

# Cell phones: Connected virtually, disconnected from reality?

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**T**HE internet once resounded with posts incorrectly quoting the late physicist Albert Einstein: "I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots." While the quote isn't connected to Einstein in any way, it's still relevant in our time (at least, the first part of the quote.)

Technology has become more advanced and complex, but at the same simpler to use, catering to much more than tech savvy people— it's for almost everyone.

The smartphone is an example of technology popularly used today, and it's in the hands of almost every person you see. It houses countless features like a radio, a music player, a virtual notebook, a diary, voice recorder, a calculator, games, a camera, and most importantly fast communication. Its virtually almost endless capabilities make it a staple in a fast-moving society.

Though gadgets like smartphones are useful and convenient, they can be addictive to use, specifically for teenagers like me. However, this addiction seems to have found hosts in the older generations, too.

Addiction is a condition wherein a person becomes dependent on a drug, object or activity—it's mostly associated with substance abuse, which overshadows other problems like technology addiction.

The *Entrepreneur* cited signs and symptoms of phone addiction

such as reaching for the phone first thing in the morning; using cell phones when bored; increasing cell phone use; becoming anxious or agitated when the cell phone is out of sight; people [around you] complaining about [your] cell phone use; and the inability to cut back on cell phone use.

King University Online notes that other signs of tech dependency include using a device to forget negative feelings or a troubling device, losing sense of time while on a device, and physical repercussions like eye strain, neck pain and more.

Dr. John Douillard, a globally recognized leader in the fields of natural health, Ayurveda and sports medicine cited in an article that some studies also show that screen time on phones or TVs can affect child development, sleep cycles, emotions (anti-social tendencies), physical health (obesity), and may serve as distractions for students.

Everywhere I go, I've also observed people who get distracted from staying alert — people walking unaware of incoming traffic or objects and of people



Just as they bring us closer, gadgets can also distance us from others. IMAGE FROM THEHUMANASIA.COM

they might bump into, people riding public transport who realized they've already passed their stopping point, and so on.

I can recall a time when I sat down in a restaurant and while waiting for my order, I noticed a family of eight across from where I was sitting and observed that none of them were talking to each other—their eyes and hands were all glued to their phones.

There were even instances where

I witnessed parents pay more attention to their phones than their children. Sometimes they would even replace a pacifier with a phone to suppress a crying toddler.

Although phones are the go-to things when staying connected to people from far-away places, sometimes they can disconnect people from individuals who are close to them — metaphorically and physically. This tends to hurt relationships

with people who love you most.

While the phone is the most common gadget to get addicted to, it isn't the only thing keeping people from paying attention to their surroundings; anything capable of connecting to the internet serves as a distraction, too.

Internet, video games and social media are the other foremost addictive examples people can pick up as hobbies that may evolve into habits if usage is uncontrolled.

A smartphone is still great nonetheless (and so are other modern devices), as it's one of the most sophisticated gadgets of modern society, and its popularity will continue to increase over the years. But we need to take heed. Technological advancements may move humans towards a future of progress, but our obsession with technology might really make us a generation of idiots — hopefully not.