

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. I believe that easy access to technology and the distractions that 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 increase in the usage of technology was seen in Sam Anderson's article. Here he writes, "Adopting the Internet as the hub of our work, play, and commerce has been the intellectual equivalent of adopting corn syrup as the center of

our national diet, and we've all become mentally obese. Formerly well-rounded adults are forced to MacGyver worldviews out of telegraphic blog posts, bits of YouTube videos, and the first nine words of *Times* editorials." (2) Here, Anderson is directly referring to technologies place in society today, comparing it to consuming corn syrup, a universally known sugar filled substance. Similarly, In Kaia Anderson's essay, she discusses technology and how it has become a readily accessible drug that that has intertwined itself into much of today's world. She writes, "Other areas of our lives like shopping, even grocery shopping, can be done completely over apps. The list is growing ever longer by the day. Dating, meetings, reading, and writing are just a small list of things that have been greatly influenced by the increase of digitalization." (Anderson). Here, Anderson is analyzing where technology has emerged into daily tasks and how depending on it to complete such tasks has led to addiction. 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. While in Kaia Anderson's article she argues that letting addiction run rampant causes the inability to focus and converse, as humans are no longer expected to practice and develop these specific skills. 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. In the time that I have been using technology, I have seen a technological explosion. Companies causes older products lag to rush to put out new products every year, forcing you to purchase new products, companies urge you to invest in electrical cars, no one carries cash anymore because of "Apple Pay", and people would rather text than communicate over the phone or in person because it is too tall of a task. These examples just grace the tip of the iceberg. Technology has such a dominant role in today's world that you would struggle to navigate it without.

The human mind today has been molded into a figure that is reliant on quick bursts of information which has caused a decrease in attention span. Lately, this is seen heavily in younger generations. 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.)" (2) 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. In a similar vein, Petrocci provides her readers with firsthand experiences surrounding technology and its grasp on its users as it has become more accessible for teenagers and young adults today. 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. Petrocci uses her experience to highlight just how bad technology can be and the grasp that it has on the young minds of today. Because of the easy access to technology today, much like Petrocci, 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 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 Kaia Anderson's essay. I feel as though 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.

It is common today to hear the phrase “that will not fly in the real world” when someone, usually an older individual, is criticizing technology use. Often, they are referring to how productivity is negatively affected by digital technology use.

While technology has revolutionized the way we live, learn, and connect, it has also created a landscape where constant distraction is normal. Through the insights of Sam Anderson, Kaia Anderson, and Myli Petrocci, it becomes clear that digital technology has grown beyond a helpful tool and has become a source of addiction that rewires how we think, interact, and function. The easy accessibility of technology, especially for younger generations, has contributed to shortened attention spans, decreased productivity, and a growing dependence on instant gratification. As someone who has grown up in this digital world, I’ve seen firsthand how these distractions impact focus and behavior.