuff. They get bored applying their brains to mathematics or history or biology, so they constantly text their friends, or see who has "liked" them or some picture of themselves, etc.<sup>9</sup> They are *easily* distracted, because they are

*constantly* distracted.

No, the digital-age generation is not smarter than previous ones. The very opposite is in fact the case. The following is reproduced from the same issue of *The McAlvany Intelligence Advisor*, as this perfectly summarises the fact that today's digital-savvy generation is no smarter than earlier ones, and in fact is even less smart than they were. It is entitled *Who's the Dummy?* It is excellent:

“The media and education establishment is known for frequently proclaiming how the current generation of young adults is ‘the best and brightest’ to ever emerge. Does the hype from this smug mutual admiration society stand up to a comparison across the decades? Where do today's under-30s stand when it comes to practical skills and the ability to deal with adversity?”

“Let's take a pair of 23-year olds from different decades. Jason is a recent college graduate, while Vernon lives in rural Nebraska circa 1931. A year-and-a-half of high school was sufficient for Vernon to qualify as the most educated member of his family.

“Since his formal schooling is so much less than Jason's, many would say the farm kid has already lost the contest. But this game is still in the first inning.

“Spending time in school and getting educated aren't always the same thing. Vern's training in a one-room schoolhouse with a library that could be measured in dozens of volumes might have provided him with a reading comprehension level that equals or even surpasses Jason's.

“We're not saying that Vernon is a genius. He's a pretty average product of his times and geographic location. That means he can work 12-hour days without whining, and knows how to raise cash crops as well as a large garden along with tending and butchering livestock.

“Vernon can also repair most things from putting up fences to doing some work on the family's 1922 Ford Model T. Jason's skills lean heavily towards video games and creating the occasional short film for YouTube. Although he is in decent enough physical condition, Jason would quickly wilt if he had to toss hay bales or shovel manure like Vernon does on a regular basis.

“Speaking of work, Vernon can go for weeks and months and not expect a compliment. Jason's fragile ego (largely a product of the times) demands constant stroking. Who is better equipped to deal with real life?”

“Vern lives on little and does so without complaint. He truly appreciates any small gift or modest financial bonus. Jason can't go more than a day or two without spending money (sometimes earned by his parents) on overpriced clothes, \$4 lattes, and the latest techno-gadget. This jaded young man has a narcissistic sense of entitlement that is dangerous for someone who is still unemployed after finishing school with nearly \$20,000 in student loans and credit card debts.

“Married for less than a year, Vernon and his wife Ida are expecting their first child. In his spare time, Vern is making the baby's cradle and some other simple, sturdy furniture. Aside from being able to design a flashy-looking web site, Jason's practical skills are all but non-existent.

“We'll give Jason the clear edge on sophistication and worldliness. In addition to his dexterity with modern electronics, Jason has rubbed shoulders with people from dozens of different cultures, and he has traveled to Europe and Mexico.

“Vernon has ventured no farther than 100 miles from his home, and that was for a short honeymoon in Omaha. His contact with ‘outsiders’ has been limited to the well-dressed salesman from St. Louis who passed through town and the hobo who did a day's work on the farm.

“The current economic slump combined with the mass exportation of tech jobs to India has crushed Jason's hopes of finding work in his chosen field. He picks up some sporadic freelance assignments, but Jason's ego and inability to understand the times have prevented him from considering other options. He refuses to seek low-wage labor as a way to make an honest dollar until something better opens up, and his indulgent parents refuse to put any pressure on their only child.

“With two brothers and three sisters in his family, Vernon knows that Mom and Dad can't and won't support him. He helps out on the farm and squeezes in other jobs as they can be found during the Great Depression. His older brother Chester – a seventh-grade dropout – sometimes has carpentry work for Vern.

“Despite his limited schooling, Chester can figure out and bid on jobs with nothing more than his

brain, a tape measure, a pencil, and a piece of paper. Where would 21st-Century college grad Jason be without a calculator?

“Meat was a precious commodity in the ‘dirty thirties,’ and Vernon can take three bullets and his single-shot Stevens .22 rifle and bring home an equal number of squirrels or rabbits. Sometimes a sitting pheasant also ends up on the dinner table. The gun is Vernon’s prized possession.

“Jason has been conditioned and brainwashed to view gun ownership negatively. That doesn’t prevent him from spending numerous hours shooting hordes of zombies, ninjas, mutants, and assorted other make-believe villains on video games that are long on fantasy and have absolutely nothing to do with the reality of firearms usage.

“If you needed help or had to hire a reliable worker, would the ‘educated’ modern techie or the rural high school dropout be your choice? In a time of economic decline and instability, the practical mindset and skills of the past could easily trump a knowledge of the latest gadgets and electronic toys.”

We certainly need techies in this modern age. Computers are very useful, and techies are essential. But the point of the article above is clear: computer knowledge is just one set of skills, and does not make a young person smarter than either those who have other skills instead, or those of past generations who knew nothing about computers but a whole lot about the real world.

## *Conclusion*

As Christians, we may certainly make use of computers, the internet, mobile phones, and other instruments of the high-tech revolution. They can be very useful, when used wisely. But wisdom in using them is greatly lacking amongst most people, including professing Christians. They have their place, but the believer needs to be very careful, and greatly limit their use.

Let the Lord’s people obey the Scripture in 1 Cor.7:29-31: using, but not abusing, the legitimate things of the world! Keep all things in proper balance and perspective, redeem the time, and let nothing encroach on, and thereby take away from, the most important things: daily private prayer and Bible study, family worship, the reading of sound Christian literature, time spent in fellowship with the saints, and in the service of the Lord.

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**Shaun Willcock is a minister, author and researcher. He runs Bible Based Ministries. This pamphlet was first published in 2003, revised and updated in 2014, and again in 2017 to keep up with changes in digital technology. For other pamphlets (which may be downloaded and printed), as well as details about his books, audio messages, articles, etc., please visit the Bible Based Ministries website; or write to the address below. If you would like to be on Bible Based Ministries’ email list, please send your details.**

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### ***ENDNOTES:***

- 1 *The Witness*, June 8, 2010. Article: “Is the Internet Ruining Our Lives?” [www.witness.co.za](http://www.witness.co.za).
- 2 *Digital Cocaine: a Journey Toward iBalance* (DVD), by Brad Huddleston. Christian Art Media, Vereeniging, South Africa, 2015.
3. [http://news.cnet.com/8301-13880\\_3-20047703-68.html](http://news.cnet.com/8301-13880_3-20047703-68.html)
4. <https://www.nikcub.com/posts/logging-out-of-facebook-is-not-enough/>
5. <https://www.nikcub.com/posts/facebook-fixes-logout-issue-explains-cookies/>
6. *The McAlvany Intelligence Advisor*, March 2010, pg.11. Published by The McAlvany Intelligence Advisor, Phoenix, Arizona, USA. [www.MIAtoday.com](http://www.MIAtoday.com)
7. *The Witness*, June 8, 2010. Article: “Is the Internet Ruining Our Lives?” [www.witness.co.za](http://www.witness.co.za)
8. *The McAlvany Intelligence Advisor*, March 2010, pgs.11-12.

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9 *Digital Cocaine: a Journey Toward iBalance* (DVD), by Brad Huddleston. Christian Art Media, Vereeniging, South Africa, 2015.

## **Bible Based Ministries**

[info@biblebasedministries.co.uk](mailto:info@biblebasedministries.co.uk)

[www.biblebasedministries.co.uk](http://www.biblebasedministries.co.uk)

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*Worldwide Contact for Bible Based Ministries:*

### **Contending for the Faith Ministries**

695 Kentons Run Ave  
Henderson, NV 89052  
United States of America  
[BBMOrders@aol.com](mailto:BBMOrders@aol.com)