

Average attention span plunging to less than that of a goldfish



Paige Martin, Staff Reporter

With technology advancing more and more throughout the years, it has brought many great things: instant access to the internet anywhere you go, being able to get directions within seconds, being able to communicate with your friends and family at any time, anywhere, and so much more. As convenient as technology is in today's society, we also have to wonder: how is this affecting the way that our brains function, and more specifically, our attention spans?

According to Medical Daily, the human attention span has shortened from 12 seconds in 2000 to just eight seconds today. This is one second shorter than the attention span of a goldfish. This decrease, however, wasn't just seen within kids and teens; it has been seen within all ages and all genders. Katie Taylor, AP psychology teacher, said, "Even myself, who didn't grow up with cell phones, I catch myself not knowing what to do when my phone is not with me."

However, there is a difference between generations. According to Medical Daily, researchers have found that younger people are more likely to display addiction-like behaviors in regards to their devices. For example, 77% of people aged 18-24 agreed with the statement, "When nothing is occupying my attention, the first thing I do is reach for my smartphone." On the other hand, only 10% of people 65 and older agreed with this statement.

With statistics like this,

you may wonder, what causes such a drastic difference between generations? I believe that a lot of this is because kids and teens in this day and age don't know anything different. So many teens have had cell phones since they were very young.

If you happen to feel like you're trapped in a constant battle between getting things done and not being able to put the phone down, there are some strategies that you can try to combat this problem. According to Personal Excellence, one tip is to "Put your phone on silent and place it at the other end of

the room." In doing so, you will be far less likely to become distracted by calls, text messages, or social media notifications in the midst of trying to get something important done.

Another tip is to set limits for social media on your phone. This can be done on an iPhone by going to "Settings", then to "Screen Time." From there you will choose "App limits", and select "Add limit" under the App Limits section. Finally, you can select however much you want your time limit to be and you can enforce this on Social Networking apps.

Now, clearly, smartphones and technology are not all bad. The relationship we as a society share with technology can be seen as a give and take. I say this because while technology has given us so many advantages and shortcuts, it has also torn at pieces of our functionality. Taylor said, "Our society has created this monster with social media and cell phones, and it's a double edged sword because cellphones have a lot of great pieces to them, but it can also be very negative and I think that's where attention spans are shortening."



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