Exploring the Digital Habits and Lifestyles of High School Students Towards the Development of a Digital Wellbeing Framework

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ABSTRACT

The pervasive use of digital devices among high school learners has prompted apprehension regarding its adverse impact on their well-being. The researchers were motivated to examine 74 high school students' digital habits and lifestyles at a Catholic school in Phitsanulok, Thailand to develop a digital well-being framework that would support students with poor digital health, habits, and lifestyles and promote healthy digital well-being. The study aimed to assist educators and policymakers in safeguarding the digital health of high school learners in a digital world. This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design. The framework employed was derived from the six pillars of digital wellbeing as outlined by Emerson Hospital and Turning Life On reflected on the study Torres and Madera (2024). The questionnaire for this study was also derived from the above-mentioned study. The data were recorded, analyzed, and interpreted in the following manner: 4: strongly agree; 3: agree; 2: disagree; 1: strongly disagree. Respondents exhibited a general sense of positivity and high levels of satisfaction in the following domains: physical, mental, spiritual, social, intellectual, and privacy and safety: digital well-being. These variables require additional enhancement, despite their mutually favorable perceptions. The study recommended to implement a balanced digital well-being framework to enhance secondary learners' digital well-being, optimize the use of technology for both personal and scholastic gain, protect learners from online hazards, and facilitate the attainment of their academic goals and maximum potential.

Keywords: digital lifestyle, digital well-being, safeguarding, secondary learners, Thailand,

INTRODUCTION

The pervasive use of digital devices among high school students has raised concerns about its detrimental effects on their overall wellbeing. Excessive gadget use can result in learning disorders, lack of concentration, abnormal behaviour, and emotional disturbances, ultimately impacting the overall well-being of adolescents (Sanger, 2023). Dependency on virtual interactions can lead to feelings of emptiness and social disconnection in the real world, emphasizing the importance of addressing gadget addiction and promoting a healthy balance in technology usage. Parents and educators play a crucial role in mitigating these negative impacts by setting limits on gadget use, encouraging physical activity, and fostering engagement in offline activities to prevent mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and stress among students (Sarla, 2019). The association between excessive internet use and adverse mental health outcomes underscores the need for a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between digital habits and well-being, especially as digital technologies become more integrated into daily life.

Digital well-being is the act of sustaining an integrative and healthy relationship with digital devices and technology (Büchi, 2021). Digital well-being is a multifaceted concept that necessitates a balanced approach to technology usage, as it encompasses the practice and state of physiological and psychological health while engaging with technology. The notion that technology should enhance individuals' lives rather than detract from their quality of life is fundamental to the concept of digital well-being (Dewitz, 2022). This involves not only maintaining physical and mental well-being but also considering the impact of technology on various aspects of life, including self-identity and relationships. Overuse of technology poses a significant risk to digital well-being, necessitating strategies to prevent negative influences and promote a healthy relationship with technology (Thomas et al., 2022). Individuals can enhance their digital health literacy to navigate the

digital world effectively, fostering a healthy balance between personal and professional lives while promoting overall well-being. By incorporating features like "do not disturb" modes and screen time notifications, individuals can encourage healthy technology usage patterns and support their well-being (Dewitz, 2022). Achieving digital well-being entails utilizing digital media in a way that fosters comfort, security, contentment, and fulfillment, ultimately contributing to a state of well-being in the digital age. Maintaining digital well-being requires individuals to develop digital skills, engage in self-regulation strategies, and consider what it means to lead a fulfilling life in a digitally-driven world (Vanden Abeele & Nguyen, 2022).

Objectives Of The Study

The researchers were motivated to investigate high school students' digital habits and lifestyles at a Catholic school in Phitsanulok, Thailand to propose a digital well-being framework that promote healthy digital well-being and support students with poor digital health, habits and lifestyle. The study hopes to assist educators and policymakers in protecting high school students' digital health in an increasingly digital world. Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. How may the digital well-being of high school students be described in terms of:
a. Physical
b. Mental
c. Spiritual
d. Social
e. Intellectual
f. Privacy and safety

2. What digital well-being framework would be beneficial for secondary school students?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The objective of this study was to evaluate the digital habits and lifestyles of 74 secondary school learners at a Catholic school in Phitsanulok, Thailand. A descriptive quantitative research design was implemented in this study. The framework used in this study is derived from the six pillars of Digital wellbeing by Turning Life On and Emerson Hospital (Digital Wellness — Turning Life On, n.d.). The questionnaire utilized in this study was derived from the research conducted by Torres and Madera (2024). The learner-respondents' evaluations of their digital well-being were quantified by the researchers through the use of numerical values for statistical computation and supplementary analysis. The table below shows the scale, scale interval and the verbal interpretation used in the study.

Scale, scale interval and verbal interpretation

SCALE	SCALE INTERVAL	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
4	3:25:4:00	Strongly Agree
3	2:50-3:24	Agree
2	1:75-2:49	Disagree
1	1-1.74	Strongly Disagree

The study's findings were evaluated and interpreted as follows: 4: strongly concur; 3: concur; 2: disagree; 1: strongly disagree. Strongly agree indicates a more positive sentiment regarding their digital well-being, agree indicates a positive sentiment regarding their digital well-being, disagree reflects a negative sentiment regarding their digital well-being, and strongly disagree informs a very negative sentiment regarding their

digital well-being. The mean was employed to record, analyze, and interpret the data produced by the research instrument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Physical Digital Well-being

Table 1. Physical digital well-being

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I embrace breaks from technology every hour by walking, stretching, looking at greeneries, refuelling snacks, and having real conversations with people.	2.98	Agree
2. I power down at least 1-2 hours before bedtime and maintain bedroom as device free spaces.	2.57	Agree
3. I get moving by engaging myself to physical exercise.	3.05	Agree
4. I protect my eyes by taking frequent breaks from using digital devices.	2.91	Agree

Table 1 illustrates the respondents' assessments of their physical-digital well-being. All respondents expressed a positive sentiment regarding their physical-digital well-being and unanimously concurred with the statements. Respondents acknowledged that they have abstained from technology and participated in physical activities, including walking, stretching, gazing at vegetation, consuming nutritious refreshments, and engaging in conversations with others. Although the respondents assert that they power down at least 1-2 hours before bedtime and maintain their bedrooms as a free space, the lowest result indicates that there is potential for improvement in this area. Avoiding cellphone usage 1-2 hours before bedtime is a simple yet impactful practice that can significantly enhance both sleep quality and overall health. Engaging with smartphones close to bedtime has been linked to decreased sleep quality and disrupted sleep patterns, affecting the peaceful and relaxing experience of falling asleep (Rosen, 2024). Conversely, refraining from using cellphones before bedtime can lead to a more restful and contented sleep experience, promoting feelings of peace and relaxation throughout the night. Research has shown that turning off phones an hour before bed can help ensure a productive night's sleep by advancing lights-out time and increasing total sleep duration (Katella, 2012). Additionally, avoiding cellphone usage before bedtime can reduce sleep latency and diminish periods of wakefulness during the night, ultimately contributing to improved sleep quality (Pacheco & Pacheco, 2023). While the impact of avoiding cellphone usage on sleep quality and overall health has not been extensively studied through randomised-controlled trials, existing research suggests that reducing screen time before bed can be a game-changer for achieving quality sleep. By replacing screen time with alternative activities and managing phone notifications, individuals can cultivate a bedtime routine that supports better sleep quality and overall well-being.

Mental Digital Well-being

Table 2. Mental digital well-being

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I limit exposure to negative or triggering content.	2.82	Agree

2. I engage myself into mindfulness meditation, and hobbies that don't involve screens.	2.78	Agree
3. I use time to focus on in-person interactions and activities that you love and promote relaxation.	3.06	Agree
4. I take digital detox or social media breaks for few hours a day.	2.83	Agree

The respondents' assessment of their mental digital well-being is presented in Table 2. The respondents "agreed" that they have a favourable perception of their mental digital well-being. Respondents maintain that they prioritize interpersonal interactions and minimise their exposure to content that contains negative triggers. Despite their agreement that they should engage in non-screen activities, practise mindfulness meditation, and take a digital detox for a few hours each day, their responses indicate that there is room for improvement in these areas. This suggests that they have not yet adequately established positive digital habits and lifestyle to ensure a harmonious equilibrium between their activities on and offline. In today's digital age, where negative triggering content is prevalent, exploring strategies to enhance digital well-being has become imperative. One such strategy is digital detox, which involves unplugging from electronic devices to reclaim mental space and overall well-being (Mirbabaie et al., 2022). It is essential to delve into the impact of Digital Detox on digital well-being to understand its efficacy in promoting a healthier relationship with technology. Particularly for students, who often resort to screens as a coping mechanism when feeling unhappy or uncomfortable, a digital detox can play a significant role in fostering healthier self-care routines and coping mechanisms. Moreover, introducing simple practices like meditation, breathing exercises, drawing, journaling, and offline hobbies can empower children to manage their emotions more effectively and find inner calm amidst the digital noise (Jefferies, 2024). By incorporating these strategies into their daily lives, individuals, especially children, can cultivate a balanced approach to digital consumption and prioritize their mental well-being in the digital era.

Spiritual Digital Well-being

Table 3. Spiritual digital well-being

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I subscribe to digital content that is inspiring, motivational, and educational for personal and spiritual growth.	2.95	Agree
2. I avoid digital noise by removing unnecessary apps and notifications from my devices.	2.97	Agree
3. I utilize journaling and conversation to develop informed thoughts and opinions.	2.88	Agree
4. I make In Real Life (IRL) a priority by practicing moderation and the importance of balance in my virtual and actual life.	3.02	Agree

The respondent's perceptions of their spiritual digital well-being are detailed in Table 3. All respondents "agreed" that they have a positive perception of their spiritual-digital well-being. Their agreement implies that they prioritise in-real-life (IRL) activities by exercising moderation in their technology use and recognise the significance of maintaining a balance between virtual and real life. Additionally, their responses indicate that they actively engage in the ingestion of motivational and enlightening materials to promote personal and spiritual development. Furthermore, they endeavour to preserve a harmonious balance between their virtual and physical lives by eliminating superfluous applications and notifications, prioritising face-to-face

communication, and maintaining a journal to foster rational perspectives. Despite their agreement with the statements, the findings underscore the importance of further improving the spiritual digital well-being of the respondents in these aspects. Learners can benefit from the implementation of periods of online abstinence and the development of information literacy skills. A novel approach to addressing overall well-being has emerged through the integration of spiritual practices with digital wellness strategies, as research has established. While the concept of spiritual digital wellness denotes the growing dependence on technology for spiritual development, it is crucial to maintain a balance between digitalisation and in-person interactions to promote human flourishing (Reclaiming Conversation by Sherry Turkle: 9780143109792 | PenguinRandomHouse.com: Books, 2016).

Social Digital Well-being

Table 4. Social digital well-being

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I have had more good times than bad times online.	3.08	Agree
2. I engage with digital content mindfully and share meaningful information that contributes positively to online communities.	2.91	Agree
3. I often felt really interested in what I am doing online.	3.05	Agree
4. I use social media platforms to foster positive relationships.	3.18	Agree

Table 4 shows the respondents' perspectives regarding their digital and social well-being. All respondents "agreed" that they have a positive perspective on their social and digital well-being. They demonstrated interest in their online activities, provided significant knowledge, engaged with digital content consciously, and had more positive than negative experiences online, as evidenced by their agreement. It is still necessary to develop, despite respondents believing they engage with digital content mindfully and share meaningful information that contributes positively to online communities. It is imperative to acknowledge the importance of establishing boundaries with technology and cultivating healthier relationships with it to cultivate social and digital well-being among students in the digital era. Digital well-being is a critical component of students' overall health and development, as they spend a significant amount of time online (Metheekul, 2024). Students can mitigate the risks associated with excessive screen time and online activities by establishing appropriate boundaries and limits for technology use. This will enable them to navigate the digital space more mindfully. To promote the social and digital well-being of students, it is essential to cultivate healthier relationships with technology. This can assist in addressing the obstacles to personal well-being and mental health that are inherent in the digital environment. A fundamental step in young people's digital well-being journey is to encourage them to make informed and conscious choices consistent with their values and lifestyle. Setting boundaries, incorporating digital detoxes, and utilizing technology as a growth aid are all effective strategies that can contribute to the psychological and social well-being of students and promote a balanced approach to digital consumption (Metheekul, 2024).

Intellectual Digital Well-being

Table 5. Intellectual digital well-being

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I stayed informed, so I felt in touch with what's	3.09	Agree

happening in my community and around the world.		
2. I learned how to do things that are important to me.	3.32	Agree
3. I was able to grow in my skills and abilities.	3.21	Agree
4. I learned things that gave me more self-confidence.	3.16	Agree

The respondents' evaluation of their intellectual digital well-being can be seen in Table 5. The respondents "agreed" that they have a positive attitude towards their social digital well-being. Consensus was achieved among respondents regarding the positive effects of their online activities on a variety of aspects, including the acquisition of valuable skills and abilities, the development of self-assurance, and keeping informed about community and global events, as evidenced by the highest mean scores among the variables. Individuals who aspire to prosper in a fast-paced and highly interconnected world must prioritize their intellectual and digital well-being in the digital era. The potential benefits of digital advancements are significantly enhanced by intellectual wellness, which entails the development and implementation of knowledge, creativity, and skills (Boyd, 2021). Simultaneously, digital well-being emphasizes the significance of maintaining a balance between online and offline activities by utilizing digital technology to improve human well-being. It is imperative to achieve this equilibrium to promote personal well-being, as the emotional and mental health of an individual can be substantially impacted by the impact of electronic tools and resources on an individual level. To effectively navigate the intricacies of the digital landscape, individuals need to adopt strategies such as digital detox, mindfulness practices, and preserving a healthy balance in their technology usage. Additionally, opportunities to improve digital and intellectual well-being can be effectively investigated and capitalized on for the benefit of society by promoting collaboration with knowledgeable individuals both within and outside of government (Bhattacharya et al., 2023). The importance of intellectual wellness in the digital age is becoming more apparent as society continues to adopt digital transformation to enhance service delivery and citizen engagement. This underscores the necessity of comprehensive well-being strategies that incorporate both intellectual and digital dimensions. Each one can acquire the knowledge and tools required to improve their overall well-being in the digital realm by increasing awareness of the impact of technology on intellectual health, comprehending tech usage patterns, and integrating digital well-being practices into daily routines (Boyd, 2021).

Privacy and Safety

Table 6. Privacy and Safety

Statements	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I don't receive or was not exposed to speech that attacked a person or group based on factors such as age, gender, national origin, religion, race, disability, pregnancy, veteran status or sexual orientation.	2.93	Agree
2. I don't experience someone impersonated me online and made false or malicious statements while pretending to be me.	3.16	Agree
3. I was not exposed to content promoting the sale, distribution, or delivery of illegal or counterfeit drugs, weapons, and fake and deceptive marketing of products through the internet or online platforms.	3.17	Agree
4. I was not exposed to extremist online communications or content that encouraged and condoned acts of violence based on religious, political, gender, domestic, culture, sexual, or racist beliefs.	3.08	Agree

Table 6 illustrates the respondents' assessment of their digital well-being in terms of privacy and safety. Each participant concurred that they had had a positive experience with their online privacy and safety. The results indicated that learner-respondents had less experience with speech attacks, sales of counterfeit and unlawful products, or extremist online communication that promotes violence based on religion, politics, gender, nationality, culture, sexual orientation, or racism. The respondents acknowledged that they have little to no experience with online impersonation or have made malicious or fraudulent statements under their guise. Nevertheless, this aspect still requires refinement. The ever-growing digital footprint that individuals leave behind has made privacy and safety concerns paramount. The vulnerability of personal information to malicious actors has been substantially heightened by the rapid digitalization of various aspects of daily life, including social media engagement, online shopping, and digital communication (Maja, 2024). Neglecting digital privacy not only exposes individuals to risks such as cyberstalking, ransomware attacks, and phishing scams, but also creates the potential for personal, financial, and psychological damage. The critical necessity of protecting online information is further underscored by the potential for large-scale data breaches, which can result in the theft, sale, or exploitation of sensitive personal data belonging to millions. This underscores the importance of digital privacy. To safeguard personal information and reduce the risks associated with invasive surveillance and data breaches, it is imperative to dispel common myths and misconceptions about online privacy as the concept of privacy becomes more elusive in the digital domain. Strategies such as conducting educational conferences on digital privacy and safety, which are designed to change perceptions about cybersecurity and improve digital safety practices, are essential for educating individuals on the effective strategies and tools available to protect their privacy in the digital age (Maja, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The digital well-being of secondary learners in a Catholic school in Phitsanulok was characterized by a general sense of positivity and high levels of satisfaction in the following domains: physical, mental, spiritual, social, intellectual, and privacy and safety. Despite their favorable mutual perceptions, these variables necessitate further improvement. The improvement of digital well-being is essential for optimizing the use of technology for both personal and scholastic gain, safeguarding learners from online hazards, and facilitating the attainment of their academic goals and maximum potential.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, a balanced digital well-being framework is recommended:

Digital Well-being Framework for Secondary Learners
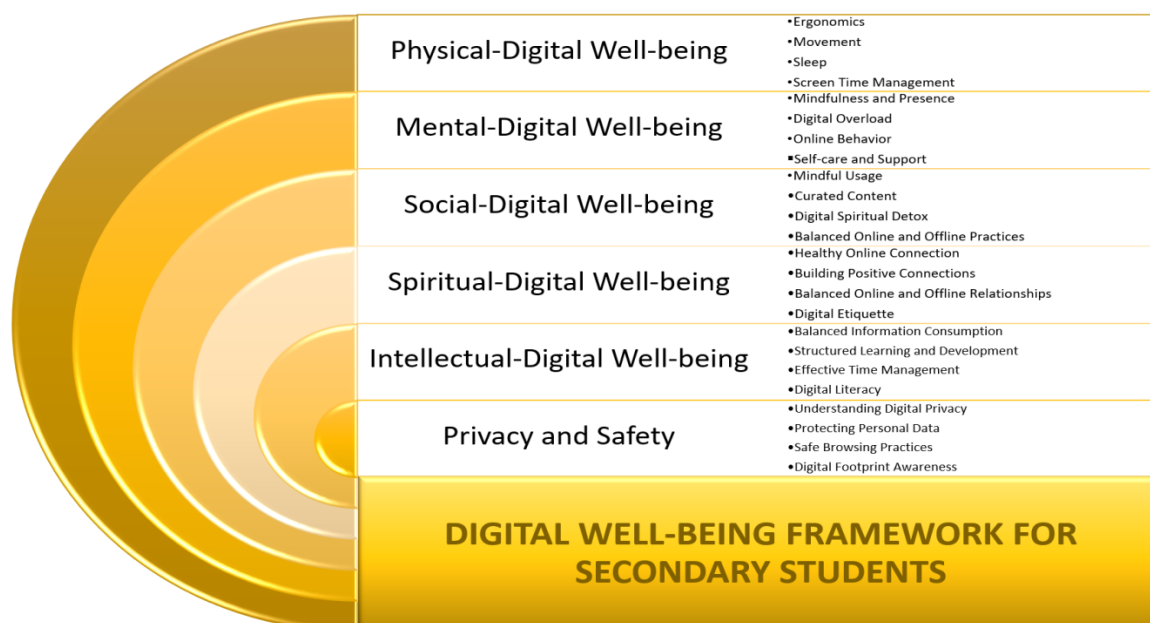
A digital well-being framework is a critical endeavour for schools in the sphere of secondary school education. To preserve digital hygiene among students, it is imperative to implement a multifaceted strategy encompassing various components, including awareness, knowledge, decision-making, and active participation (Eavi, 2024). This method underscores the significance of maintaining a harmonious equilibrium between online and offline activities, making well-informed decisions, and protecting personal privacy in the digital environment. Information literacy is a critical talent for understanding the complex relationship between digital well-being, critical thinking, and responsible citizenship. Schools can fortify their defences against problematic internet usage and cultivate positive attitudes towards online platforms by incorporating a digital well-being framework into the curriculum through information literacy education. Secondary school students are increasingly emphasising their attitudes and awareness regarding digital well-being, with an emphasis on individual and collective health and safety concerns. This shift is evident. The integration of tools such as the phygital toolkit provides a structured approach to involving high school students in the design process, thereby enabling the rapid prototyping of smart devices. This engagement not only serves to encourage reflections on technology and social digital well-being, but also underscores the significance of cultivating a reflective perspective on the societal impact of technology, particularly among the younger generation. An educational approach that fosters critical thinking and responsible digital citizenship is advocated for, with the central argument being the empowerment of young individuals to actively participate in the shaping of technology for social benefit.

1.   **Physical-digital well-being** refers to maintaining a healthy balance between physical health and digital engagement. As technology becomes more integrated into our lives, it's important to manage both our physical health and our digital habits. The following maybe observed to maintain physical-digital well-being:

a.   **Ergonomics:** Set up your workspace to promote good posture and reduce strain. Use ergonomic chairs, keyboards, and screens.

b.   **Movement:** Incorporate regular physical activity into your routine. Take breaks to stretch, walk, or exercise.

c.   **Sleep:** Prioritize quality sleep. Limit screen time before bed to avoid disrupting your sleep patterns.

d.   **Screen Time Management:** Monitor and manage your screen time to avoid excessive use. Use apps or built-in features on devices to track and limit usage.

2.   **Mental-digital well-being** focuses on maintaining a healthy mental state while engaging with digital technology. As digital tools and platforms play a significant role in daily life, the following maybe considered in managing and maintaining mental digital well-being:

a.   **Mindfulness and Presence:** Practicing being present in the moment and being fully engaged in offline activities and interactions can help reduce digital distraction and improve mental clarity. Downloading Mindfulness Apps designed for mindfulness and meditation to help manage stress and anxiety. Moreover, students may designate Unplug Periods by designating certain times of the day or week as "digital-free" to help recharge mentally.

b.   **Digital Overload:** Be selective about news consumption to prevent information overload and reduce stress. Focus on meaningful interactions and connections rather than the quantity of online interactions. Control notifications to minimize distractions and interruptions that can impact mental focus and well-being. Set limits on how often you check emails and use certain apps to avoid feeling overwhelmed.

c.   **Online Behavior:** Engage in online communities and fora that are supportive and positive. Avoid toxic or hostile environments. Be aware of the impact of cyberbullying and practice empathy in your online interactions.

d.   **Self-Care and Support:** Utilize online resources for mental health support, such as counseling apps or online therapy, if needed. Integrate technology with traditional self-care practices, such as physical exercise, hobbies, and spending time with loved ones.

3.   Spiritual-Digital Well-being "Spiritual-digital well-being" is about integrating and maintaining spiritual practices and values within the context of our digital lives. As technology becomes increasingly prevalent, it's important to find ways to nurture and respect our spiritual needs while navigating the digital world.

a.   **Mindful Usage:** Approach digital tools and content with purpose and mindfulness. Ensure that your online activities align with your spiritual values and goals. Use digital platforms to practice mindfulness and self-awareness, such as apps for meditation, spiritual reading, or reflective journaling.

b.   **Curated Content:** Seek out and engage with digital content that supports your spiritual growth, such as podcasts, articles, or online communities focused on spirituality. Be selective about the content you consume to avoid material that conflicts with or undermines your spiritual beliefs. Explore apps designed to enhance spiritual practice, such as daily affirmations, guided meditations, or religious texts. Participate in online spiritual retreats or webinars to deepen your practice and connect with others on a similar journey.

c.   **Digital Spiritual Detox:** Regularly disconnect from digital devices to create space for spiritual practices like prayer, meditation, or contemplation. Designate certain times or spaces in your daily routine as "digital-free" to focus on your spiritual practices and inner reflection.

d.   **Balanced Online and Offline Practices:** Combine digital tools with offline spiritual practices. For example, use a meditation app but also spend time in nature or attend physical spiritual gatherings. Create a dedicated physical space for spiritual practices that is free from digital distractions.

4.   Social-digital well-being focuses on maintaining healthy and fulfilling social interactions and relationships within the digital landscape. As digital communication becomes a significant part of our social lives, it's important to balance online and offline interactions to promote overall well-being.

a.   **Healthy Online Communication:** Strive for genuine and meaningful communication in your online interactions. Share and respond to content that reflects your true self and values. Set boundaries to manage your online presence and interactions, including limiting time spent on social media or avoiding digital discussions during in-person gatherings. Schedule regular check-ins with friends and family, both online and offline, to maintain strong, supportive relationships. Engage with a diverse range of people and perspectives to enrich your social experience and avoid echo chambers.

b.   **Building Positive Connections:** Engage with online communities that offer support, encouragement, and positive interactions. Seek out groups or forums aligned with your interests and values. Focus on nurturing a few meaningful relationships rather than trying to maintain a large number of superficial connections.

c.   **Balanced Online and Offline Relationships:** Prioritize face-to-face interactions and make time for in-person relationships, which can offer deeper connections and emotional fulfillment.

d.   **Digital Etiquette:** Be mindful of others' privacy online, and respect boundaries regarding personal information and digital space. Consider the impact of what you share online and how it may affect others. Avoid oversharing personal details or engaging in gossip.

5.   Intellectual-digital well-being involves managing the interplay between intellectual pursuits and digital engagement to foster healthy cognitive development and lifelong learning. As digital technology offers vast resources and information, it's important to use these tools in ways that enhance rather than hinder intellectual growth.

a.   **Balanced Information Consumption:** Apply critical thinking skills when consuming digital content. Evaluate the credibility of sources and cross-check information to avoid misinformation. Set limits on time spent browsing or consuming digital content to prevent cognitive overload and maintain focus.

b.   **Structured Learning and Development:** Utilize online learning platforms to engage in structured educational programs or courses that offer in-depth knowledge on specific subjects. Use apps designed for intellectual development, such as language learning apps, puzzle games, or brain-training exercises, while setting boundaries to avoid overuse.

c.   **Effective Time Management:** Use digital tools like calendars and task managers to organize your intellectual pursuits and manage time effectively. Focus on one task or learning activity at a time to enhance concentration and retain information more effectively.

d.   **Digital Literacy:** Develop skills to navigate and use digital tools effectively, such as search engines, databases, and academic resources. Understand and practice digital ethics, including respecting intellectual property rights and avoiding plagiarism.

6.   **Digital privacy and safety** are critical aspects of protecting personal information and maintaining secure online interactions. As our lives become increasingly digital, understanding and implementing measures to safeguard your privacy and security is essential.

a.   **Understanding Digital Privacy:** Keep up with the latest developments in digital privacy and security. Knowledge of emerging threats and new security practices can help you stay protected. Participate in cybersecurity training or awareness programs to understand common threats and how to mitigate them.

Be aware of the types of personal information you share online, including social media profiles, email addresses, and financial details. Understand that websites and apps often collect data about your browsing habits, preferences, and interactions. Read privacy policies to know how your data is used and stored.

b.   **Protecting Personal Data:** Use strong, unique passwords for each of your online accounts. Activate two-factor authentication on accounts that offer it. This adds an extra layer of security by requiring a second form of verification in addition to your password. Ensure that websites use HTTPS, which encrypts data transmitted between your browser and the website. Use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to encrypt your internet connection, especially when using public Wi-Fi networks. Review and adjust the privacy settings on your social media accounts to control who can see your posts and personal information. Regularly check app permissions on your devices and limit access to only necessary features. Revoke permissions for apps that no longer need them.

c.   **Safe Browsing Practices:** Be cautious of emails, messages, or websites that request sensitive information or direct you to unfamiliar links. Verify the source before providing any personal details. Keep your operating system, software, and apps up to date to protect against security vulnerabilities and exploits.

d.   **Digital Footprint Awareness:** Regularly review your online accounts for any unusual or unauthorized activity. Be mindful of your digital footprint by searching for your name online and managing the information that appears in search results.

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