

Link Available @ Conclusion

**CONVERSATION CASE**  
**Distraction, Multitasking and Time Management**

Is media multitasking an important modern-day skill or a disruptive and damaging habit?

Many of us can relate to the experience of being interrupted by a digital intrusion while we are trying to focus on another task. A cellphone vibrates to alert us to a new text message, or lights up on the table in front of us in response to a new email, or pierces a quiet work environment with its familiar ringtone. Instantly, we shift our focus – maybe just momentarily – to attend to the message. Even when cellphones are out of reach, working on a computer can mean the constant pop-up of calendar notifications or the ping of new email messages. Or, we may actively seek out distractions and temporarily divert our attention from work because of the lure of social networking sites, news articles, or our favorite blogs or online shops.

The fact that technology can pull attention away from other tasks is not only a problem for kids, but adults can relate to as well. But questions about technology's distracting potential are especially relevant in the context of parenting, since we want to make sure we're doing our part to support effective habits.

On one hand, the technology isn't going anywhere. Some parents feel like kids may benefit from learn work around of digital distractions, since they're going to need this skill for their entire lives. On the other, the stakes are high. We don't want kids to develop enduring bad habits in the process, and we certainly want their learning or schoolwork to suffer. Today's case focuses on the challenge of managing technology's disruptive potential. We're going to consider two articles that describe what the research says about multitasking and implications for media multitasking youth.

**The Case, Part 1**

The following excerpts appeared in an article written by Bob Sullivan for NBC News titled "Students distraction for two minutes... and neither can you."

Multitasking has been the subject of popular debates, but among neuroscientists, there is very little brain researchers say that what many people call multitasking should really be called "rapid toggle" between tasks, as the brain focuses quickly on one topic, then switches to another. At economics students know, switching is not free. It involves "switching costs" — in this case, the time it takes to re-immers your mind in one topic or another.

Researchers say only the simplest of tasks are candidates for multitasking, and at but one of those must involve automaticity. If you are good at folding laundry, you can probably fold laundry and watch TV at the same time, for example.

**Overestimated abilities**

Despite this concern among brain scientists, many people overestimate their ability to multitask. As the college student who tries he can text and listen to a lecture simultaneously. He cannot, says expert Annie Murphy Paul, who writes "The Brilliant Blog."

**Consider**

- What is the biggest "digital distraction" for you? Are there any strategies you've found particularly helpful?
- What do you observe that seems to be most challenging for your child in terms of distraction and time management?
- What strategy or policy do you think would most help in supporting your child in those challenging moments?
- The case focuses particularly on the issue of time management and schoolwork. Are there other times when digital tools distract, for example in terms of sleeping or concentrating on other social interactions?
- How might strategies or "best practices" for helping teens avoid distraction differ in non-schoolwork situations?

**What About Music?**

In the case of listening to music while studying, the picture is a bit murky. The documented benefit of music relates to its mood-boosting capacity, which can certainly have its own advantages for an adolescent about to dive into hours of grueling homework at the end of a long day. When it comes to focus and performance, however, the benefits are less clear. Some studies find that some types of music (for example, without words) may help some people with focus and performance under some types of task conditions – but other studies also find that music is detrimental to focus and performance. What do all of these conditional conclusions mean? Most likely they mean that there is variation in how music influences processing and performance, and letting your child experiment thoughtfully with different conditions (e.g., music, no music, music without lyrics, music for some types of homework, like math problems, but not others, like memorization) can help him or her learn more about their own personal style.

**COMMON SENSE EDUCATION**  
 CONNECTING FAMILIES @ 2014 www.commonsense.org

**Recap-Tasks**

**Sherry Turkle...Alone Together**

What does Sherry believe about technology as a distraction to connecting with others?

What role do parents play in modelling multi tasking behaviours using their devices?

Do you agree with her views or not?

What did you take away from her talk that gives you reason to pause and change a behaviour or a habit?

'Always ON and Always ON us..Multi-Tasking to Multi-Living.' Do you agree?

# THE COMMON SENSE CENSUS

MEDIA USE BY TWEENS + TEENS

This 2015 national survey details the media habits and preferences of American 8- to 18-year-olds and shows just how central a role media plays in the lives of Generation Z.



## AVERAGE DAILY MEDIA USE

Excluding time spent using media for school or for homework

TWEENS

TEENS

# 6 hours

5:55 Total Hours  
4:36 Hours of Screen Time

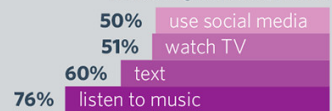
# 9 hours

8:56 Total Hours  
6:40 Hours of Screen Time

### Multitasking: The New Normal

Many teens use media while studying, and most think it has no effect on the quality of their work.

While Doing Homework, Teens ...



## BOYS ARE FROM XBOX, GIRLS ARE FROM INSTAGRAM

Average daily time used for social media and gaming is strikingly different.

TWEENS

TEENS

Video Games 43 mins.  
12 mins.

Social Media 6 mins.  
26 mins.

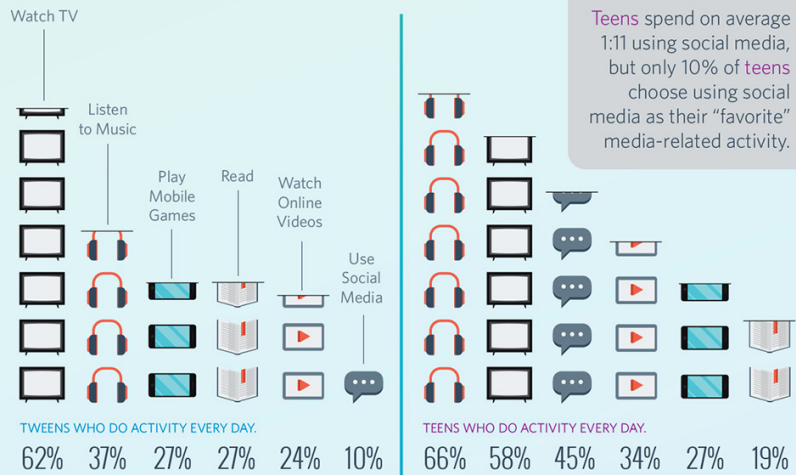
♂ Boys ♀ Girls

56 mins.  
7 mins.

52 mins.  
1 hr. 32 mins.

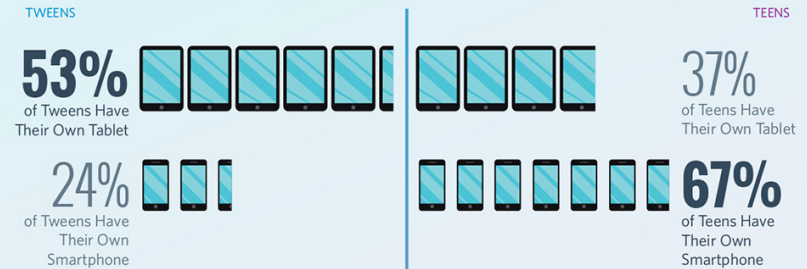
Video Games  
Social Media

## SURPRISE! TV AND MUSIC STILL DOMINATE DAILY MEDIA DIET



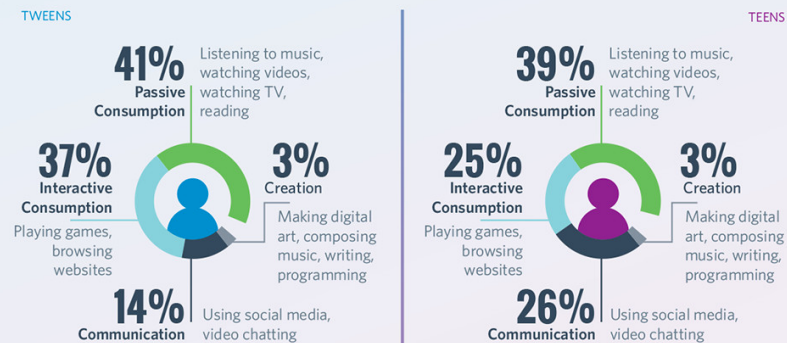
## MEDIA CONSUMPTION IS HIGHLY MOBILE

Mobile devices account for nearly half (41%) of all screen time used among tweens and 46% among teens.



## MANY MEDIA ACTIVITIES MAKE UP A MEDIA DIET

The time youth spend with digital devices includes many types of activities, from passive consumption to interactive consumption to communication to content creation.



## Impacts of Media Multitasking on Children's Learning and Development.

2009 Stanford University

'Media multi-tasking is defined as **engaging in multiple media activity simultaneously including multiple windows on single media platform and/or multiple media** [eg. web surfing while watching TV]

... multitasking maybe influenced by **contextual factors**, such as **bedroom media and parental mediation**, as well as **individual differences** such as **age, gender, attention problems & Internet addiction'**



With multifunctional digital devices, opportunities to multitask have **increased significantly**, and multitasking has become more of the **norm** than the exception.

People are constantly engaged in “**continuous partial attention**,” whereby they simultaneously process **multiple streams of information** **without fully committing to a single activity** (Jones, 2005).



Since people can only handle one decision making process at a time, the way to handle two simultaneous processes is to make one of them **automatic** so it requires no decision-making.



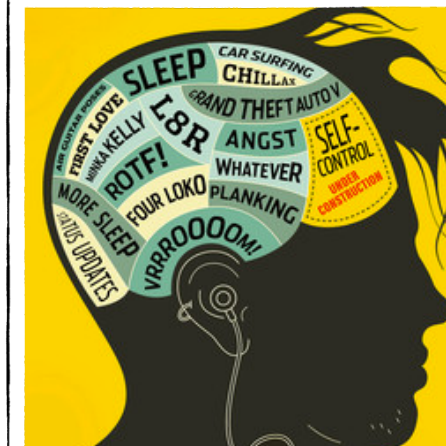
.. In general **dividing attention** has been shown to **disrupt memory encoding** and **reduce subsequent recall**.'

'**Texting, emailing, and posting** on Facebook and other social media sites are by far the **most common** digital activities students undertake while learning...'



'Under most conditions, the brain simply cannot do two complex tasks at the same time..this can only occur if one of the tasks is automatic.  
...and requires no decision making.'

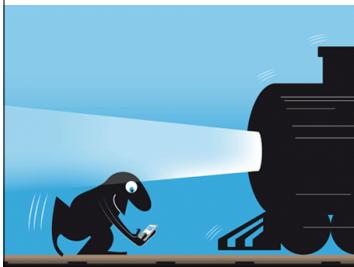
'..but listening to a lecture while texting, or doing homework and being on Facebook—each of these tasks is very demanding, and each of them uses the same area of the brain, **the prefrontal cortex**.'





'.....evidence from psychology, cognitive science, and neuroscience suggests that when students multitask while doing schoolwork, their learning is far **spottier and shallower** than if the work had their full attention.

They **understand and remember less**, and they have greater **difficulty transferring their learning to new contexts**'



2013 [blogs.kqed.org](http://blogs.kqed.org)

## Sleep is Key to Effective Learning

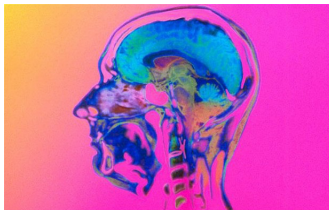


Academics from the **Department of Psychology at Royal Holloway University** found that learners were able to remember and consolidate material more effectively **having slept** on the new information.

The research also suggested that **learning material in stages and getting enough sleep** in between sessions, meant students were better able to **make connections and remember information**, putting paid to the belief that 'cramming' before an exam is an effective means of revision.

[telegraph.co.uk](http://telegraph.co.uk) April 2015

"While you are resting, you are **consolidating** the information... the hippocampus replays the information and it gradually becomes **encoded in the neocortex**." Professor Rastle 2015



"When we are revising we are not just trying to remember individual stats, we are trying to **extract concepts**... So our research shows that you have to have a consolidation period."

'Research has demonstrated that nighttime light exposure **suppresses the production of melatonin**, the major hormone secreted by the pineal gland that controls sleep and wake cycles...



Therefore, a **reduction in melatonin** at night is associated with subjective levels of sleeplessness.

# Blue Light & Melatonin Suppression

It is well established that short-wavelength or “blue” light is the most melatonin-suppressive; this is the type of light typically emitted by devices such as televisions, computer screens, and mobile phones.

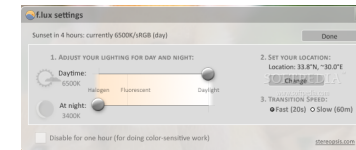


Program called [f.lux](http://justgetflux.com), a program that makes the color of your computer's display adapt to the time of day, warm at night and like sunlight during the day.



This program can be installed on computers, iPads, and iPhones, and may have a significant effect on your melatonin secretion when using these devices at night.

The best part about this program is that it turns on automatically in response to the daylight in your particular time zone, so there's no need to remember any adjustments to the screen.



[justgetflux.com](http://justgetflux.com)

Download f.lux  
Free for Mac OS X  
© 2012 f.lux LLC. All rights reserved. f.lux is a registered trademark of f.lux LLC. f.lux is a service mark of f.lux LLC. f.lux is a trademark of f.lux LLC. f.lux is a trademark of f.lux LLC.  
*(also available for Windows, Linux, and iPhone/iPad)*

## Australian family screen time

### Fall asleep while using a device

Parents: 17%

Children: 39%



### Using devices during meal times

Parents: 15%

Children: 19%

### Using devices between 9pm and midnight on school nights

Parents: 62%

Children: 74%

Source: Telstra Cyber Safety: Balancing the Screen Time Survey 2015



what the internet is doing to our brains

Is multi-tasking deepening generational segregation by promoting more intensive communication with peers and less between generations?



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The fact that technology can pull attention away from other tasks is not only a problem for kids, it's one most adults can relate to as well. But questions about technology's distracting potential are especially relevant in the context of parenting, since we want to make sure we're doing our part to support effective habits.

On one hand, the technology isn't going anywhere. Some parents feel like kids may benefit from learning how to work around of digital disruptions, since they're going to need this skill for their entire lives. On the other hand, the stakes are high: We don't want kids to develop enduring bad habits in the process, and we certainly don't want their learning or schoolwork to suffer. Today's case focuses on the challenge of managing technology's disruptive potential. We're going to consider two articles that describe what the research says about multitasking and implications for media multitasking youth.



**Distraction, Multitasking, & Time Management**

What does research say about the impact of media multitasking (texting, Facebooking, listening to music) while doing schoolwork? Learn about what the pros say, and a few tools, tips, and tricks that kids can use to stay focused.

**The Case, Part 1**

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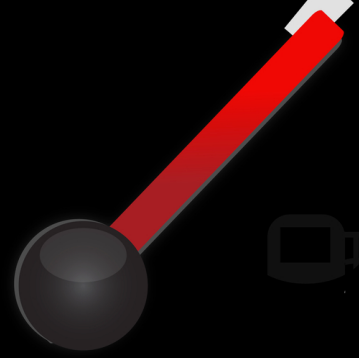
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**Overestimated abilities**

Despite this concern among brain scientists, many people overestimate their ability to multitask, such as the college student who thinks he can text and listen to a lecture simultaneously. He cannot, says brain expert Annie Murphy Paul, who writes "The Brilliant Blog."

YOU ARE IN CONTROL!



Children & teens need effective **strategies, tools & techniques** with which to navigate the sea of information surrounding them.

Teaching them how to **organise & manage information** could help improve **productivity** & develop more **intentional** media use.

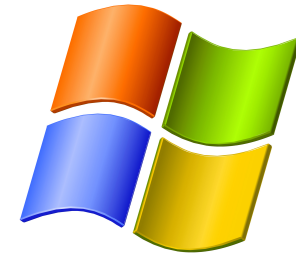
Parents, teachers and young people need to know how to leverage **medium multitasking habits to enhance learning...**and when tasks require total focus.

# Tech Breaks



To satisfy their cravings for electronic communication: After they've laboured on their schoolwork uninterrupted for **15 minutes**, they can allow themselves **2 minutes** to text, check websites, and post to their hearts' content.

# Operating systems



## Parental Controls

Both Microsoft's Windows and Apple's Mac OS come with built-in parental controls.

When you create user accounts, you can select different protections for different users.

The image shows two overlapping windows. The top window is the Mac OS 'Parental Controls' window, which includes a search bar, a warning icon, and text explaining that parental controls manage children's use of the computer and internet. It offers options to 'Create a new user account with parental controls' or 'Convert this account to a parental controls account'. The bottom window is the Windows 'User Controls' window for a user named 'Rowan'. It shows settings for 'Parental Controls' (set to 'Off'), 'Windows Settings' (including Web Filter, Time limits, Games, and program restrictions), and 'Current Settings' (Web Restrictions: General interest, Time Limits: On, Game Ratings: Off, Program Limits: Off). An 'OK' button is at the bottom right.

# NO Self Control? There's an App for That

The image is a screenshot of the Cold Turkey website. At the top, it says 'Cold Turkey' with navigation links for HOME, FEATURES, DOWNLOAD, CLIENTS, CONTACT, and DOCUMENTATION. The main headline reads 'Save time. Stop procrastinating.' Below this, it says 'Use Cold Turkey to temporarily block social media and games while you study.' A green 'Download Now' button is centered. At the bottom, there are three icons with text: a rocket for 'Boost productivity.', a graduation cap for 'Better grades.', and a coffee cup for 'Schedule breaks.'

This section contains three icons and their corresponding text: a rocket icon for 'Boost productivity.', a graduation cap icon for 'Better grades.', and a coffee cup icon for 'Schedule breaks.' The text for each icon describes how the Cold Turkey app helps with that goal.



## Features

More features than ever before.



### Block Websites

Add an unlimited number of websites that you would like blocked. You can also import text files containing domains (separated by new lines or commas).



### Block Applications

In the **pro version**, prevent yourself from wasting time playing games by adding an unlimited number of executable files to block.



### Computer Wide

Cold Turkey's blocking features are computer-wide, which will affect all users and browsers on the computer (except the **parent version**). No more sneaking to other browsers!



### Scheduled Blocks

In the **pro version**, color in the schedule to block certain groups at certain times. The schedule will re-occur weekly (until you change it).



### Lock Settings

Stick to your goals by locking the timer or schedule until a certain time. If you end Cold Turkey before your block expires, all sites will be blocked until you reboot your PC and Cold Turkey starts back up.



### Wildcards and Exceptions

In the **pro version**, you can use wildcards by using an asterisk in a domain. To block the entire internet except a few sites, block **\*.\*** and then add exceptions to allow certain sites.



# SelfControl

A free Mac application to help you avoid distracting websites.

Download SelfControl

v2.0.2, for Mac OS X 10.7+

Users of older OS versions can download [SelfControl 1.5.1](#) for Mac OS X 10.5+.

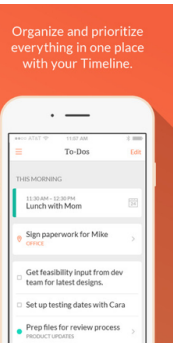
SelfControl is a free and open-source application for Mac OS X that lets you block your own access to distracting websites, your mail servers, or anything else on the Internet.

Just set a period of time to block for, add sites to your blacklist, and click "Start." Until that timer expires, you will be unable to access those sites--even if you restart your computer or delete the application.

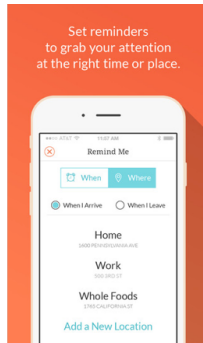
## Time Management Apps



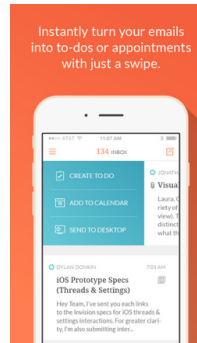
Handle  
Free  
iPhone-iPad



Organize and prioritize everything in one place with your Timeline.



Set reminders to grab your attention at the right time or place.



Instantly turn your emails into to-dos or appointments with just a swipe.



Todoist  
Free  
iPhone-iPad

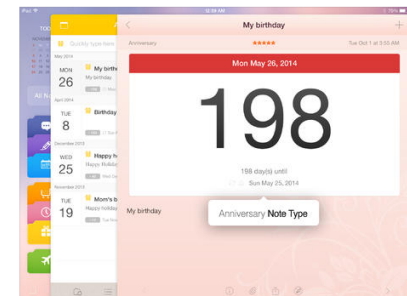


\$6.49 Buy

Awesome Note  
Cost  
iPhone-iPad  
To do/calendar/reminder/memo



Wunderlist  
Free  
iPhone-iPad





Carrier 9:03 PM  
Edit Subjects +

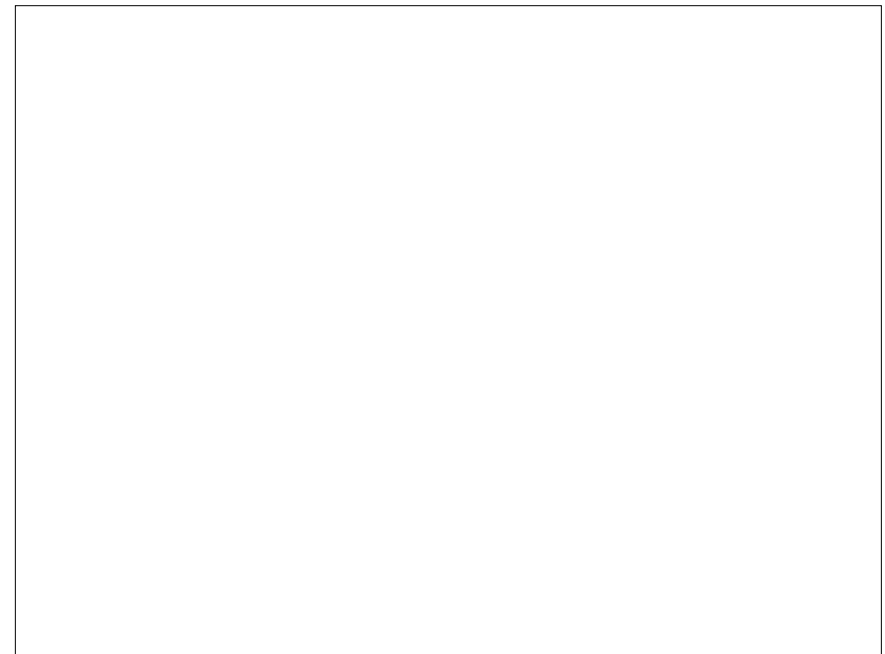
Due Today 1 Today  
Upcoming 1 Today  
Workout  
Biology 4 Overdue  
Organic Chemistry  
AB Calculus 1 Today 27 Overdue 1 Upcoming

\$2.49 Buy

iProcrastinate  
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Details Steps Edit



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