



Addicted and unhappy through digital media



Smartphones can make teens addicted, dissatisfied and less efficient. This is confirmed by various studies by psychiatrists, therapists and professors. In this part of our series "Digital Education" we present various facts about this topic.

In this additional part of our program about "Digital Education" we show how an early and intensive use of digital media affects the mental well-being of the students. The psychiatrist and media therapist Bert te Wildt describes in his book "Digital Junkies" that the smartphone is addictive and a like gateway drug.

Deliberately integrated reward mechanisms are tying people to these digital devices: Every time the user turns on the device, he sees a nice WhatsApp message, an interesting headline or a new e-mail. The result of a "BLIKK-study"* confirms that these mechanisms are effective: "Over 60 % of the nine to ten-year-old kids can only busy themselves for less than 30 minutes without using digital media."

The internet and game addiction has increased drastically amongst young people – as reported by the German medical journal "Deutsches Aerzteblatt" already in December 2016. In addition various studies show that internet dependence often correlates with suicidal thoughts, depressions, ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), autism, aggressiveness and addictive disorders.

Moreover, internet and smartphone addiction has also a decisive influence on the learning behavior of the students. Digital media entice children to twittering, mailing, replying to WhatsApp messages and listening to music while doing their homework. Due to this sensory overload the things they have learned are not transferred anymore from short-term memory to long-term memory to be saved. Alexander Markowetz, professor at the University of Bonn describes in his book "Digital Burnout", that such a life with these kind of permanent disruptions prevents a productive flow. Many things are being done simultaneously, but nothing "properly". This would have a negative influence on mental capacity and health, resulting in an unproductive and finally unhappy state of mind.

*„BLIKK-media“ is a German charitable project of the professional association of pediatricians investigating accomplishment, learning behavior, intelligence, competence and communication.

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Sources:

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