Effects of Entertainment Technology on Productivity

Due: Thursday, May 2nd, 2013 by midnight

NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED!

This assignment is an INDIVIDUAL assignment. You are expected to abide by the policies outlines on the course syllabus, the Math/CS Dept's SPCA, and the Emory Honor code (all of which are available from the course website) in completing this assignment.

Motivation:
Technology has affected all of us profoundly in a spectacularly short period of time. In this course, we've talked about the effects of technology on commerce, banking, security/warfare, and many other areas as well. However, we haven't really discussed the effects on you personally. This assignment is designed to force you into an “technology detox” and critically reflect on how technology affects you in both positive and negative ways.

Summary:
Attempt to live for 3 consecutive days (72 hours) without using the computers for entertainment purposes. At least one of these days must be a weekend day. Keep a journal and record your observations and the changes to your lifestyle. At the end of the assignment, reflect on your experience and how you react to the lack of entertainment. Your finished paper will probably be about 8-10 double-spaced pages in length.

Specifications:
You will need to critically evaluate your technology usage and try to eliminate using computers for entertainment purposes. This includes all form factors and platforms (laptops, iPads, smartphones, Wiis or other gaming consoles, etc). Keep in mind that we're not talking about eliminating ALL technology usage, just that which you do for entertainment. This could include things like mindlessly surfing Facebook, streaming radio, or watching DVDs on your computer. However, you're free to replace these activities with “old school” equivalents like actually visiting your friends and talking to them about their statuses and likes, listening to a CD player, or watching TV.

Again, you do not need to eliminate all technology usage. You may use technology as necessary for work or school purposes. Just don't use it for entertainment purposes. For example: finding resources or conducting research online for a term paper is ok, but flipping open a new tab and browsing online comics or Facebook isn't (unless it relates to work you are doing). You may check your email daily to read class/work related emails, just skip the ones not related to work or school.

You are not graded on whether you succeed at eliminating entertainment technology from your life. You're graded on whether or not you make an honest effort at the assignment, how well you chronicle your experiences, and the quality of your reflections.

You may want to do some pre-planning for this assignment. Consider hosting a board game night with friends. Go to the library and stock up on novels. Spend some quality time working on classwork or reading your textbooks.

Reflections:
Read the two articles posted on BB for this assignment in the “Resources” section. Both of these articles present different approaches to the issue of technology overuse. Think about your experiences in light of these articles.

At the end of your 3 days, reflect on your experiences. In addition to your daily chronicles, some things to think about include:

- Think about the two articles you read for this assignment. How do you feel your use of technology affects you on a daily basis? Is it a positive or negative effect overall? Do you use technology in moderation or are there areas you could do without?
- What aspect of technology did you miss the most and which did you miss the least?
- How comfortable are you with the amount of time you spend daily wasting time via technology? Do you even consider it a waste? Do you think your usage is an issue or are you ok with it?
- What is one experience you had during this assignment that you would not have had otherwise? Would you be willing to continue to give up time previously dedicated to your technology habits in order to continue to have this experience or ones like it?
- Do you feel your productivity was affected during your time without technology? If so, how?
- If you were a technology manager of a small company or a business owner, would you consider limiting your employees access to entertainment technology in the workplace (computer games, Facebook, etc) via business computers/systems/phones? Why or why not?

Scoring:
This assignment can add up to 3 percentage points to your final grade. In other words, if your final calculated grade in the course was a 90.3, good performance on this assignment could raise your grade to a 93.3. However, since this is a significant amount of extra credit, I expect a significant amount of quality work from you in order to earn the full 3 points.

Turn-in:
I do not expect perfect writing, as this assignment includes your personal thoughts and experiences; however, your assignment should be free of major spelling, punctuation, and grammar mistakes. Upload your assignment to BB for the “Extra Credit” assignment. No late submissions will be accepted. No exceptions.