Chapter 9
Developing Healthy Habits in Media Consumption: A Proposal for Dealing with Information Overload

Javier Serrano-Puche
University of Navarra, Spain

ABSTRACT

In the contemporary media ecosystem, online consumption is framed and characterized by a number of general elements. These key factors are: a) the overabundance of information available to users (information overload); b) the speed of online interaction; c) the emergence of attention as currency; d) the multiplicity of different screens; and e) the socialization of consumption. This chapter, grounded on a comprehensive literature review, first provides a description of these elements. A digital diet is then proposed based on the development of three areas: knowing how to use the technological tools and applications to deal with information overload; learning how to manage attention and cognitive overload; and, finally, establishing regular periods of digital disconnection. The conclusion is that practicing these healthy habits leads to more useful and effective media consumption.
INTRODUCTION

The integration of digital technology in our daily lives is unquestionable, to the point where it is increasingly difficult to stop using it regularly because it has become such an inevitable part of our existence. As Deuze (2012) said, “we do not live with, but in, media” (p. XIII). It is a time of individuals interconnected via networks (the new social operating system) (Rainie & Wellman, 2012), who use the Internet as their platform for contact and information exchange and which they can access anytime and anywhere, thanks to mobile communication.

The omnipresence of digital devices is not, however, a simple quantitative matter, as:

their widespread presence, their level of personalization and the potential for permanent connection that they provide contribute to the reconfiguration of many aspects of daily life and to contemporary processes of subjectivation and socialization (Lasén, 2014, p. 7).

Thus, according to Lipovetsky and Serroy (2009), “the network of screens has transformed our way of living, our relationship with information, with space-time, with consumption” (p. 271).

Digital technology has favored increasing flexibility in relationships between individuals and groups, giving rise to the development of what some authors have called “networked individualism” (Wellman et al, 2003) or “networked self” (Papacharissi, 2011). In parallel with traditional relationships of belonging, transitory network relationships of a more limited scope have proliferated and are characterized by being less rigid and more dynamic, because the online environment allows users to be in company while conserving their individuality (Turkle, 2011) and provides a “sanitized” form of relationship typical of a liquid world in which identities are fluid (Bauman, 2004).

The birth of each new medium has always given rise to the start of a debate between enthusiasts and skeptics, and the Internet is no exception (Baym, 2010). However, it is needed to rise above this polarization and take a critical and nuanced approach to really understanding the impact of digital technologies and the opportunities, challenges and risks they bring in order to make good use of them. According to Area and Ribeiro (2012), there are six major realms or dimensions of learning on the Internet, as it is at once:

a universal library, a global market, a giant jigsaw puzzle of hypertextually interconnected pieces, a public meeting place where people communicate and form social communities, a territory in which multimedia and audiovisual communication take precedence, and a diversity of virtual, interactive environments (p. 14).
From Information Model to Controllable Implementation
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/information-model-controllable-implementation/22995?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/information-model-controllable-implementation/22995?camid=4v1a)

Health Care Reform Requires Rethinking on the IT Strategy
Au Vo and Rahul Bhaskar (2012). *Teaching Cases Collection* (pp. 65-72).
[www.igi-global.com/article/health-care-reform-requires-rethinking/71813?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/health-care-reform-requires-rethinking/71813?camid=4v1a)