

Today, technology is everywhere you look. In some form or another, it plays a role in everyone's life. The role of technology, specifically digital technology, has been contentious and has undergone serious changes since its inception in the 1970s, with the popularization of digital computers. Today, most people possess high-powered devices in their pockets and high-powered computers in their backpacks. Digital technology has evolved from a mere tool at users' disposal to a means of distraction from everyday life. This change is discussed in the essay "In Defense of Distraction," written by Sam Anderson. Anderson, an American author and staff writer at The New York Times Magazine, uses his essay to argue that while often seen as negative, distractions can be beneficial, offering a necessary break from intense focus and promoting creativity and exploration, rather than being solely detrimental to productivity. Conversely, Kaia Anderson, a first-year student at the University of New England, employs her essay "Helping the Addict: A Call to Action" to highlight the addiction caused by the constant distraction of digital technology. In a similar vein, Myli Petrocci, also a first-year student at the University of New England, points out the negative effects of technology-induced distraction on college students. As a member of Gen Z, I have grown up with easy access to technology, and I believe that the distractions it provides contribute to technological addiction.

Technology, although it has gotten quite expensive, has become far more accessible which means more and more people suffering from the distractions that it provides. As a college student you would expect that every student has their own phone or computer and that is the case. But as you go down the age groups, you would think that phone and computer usage would decrease. But that is not the case. As technology has become increasingly popular, it has become increasingly easier to attain, no matter your age. The high technological usage in the younger generations is discussed in Anderson's article. He writes, "schoolkids spread their attention across 30 different programs at once and interact with each other mainly as sweatless avatars. (One

recent study found that American teenagers spend an average of 6.5 hours a day focused on the electronic world, which strikes me as a little low; in South Korea, the most wired nation on earth, young adults have actually died from exhaustion after multiday online-gaming marathons.)” (page number) In this quote, Sam Anderson is addressing the amount of time kids spend on technology in school and how some kids take part in multiday gaming marathons which have had deadly results. Similarly, Petrocci provides her readers with firsthand experiences surrounding technology and its grasp on its users. She writes, “I find that if I let myself rot on a screen before bed, I lose track of time, time goes by so fast, I have no idea how much I just wasted and earn absolutely nothing from it. Specifically, a few nights ago when I was so excited to finally be done with studying and in bed before midnight even, my body was ready for sleep, and I told my roommates I was going to bed and excited about it.” (Petrocci). Here, Petrocci is explaining the effects talked about in Sam Anderson’s quote. She is backing the claims that he made using her own experiences as a college student. Where these quotes differ is the application of them. In Anderson’s article, he develops this quote into the claim that kids growing up now might have an associative genius that we don’t and that they have a Zenlike state of focused distraction. Petrocci uses her quote, rather her experience, to highlight just how bad technology can be and the grasp that it has on the young minds of today. As someone who has grown up with technology, whether it be my Leapfrog educational tablet or my iPhone, I have had technology at my fingertips. And because of this easy access, I have felt a serious decline in my attention span. I have found it increasingly difficult to focus on one topic at a time. As I type this essay, I have bounced between four different tabs, texted 3 different people, and watched TikTok on my phone. This is not a unique experience however and that is seen in Petrocci’s essay. Teens and young adults today have lost the ability to focus on relatively easy tasks because it requires them to spend more than 3 minutes on a task. Apps such as TikTok and Instagram feed their

users with 15-30 second clips that provide them with some quick burst of stimulation and then it forces them to move on. This quick burst of stimulation has molded the human mind of today to be reliant of quick and easy tasks rather than tasks that require serious cognitive thinking.