Disconnecting & the Potential Benefits Some Disengagement with Technology Can Bring

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Agenda

• THINKING ABOUT DISCONNECTING
• WHY YOU NEED TO DISCONNECT
  • Multitasking
  • Interruptions
  • Relationship, Communication, Sleep and Mental Health Issues
• WHY IT IS SO HARD TO DISCONNECT
• SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU
Ode To a Disconnected Journey

If from technology you need a break,  
Don’t be afraid a break to take;  
For creativity and focus, your mind does ache  
and so you likely will tend to make a mistake.  
In addition you may see ...  
a better attorney, boss, and person you will be.  
Mindful rather than multitasking wins the day.  
And in the end you temporarily disconnect or pay.  
(But that may not mean you want Vaunt to stay away).

By Me
Thinking about Disconnecting

Many lawyers struggle with time management and productivity. They often turn to technology to assist them in communicating with clients and staff and accessing resources to meet the legal needs of their clients. But, they often fail to realize that the technology may actually be an impediment to the focus and creativity necessary to solve the complex legal problems of their clients.
Thinking about Disconnecting

Attorneys may find that if they disconnect from the technology and take reasonable breaks (both in the form of short breaks each day and annual vacations) to recharge, they can be more productive and have better relationships with the people they work with. In turn, they may also find they have less stress and better rest and health.
National Day of Unplugging

• NATIONAL DAY OF UNPLUGGING
• A 24 HOUR GLOBAL RESPITE FROM TECHNOLOGY. IT HIGHLIGHTS THE VALUE OF DISCONNECTING FROM DIGITAL DEVICES TO CONNECT WITH OURSELVES, OUR LOVED ONES AND OUR COMMUNITIES IN REAL TIME.
• FROM SUNDOWN ON MARCH 9, 2018, UNTIL SUNDOWN MARCH 10.
Locking Up the Phones

• If it is good for kids, is it good for lawyers too?
Do Lawyers Need a Digital Detox?

By Sharon D. Nelson & John W. Simek

VERY FEW LAWYERS SEEM to have control over their digital devices. To the contrary, the devices seem to be in control, demanding the nearly nonstop attention of lawyers. It might seem odd to hear two geeks talk about digital detoxing, but we recognized the need for it years ago. Perhaps, as geeks, we were on the bleeding edge of this phenomenon.

Author Nelson was not pleased that author (and her husband) Simek could not have dinner in a nice restaurant with his wife without regularly checking his phone. That was the beginning. In time, marital negotiations (and renegotiations) resulted in some rules! Our phones may be in our pockets, but they are not invited to participate in nice dinners. Our phones, unless people check their phones at least once during the night. Nearly two-thirds of us check our phones within 15 minutes of arising in the morning.

Our technology has become an addiction as disturbing as reliance on drugs or alcohol. Many experts say that technology is rewiring our brains, and we tend to agree.

In June 2017, McAfee released a document called Report: Digital Detox—Unwind, Relax and Unplug. It is chockablock full of statistics about the extent of our addiction. (You can find the report at mcafee.com/resources/misc/pr-unplugging-study-digital-detox.pdf.) As depressing as it may be, it offers support for our conviction that everyone, lawyers included, needs to take a long, hard look at
AT LEAST WE AREN'T CHECKING OUR PHONES!
WHY WE NEED TO DISCONNECT

• Because we are using technology to try to successfully multitask
• Because technology is introducing interruptions
• Because constant use of technology can adversely affect relationships, communications, sleep patterns and mental health issues while “unplugging” can result in improved quality of life.
Successful multitasking isn’t possible for most people.

In 2012, David Strayer found himself in a research lab, on the outskirts of London, observing something he hadn’t thought possible: extraordinary multitasking. For his entire career, Strayer, a professor of psychology at the University of Utah, had been studying attention—how it works and how it doesn’t. Methods had come and gone, theories had replaced theories, but one constant remained: humans couldn’t multitask. Each time someone tried to focus on more than one thing at a time, performance suffered. Most recently, Strayer had been focussing on people who drive while on the phone.

"Multitask Masters," by Maria Konnikova. There is generally an inverse relationship between how good people are at multitasking and how good they think they are.
Multitasking

- Successful multitasking isn’t possible for most people.
- Don’t believe it ... [Watch](#) this.
Multitasking

• 2% of the population can multitask

• 98% Switch back and forth rapidly between task
  • The "executive system" of the brain helps the brain decide which tasks to focus on and when to suppress irrelevant information
Multitasking

• 2% of the population can multitask well

• 98% Switch back and forth rapidly between task
  • The "executive system" of the brain helps the brain decide which tasks to focus on and when to suppress irrelevant information
  • The result is a start/stop/start process that rather than saving time, costs time. It’s less efficient, we make more mistakes, and over time it can be energy sapping.
Multitasking

- Multitasking may allow us to quickly cross some simpler items off the to-do lists. However, it rarely assists in solving tough more complex problems. “... More often than not, it’s procrastination in disguise.”
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

• Shifting our attention from one task to another ... disrupts our concentration and saps our focus. Each time we return to our initial task, we use up valuable cognitive resources reorienting ourselves. And all those transitional costs add up ... According to a University of California-Irvine study, regaining our initial momentum following an interruption can take, on average, upwards of 20 minutes.
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

• An experiment conducted at the University of London found that we lose as many as 10 IQ points when we allow our work to be interrupted by seemingly benign distractions like emails and text messages.
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

AVERAGE OFFICE WORKER RECEIVES AND SENDS APPROXIMATELY 122 EMAILS EACH DAY
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

ADULTS (45-54) SEND AND RECEIVE ~33 TEXTS A DAY
ADULTS (35-44) SEND AND RECEIVE ~52 TEXTS A DAY
ADULTS (25-34) SEND AND RECEIVE 75+ TEXTS EVERY DAY

33-75 TEXTS EACH DAY
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

CHECKING SOCIAL MEDIA
0-120 MINUTES EACH DAY

Two-thirds (67%) of respondents say they regularly check social media while at work.
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

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Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

OTHER INTERRUPTIONS INCLUDING CALLS & VIDEO CONFERENCING & OTHER TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED MEETINGS
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

• On average you check your phone **110 times a day** - that means you're spending 23 days every year glued to your smartphone! How productive do you think that makes you?
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

“Apple says that iPhone users unlock their phones 80 times a day. Even worse, research firm Dscout found that we tap, type and swipe our smartphones more than 2,600 times a day, on average. The majority of us check in front of our kids, during meetings, while we eat and while we should be sleeping.”
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

• And our smartphones are the primary device we use to facilitate these interruptions

• Overall, the number of times users look at their phones has remained nearly constant for the past three years at approximately 47 times per day

Deloitte: Americans Look at Their Smartphones More Than 12 Billion Times Daily, Even as Usage Habits Mature and Device Growth Plateaus

Device Addiction Shifts to Device Etiquette

• The year 2017 marks the emergence of what we call "Device Etiquette" – a collection of usage patterns and habits across all demographics. The survey notes that respondents are relatively consistent when it comes to the amount of times they look at their phones each day, including the speed at which they reach for their phones.

• Almost half (47 percent) of U.S. consumers are making a conscious effort to reduce or limit their smartphone usage, mostly by keeping it out of sight or turning its functions off.

• Overall, the number of times users look at their phones has remained nearly constant for the past three years at approximately 47 times per day, the notable exception being the youngest age group (18-24) who check their phones 86 times a day, up from 82 times in 2016.

• The number of apps consumers download and have installed on devices, has increased marginally, to 23, from 22 in 2016.

• Eighty-nine percent of consumers looked at their phones within an hour of waking up, a yearly increase of only 1 percent.

• Similarly, 81 percent of those surveyed look at their phones an hour before going to sleep, consistent with 2016.
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

47 phone checks x 20 minutes to return to task = 940 minutes (or almost 16 hours a day).
Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

Are the constant stream of interruptions part of the reason for the low number of billable hours reported in Clio’s 2017 Legal Trends Report?
• Lawyers spend only 2.3 hours daily on billable tasks (29 percent of an eight-hour workday).

• Lawyers spend nearly half of their day (48 percent) on office administration (billings, bookkeeping, technology and so on).

• They spend about one-third of their time on marketing, which “suggests earning new clients is a constant concern.”

Technology Is Introducing Interruptions

• Statistics Lie
  • Lawyers often think it’s cheaper to do all their own stuff rather than hire someone. And frankly, some hide out from their work, their marketing and their worries by sticking their heads in the sands of office stuff.
  • Do lawyers really spend one-third of their time on marketing? Or are they recording their social media time — unstructured, undirected, haphazard as most of it is?
  • ... the average lawyer loses 20 to 25 percent of their potentially billable time to distractions and interruptions ... Clio’s survey data says 25 percent of legal professionals are interrupted more than 10 times per day, and 30 percent are interrupted between six and 10 times per day.
Constant use of technology can adversely affect relationships & communications

• Communications
  • Most people speak more quickly than we type or text. Thus, even if we must walk across the office, face-to-face communication is likely to take less time and be more effective
  • Non-verbal cues are just as crucial when communicating as the words we say. Everything from body language and facial expressions to attentiveness and engagement can indicate different thoughts and feelings – each of which can only truly be observed through face-to-face communication.”
Constant use of technology can adversely affect relationships & communications

• Relationships
  • There is no doubt that if you’re not physically in the workplace, you keep yourself locked away in your office, or you choose email to communicate over phone ... you’re not going to be as connected with your colleagues as those who understand the importance of face time. A sense of community comes with the ability to interact and socialise, and this sets the foundation for trust, and ultimately better working relationships.
  • But use of emojis to support the role in business relationships can help.

#ABATECHSHOW
Constant use of technology can adversely affect sleep, health & mental health

• Sleep
  • Data from a 2013 survey in PEW shows that 44 percent of people sleep with their phones by their sides so they don't miss a message or notification ... if you're waking up in the middle of the night to check work emails, that doesn't suggest anything good ... because you aren't giving your brain and body proper time to recharge.
  • Research also suggests that the blue light from the screens in computers and phones also makes it difficult ... to fall asleep, implying that we should disconnect before bed ... [But many devices now have blue light filters]
Constant use of technology can adversely affect sleep, health & mental health

- Health
  - Multitasking results in the release of dopamine and stress hormones, like adrenaline, which have negative effects long-term health and also lead to short-term memory loss. That means that the information taken in when multitasking is more difficult to remember at a later stage.
Constant use of technology can adversely affect sleep, health & mental health

• Mental health

• Researchers studying the relationship of mobile phone use and mental health have also found that excessive use of phones may be leading to greater incidences of depression and anxiety

• “Individuals who overused their phones were more likely to score higher on the depression and anxiety scales, possibly because, according to the study, problematic smartphone use ‘may interfere with other pleasurable activities and disrupt social activities, thereby reducing behavioral activation and subsequently increasing depression.’”
Constant use of technology can adversely affect sleep, health & mental health
WHY IT IS SO HARD TO DISCONNECT AND QUIT USING TECHNOLOGY TO MULTITASK?

- We have conditioned our bodies to release chemicals to “reward” our task accomplishment even if the quality of our work suffers.
  - “Successful” multitasking results in release of dopamine, also known as “the happy hormone.” The dopamine rush makes individuals feel good and generates beliefs that they are being effective.
  - The dopamine rush can also make individuals overly optimistic, which means they are less careful about their work and more likely to make mistakes.
  - Multitaskers become addicted to the dopamine rush which leads them to believe they are being effective when in fact they're not.
WHY IT IS SO HARD TO DISCONNECT AND QUIT USING TECHNOLOGY TO MULTITASK?

• There’s almost nothing more compelling than social information ... which activates part of your brain’s reward system.

• Your noodle is also hardwired to respond to novel sights or sounds ... For most of human history, a sudden noise might have signaled the presence of a predator...

• Combine that sudden beep with the implicit promise of new social info, and you have a near-perfect, unignorable stimulus that will pull your focus away from whatever task your brain is working on. And while you may think you can quickly check a text or email and pick up that task where you left off, you really can’t.
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Take 5-10 minutes to plan the task you need to complete each day.
• Rather than working from email or message reminders disconnect and make a list of these “Most Important Tasks (MITs)” to be more productive.
• Some advocates of the MIT approach recommend writing the list in a paper journal so that you can refer to the list without having to “reconnect” to technology.
• Maintain focus on completing the MITs.
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Turn off email notifications and don’t constantly have your email open.
  • Just because you can have email open on dual monitors, doesn’t mean you should.
  • Schedule times to check email and stick to the schedule. Use auto responses to inform email senders of the schedule.
Some Tips/Methods/Strategies to Help You

- Turn off email notifications and don’t constantly have your email open.

  - Schedule times to check email and stick to the schedule. Use auto responses to inform email senders of the schedule.

  - Use a client portal to communicate with your clients rather than email. Use of a client portal allows the attorney to attend to client communications on a schedule that best serves both the client and the attorney and lessens the number of interruptions the attorney experiences. Additionally, communications from clients through the client portal of a practice management solution will be part of the “digital client file” of a paperless office.
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Turn off your device, not just the notifications, and consider placing the device somewhere else in the office.

  • ... the mere presence of consumers’ smartphones can adversely affect two measures of cognitive capacity—available working memory capacity and functional fluid intelligence ...

  ... defined and protected periods of separation, such as these, may allow consumers to perform better not just by reducing interruptions but also by increasing available cognitive capacity.

Brain Drain: The Mere Presence of One’s Own Smartphone Reduces Available Cognitive Capacity

Adrian F. Ward, Kristen Duke, Ayelet Gneezy, and Maarten W. Bos
• Take a break in an environment in which the connectivity is limited. Researchers have suggested that spending time in nature may counteract the focus-draining effects of too much tech time.
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Take a vacation

• Prepare to do so by
  • Moving to the cloud if you haven’t
    The risk is that you could also use cloud software as an excuse to work regular hours during your vacation. Don’t fall into that workaholic trap. Instead, truly unplug and only respond to emergencies.

• Schedule some free time
  You can also free up time to take regular vacations if you become more rigid about how you manage your calendar ... Book the trip and start informing your clients that you’ll be away. The sooner you do both of those things the more time you will have to arrange/rearrange your schedule.

• Get a Substitute
  It is a small percentage of lawyers who formalize backup attorney arrangement, but if you want to go on a true vacation, you should be one of them.
TIPs/Methods/strategies to help you

• Ask your colleagues and/or staff for help. Their own self-interest will likely motivate them to provide assistance.
  • Study found that “when people used cell phones they were less likely to be good to others, or to display ‘prosocial behavior’ directly after.”

Is Your Cell Phone Making You a Jerk?

Cell phones connect you socially, but they may also make you less socially minded.

By Alexandra Sifferlin @acsifferlin | Feb. 20, 2012

Cell phones keep us socially connected, but new research suggests they actually reduce users’ social consciousness. In fact, the study showed that cell phone use was linked to more selfish behavior.

Researchers from the University of Maryland’s Robert H. Smith School of Business found that after a short period of cell phone use, people were less likely to partake in “prosocial” behavior — actions that are intended to help another person or society — compared with a control group. For example, after using a cell phone, study participants were more likely to turn down volunteer opportunities and were less persistent in completing word problems, even though they knew their answers would provide money for charity.

The same drop in prosocial tendencies occurred even when participants were simply asked draw a picture of their cell phones and think about using them.

The study involved college men and women in their 20s, but the researchers think the findings would apply to any group.

So why would an innocuous thing like making a cell phone call make a person less giving? The researchers think it has to do with feelings of social connectedness. All humans have a fundamental need to connect with others — but once that need is met, say by using a cell phone, it naturally reduces our inclination to feel empathy or engage in helping behavior toward others. “The cell phone directly evokes feelings of connectivity to others, thereby fulfilling the basic human need to belong,” said study author and marketing professor Rosellina Farrow in a statement.
TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Ask your colleagues and/or staff and/or for help. Their own self-interest will likely motivate them to provide assistance.
  • Mindful leaders, who have taken a break from the interruptions of technology to focus, tend to have happier employees and are more productive.
• If you really can’t disconnect, try using an app or tech tool designed to help you focus.

• Try the Pomodoro Time Management Method. The Pomodoro method ... is a variation on batch processing. It involves setting a timer to 25 minutes and working steadfastly on a single task (or single batch of work, like email) for the full 25 minutes—thus quelling urges to multi-task and mind-wander. At the end of this work interval, users get up and walk around for 5 minutes to rest and recharge.” An online Pomodoro timer can assist with this method.
"It may seem counterintuitive to use an app to unplug, but in an age where we use our smartphones for almost everything, it makes sense to fight fire with fire."
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Try an app to block interruptions or to assist with mindfulness or meditation activities.
  • Moment (iOS) Moment tracks your device usage and allows you to set daily limits; the app notifies you if you exceed them. You can even use a setting that "forces" you off your phone by flooding your screen with annoying alerts when you try to extend your screen time.
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Try an app to block interruptions or to assist with mindfulness or meditation activities.
  
  • **Moment** (iOS) Moment tracks your device usage and allows you to set daily limits; the app notifies you if you exceed them. You can even use a setting that "forces" you off your phone by flooding your screen with annoying alerts when you try to extend your screen time. ($4)
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Try an app to block interruptions or to assist with mindfulness or meditation activities.
  • **Offtime** (iOS, Android)

This app helps users unplug by blocking distracting apps like Facebook and games and filtering communications. It includes information on how much you actually use your smartphone. You can choose tailored modes like Work, Family, or Me Time to ensure that you have access to the things you need, but aren't distracted by what you don't. Analytics of your phone and app usage can be an important wake-up call, and can help you curb your habits.
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• If you really can’t disconnect, try using an app or tech tool designed to help you focus.
  • Muse brain sensing headband alerts you to when your mind is wandering so that you can learn to better focus during meditation.

http://www.choosemuse.com/
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• If you really can’t disconnect, try using an Apple watch that makes it more difficult to multitask than your phone.
• If you really can’t disconnect, try using an Apple watch that makes it more difficult to multitask than your phone.
• Ask (colleagues and staff) for help. Their own self-interest will likely motivate them to do so.

• A 2014 study found that people who spend a lot of time ‘media multitasking’ ... tend to have less grey matter in a part of their brain involved with thought and emotion control.

• Instead of complaining about “poor employee engagement” and urging employees “to work smarter” leaders should work to create environments that enable “greater focus, leading to sustained improvements in productivity...”
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Stop using your phone as an alarm.
• Adopt a strategy of “focus, filter, and forget”
  • “There is a responsibility to reset ... markedly information overload decreases ... learning and decision making. Multitasking is not heroic; it’s counterproductive.”

A responsibility to hit the ‘reset button’

All this was easier back in Drucker’s day, when we couldn’t talk on the phone during the daily commute, we didn’t bring multiple connectivity-enabling devices with us on vacation, and planes didn’t have Wi-Fi. The strategies of focusing, filtering, and forgetting are also tougher to implement now because of the norms that have developed around 21st-century teamwork. Most leaders today would feel guilty if they didn’t respond to an e-mail within 24 hours. Few feel comfortable “hiding” from their teams during the day (or on the drive home or during the evening) in order to focus more intently on the most complex issues. And there is the personal satisfaction that comes from feeling needed.

But there is a business responsibility to reset these norms, given how markedly information overload decreases the quality of learning and decision making. Multitasking is not heroic; it’s counterproductive. As the technological capacity for the transmission and storage of information continues to expand and quicken, the cognitive pressures on us will only increase. We are at risk of moving toward an ever less thoughtful and creative professional reality unless we stop now to redesign our working norms.
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Adopt a strategy of “focus, filter, and forget”
  • In other words, disconnect to focus on the essential
tasks, complex matters, and relationships.
  • “Managing it [the relentless barrage of information] may be as simple—and difficult—as switching off the input. Shut down e-mail, close Web browsers, have phone calls go automatically to voice mail, and let your assistant and team know that you are in a focused working session ... ‘If you’re really addicted and can’t be trusted not to check ... when it’s in your pocket or bag, you just have to leave it behind.’”
  • Disconnecting for only twenty-four hours will help you become less compulsive about continually checking your phone. And will act as a “detox” to restore creative thought.
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Adopt a strategy of “focus, filter, and forget”
  • But disconnecting may mean that the inbox will be overflowing unless you have a filtering strategy. Having support staff, who you have trained and trust, to weed out or answer email messages and other communications you don’t really need to see might be part of a workable filtering approach.
SOME TIPS/METHODS/STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU

• Adopt a strategy of “focus, filter, and forget”
  • Forgetting is an essential step to give the brain “downtime to process new intellectual input ... and to think creatively...” about legal arguments and approaches to resolving complex legal issues
• YOU play the most important part in keeping TECHSHOW exciting. *Please complete the Speaker evaluation before you leave.*

• Reserve the dates!

TECHSHOW 2019: February 27 – March 2, 2019