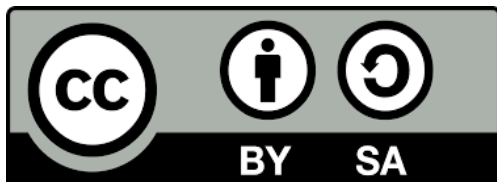




DIGITAL AND MEDIA LITERACY FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP: A tool kit
for promoting critical thinking and democratic values

MODULE 6: Managing Digital Identity

Topic 3: Screen Time Management



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Co-funded by the
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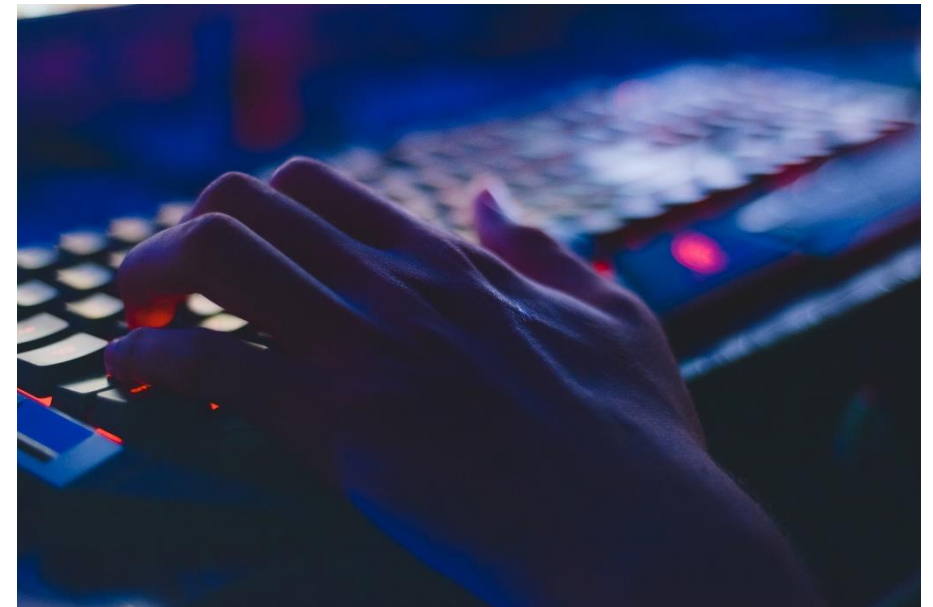
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Module Description

Nowadays, technology is a part of our everyday lives.

We are online perhaps more than we are offline, as we are almost constantly in front of a screen, whether on a smartphone, a computer monitor, a laptop or a tablet, and it is important to remember that the persona we have online has an impact on our offline lives, as well.

This module will teach you why you need to be careful with your online identity, how to paint yourself in a good light in online interactions, and how to manage your time and activities online.



Topics

This module will cover the following topics:

- Topic 1: Netiquette
- Topic 2: Digital Footprint
- Topic 3: Screen Time









Learning Outcomes

In this module, you will learn:

- what comprises our digital identity and why it is important to be conscious of it
- the skillset needed to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate online behaviours that form one's digital identity
- how to manage your online identity to avoid the pitfalls that may result from abusive or inappropriate behaviour and use of the internet

Legend

	Keywords
	Scenarios
	Tips
	Questions
	Activities
	Resources

Topic 3

Screen Time Management

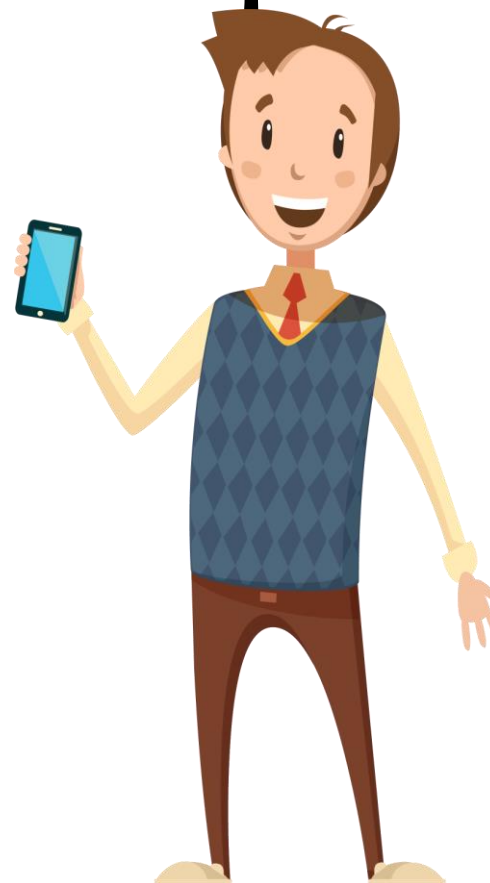


How long do teenagers spend on their phones?

A survey found that 91 % of young people in the EU made daily use of the internet.

In some EU countries, 9 out of 10 young people use a mobile device to connect to the internet on the move.

Research has also shown that teenagers in the US spend around 9 hours a day on the internet, either on their phones, tablets or computers, watching videos, browsing social media, chatting and playing online games.



What is internet addiction?

We've probably all heard of internet addiction.

Can the internet be just as addictive as drugs though?

Internet addiction is characterized by the urge to spend a lot of time on the computer. A person suffering from internet addiction is preoccupied with getting on their computer (or other device), and if they cannot access the internet, they may experience anxiety and other negative feelings.



The gap between **screen addiction** and **internet addiction** is lessening more and more, as the internet continually expands to offer additional services.



Addictive aspects of technology

Which online activities are the most addictive?

Social media, online gaming and **binge-watching** are all activities that have been linked with addiction.

What do these things have in common, and why are they so addictive?

✂ The answer is found in something called **behavioural addiction**, a type of addiction which occurs without the abuse of substances.

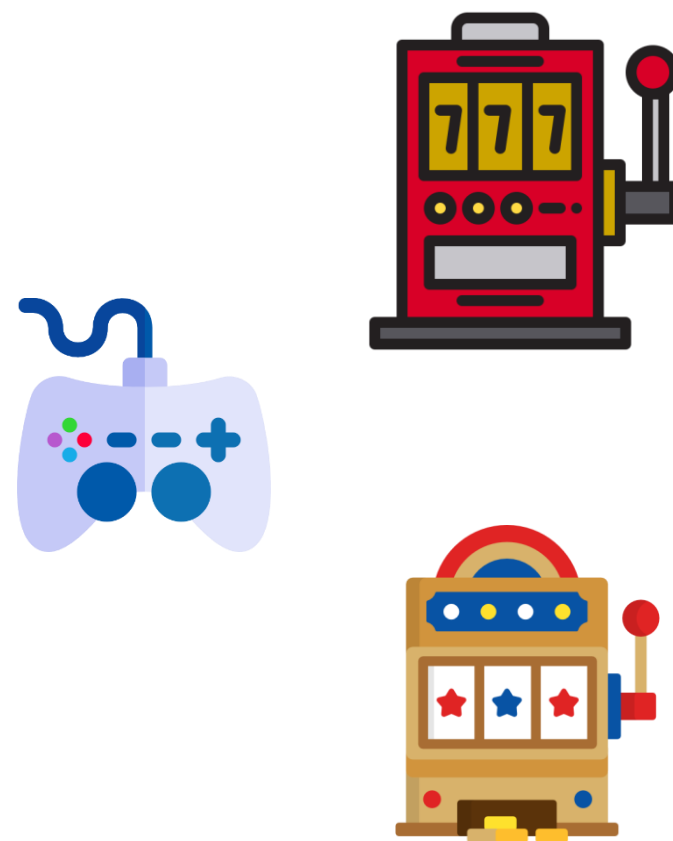
An example of a type of behavioural addiction is gambling addiction.



What makes these activities so attractive? - Games

Experts have found many similarities between gambling, more specifically slot machines, and videogames. Similarities include:

- Flashing lights and loud, sudden sounds on queue
- Positive feedback after we do the correct set of actions
- The need for repetitive patterns of actions
- Need for concentration and hand-eye coordination



What makes these activities so attractive? – Social Media



What is it that makes us want to spend so much time on social media?

First of all, the information never runs out. Our feeds are constantly refreshed, and there's always something new to see.

Secondly, it is in our nature as humans to want to **belong** and **feel accepted** by those around us.

Positive feedback (a lot of likes, shares and good comments) makes us want more, and negative feedback (few likes, and maybe sometimes even mean comments) makes us try harder, to achieve positive feedback.



What makes these activities so attractive? – **Binge-watching**



Binge-watching, whether it be on television or online, is also highly addictive.

As we watch, our brain releases dopamine, otherwise known as “the happy hormone”.

So, when we continue to watch, our brain tells our body to continue watching, because it feels too good to stop.

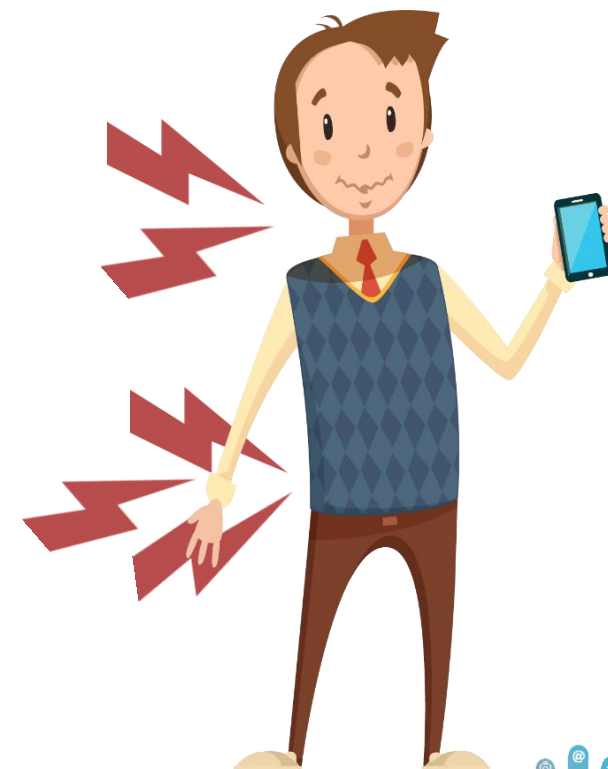
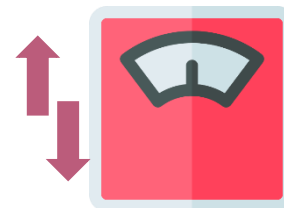
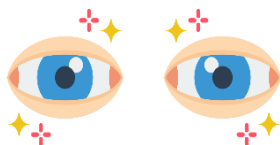
The “good feeling” we experience is due to the dopamine release, something which also happens with other types of addiction, such as drugs and alcohol.

Indications of excessive screen time and screen addiction

Spending too much time online can have a negative impact on someone's body and mind.

People may experience **physical symptoms**, such as:

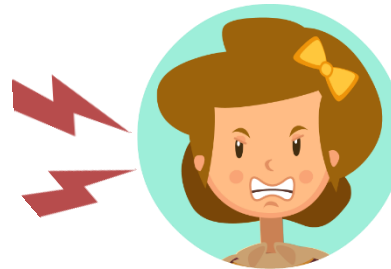
- Headaches,
- Back ache,
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome,
- Blurry/strained vision,
- Changes in body weight (gain or loss)
- Sleep disturbances.



Symptoms of excessive screen time and screen addiction

The symptoms of internet addiction can also be felt **emotionally**:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loneliness
- Agitation
- Mood swings
- Fear
- Euphoria when using the computer



Symptoms of excessive screen time and screen addiction

When someone truly suffers from screen addiction, there are also some telling **behaviours**:

- Lying about computer use
- Isolation
- Can't maintain schedules
- Defensiveness
- Avoiding to do work (or homework)



It's very important to remember that even though some of these symptoms may be present, it doesn't necessarily mean that someone is suffering from internet addiction. If you feel that someone may be facing such problems, have a talk with them, or if you feel it is necessary tell your teacher and/or parents.

Effects of addiction on our lives



All these symptoms sound terrible, but the effects of internet addiction don't stop there. People who have long-term issues with internet addiction may have a lot of serious problems, as it can affect many aspects of our lives:

Personal relationships may suffer, as people will neglect their friends, family and loved ones to spend more time in front of a screen.

Moreover, lying about how much time they spend online may lead to trust issues between them and their loved ones.

Effects of addiction on our lives



Our **school performance** may also suffer, as we will sacrifice our duties to spend more time in front of the screen.

In older people, internet addiction can even lead to serious financial problems, since people tend to avoid working in favour of spending time online, shopping, gaming, gambling and binge-watching.

Effects of spending too much time on screen



Other implications of excessive screen time, especially on social media, may include:

FOMO, or, Fear Of Missing Out: an uneasy feeling we get that we might miss fun things happening around us, caused especially by things we see on social media.

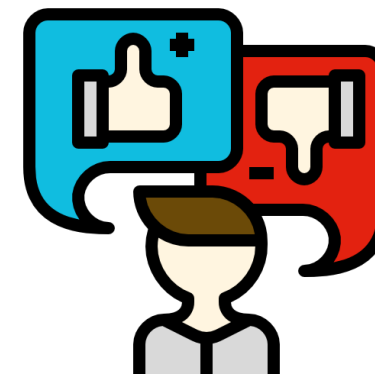


Cyberbullying: bullying that happens through electronic means, e.g. the posting of mean things about someone on social media.



Effects of spending too much time on screen

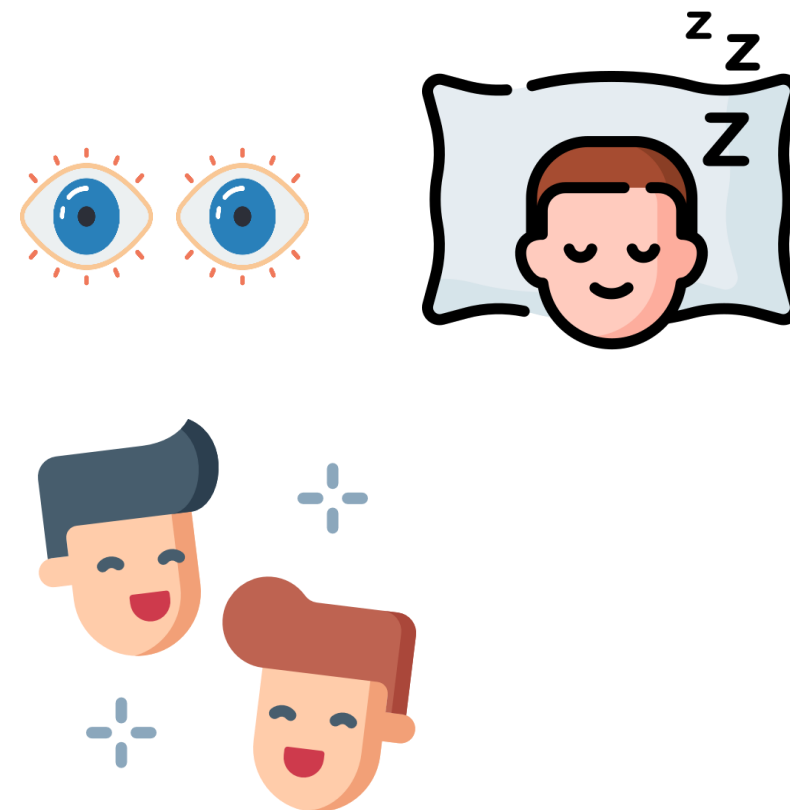
- ✎ **Peer pressure:** the need to do the same things as other people or our age and social group in order to be liked and respected by them. Social media can intensify this, as we are constantly bombarded with information.
- ✎ **Insecurity:** social media presents us with unrealistic standards, which puts us in a position to compare with ourselves, and makes us feel like we are not enough.



Managing our screen time – why it's important

There are a lot of benefits to keeping our screen time in check. Some of these include:

- Better sleep
- Less stress
- Less eye-strain
- More time to engage in hobbies, other enjoyable activities and to socialize



Managing our screen time: How to do it

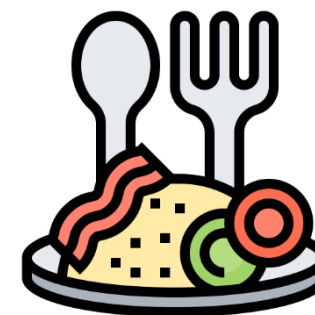
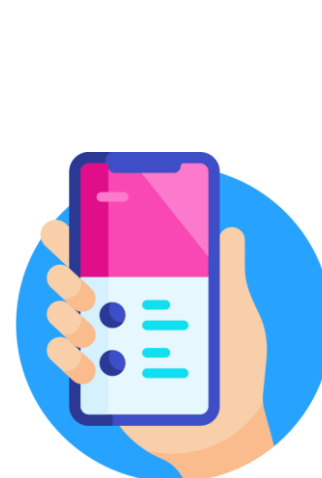
! Here are a few tips to help you put your screen time under check:

- **Count how many times you pick your phone up**

The average number a person picks up their phone in a day is around 58.

- **When eating a meal, stay media-free.**

This is a great way to reduce your screen time. Try to stay away from TV, your phone, tablet or computer.



Managing our screen time: How to do it



- **Stay off TV and your phone in bed.**

This can also improve your sleep quality, as screen time before going to sleep has been shown to cause disturbances in sleep.



- **Try to socialize more in person or over the phone, rather than on social media.**

Not only is it faster to say something to someone, it's also more personal to call or meet than catching up over chat.

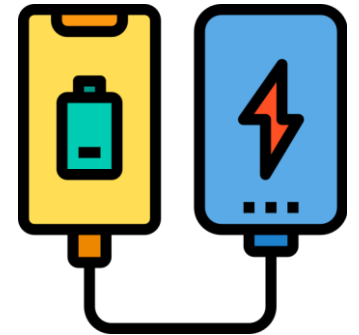
Managing our screen time: How to do it

! • Set a timer.

There is no harm in doing something we enjoy, as long as we do it mindfully. Start by setting a timer to see how long you spend on social media. The next step is to reduce that time. Once the alarm goes off, get off your device!

• Put your phone charger away from your bed.

If you charge your phone next to your bed, chances are you'll be tempted to pick it up during nighttime if it goes off, or as soon as you wake up.



Managing our screen time: How to do it

- ❗ • **Make your smartphone limit your time for you.**
Nowadays, smartphones have integrated options for tracking and limiting screen time. In addition to giving information about how much time you spend on your phone, you can also see **what** you do with your time.

You can also download apps that lock your phone for a certain period of time.

- **Switch off notifications**

See which apps are most addictive for you. Then, switch off notifications for those apps for a while, or put your phone on silent and focus on another task. You are less likely to pick up your phone if it's not going off.



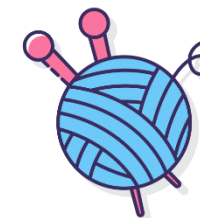
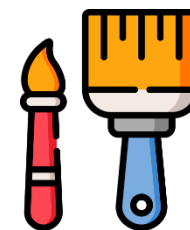
Managing our screen time: How to do it

- ❗ • **Take up a creative hobby or sports.**

Being creative always makes us feel more productive and proud in our work. Plus, when you're doing something you enjoy, you'll probably forget to check your phone!

- **Trick yourself into limiting use**

Many times, we pick up our phones absent-mindedly, without a real reason. When we do this, we usually go to the same 2 or 3 apps without thinking about it. To limit this, change their positions on your home screen regularly, or remove them from your home screen entirely. When you have to look for the app's icon, you reduce the chances of you opening the app by force of habit.



Conclusion

Technology can be a great tool and a source of fun and entertainment when used with moderation.

Mindless screen time can take a toll on our personal and professional lives, and even our health, so we need to be mindful about our screen time, and spend time on our devices wisely.

There are a number of easy ways to reduce our screen time, and it's all about forming healthy habits.

We start by making small changes, and then move up from there.



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Extra Resources

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQOSMcGkt6E>

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Submission Number: 2018-1-DE03-KA201-047411