

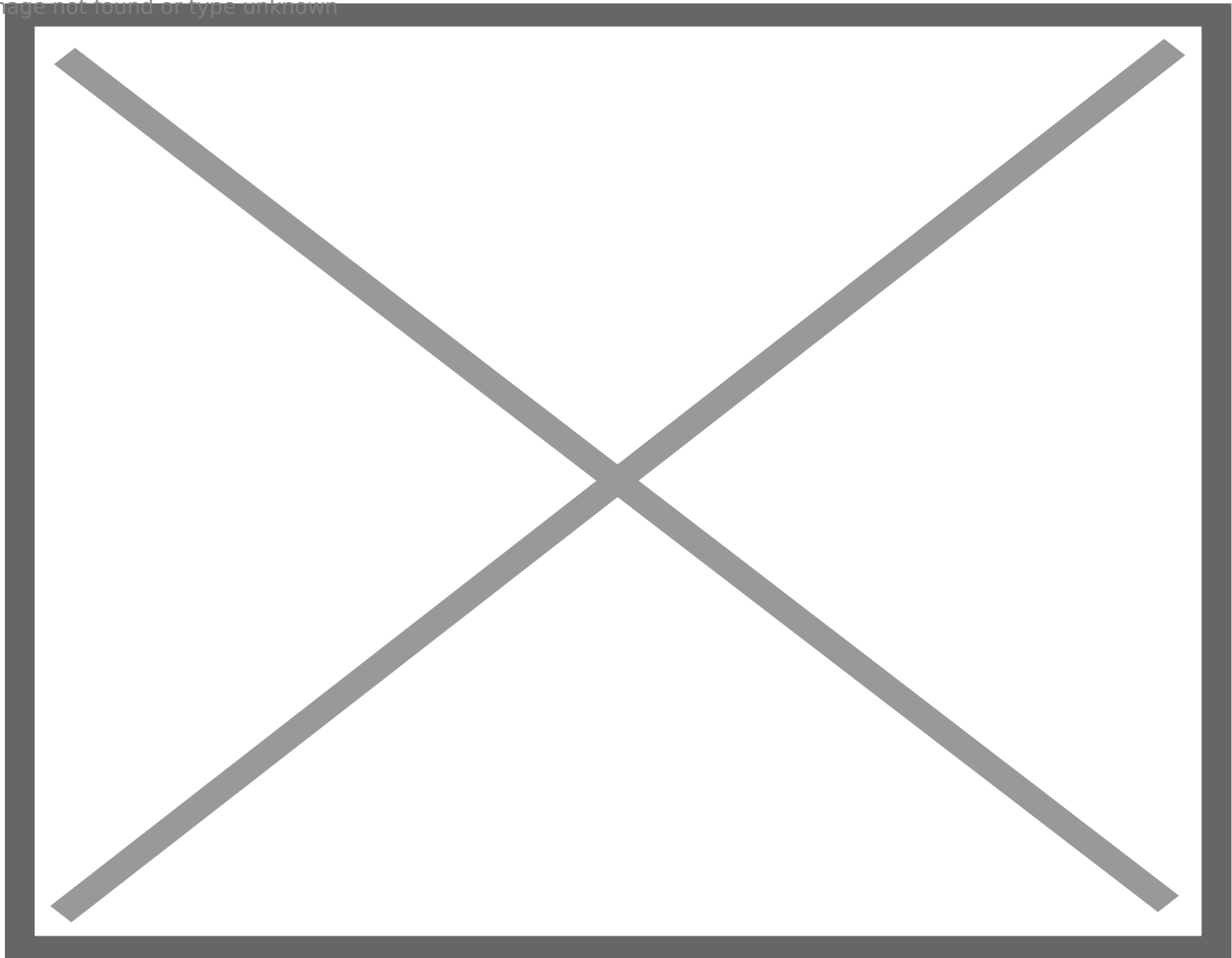
Managing tech "over-use" & keeping your senses sharp

Post by "Kalosyni" of June 27, 2023 at 8:51 AM

Managing tech over-use --reasons to check in on yourself with this -- the mental pleasures of the use of devices may be masking other issues such as the short focus onto a device screen can cause blurry eyes, and it can also lead to not enough physical movement (leading to lack of blood circulation and fatigue). And there could be mental effects on the brain (which is something I haven't researched yet). If Epicurus were alive today, I think he would ask us: Are you missing out on some of the bigger pleasures of life by spending too much time on your digital devices?

Here is a very good article with **tips on how to go about setting aside devices to bring in more analog time** each day:

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[Embracing An Analog Lifestyle: Opt Out Of Overwhelm - The Tiny Life](#)

How to pursue an analog lifestyle in a digital world. Advice and tips for living a slow life that's hands on, present, and free from the overwhelm of...
thetinylife.com

Post by "Julia" of May 17, 2024 at 9:13 AM

On Healthy Smartphone Use

I use a watch, wall calendar, pocket-sized day planner, a paper journal and a calculator. The haptic interaction helps; and studies have consistently shown that handwriting (as opposed to typing) helps in processing/retaining information. However, I'm just not going to also carry a

GPS, torch, camera, ... with me everywhere I go. For things to remain sane and sound, I use my smartphone like this:

- any and all notifications off by default
- selectively re-enable certain, specific notifications
- always buy a model with notification LED - this prevents the compulsion of checking the screen all the time (if it were important, it would blink - like good old answering machines)
- habituated myself to place it with the screen facing down, such that I don't see even the LED unless *I myself* decide to pick it up (eg to use it, to leave the house, charge it, ...)
- no email on phone (I read mail once a day, max. If that is too slow, people ought to call me)
- no social media (just 1-to-1 messaging)
- F-Droid app store to replace most commonly used apps, with ones that are ad-free, and not as intrusive as others, because they don't rely on user-interaction to sell ads
- I use special apps to access online video (→ Newpipe) and streaming music (→ InnerTune), because they allow me to hide comments, don't have ads, and don't recommend more content (but allow me to save what I specifically searched for and let me access my playlists)
- automatic silent mode (do not disturb) at night (only repeat callers and especially marked contacts can get through)
- segregate certain apps into the Work profile
- only install what's really needed; eg: I don't have banking on my phone. I do that at home, in my office. No news apps, either.
- Don't save bookmarks, auto-delete tabs after closing the browser, ...
- If having a compulsive-use issue, DetoxDroid (available through F-Droid) can help curb and extinguish bad habits

There are some companies which sell phones with modified Android versions pre-installed, usually advertised for added privacy or security, but in my opinion they also help in positively changing how one uses technology, because certain function are off by default, et cetera. (Effectively, I use something virtually identical to those, except I went through the technical hassle of re-installing and modifying it all myself; that takes time, and I might not want to do it again, in which case I'd also buy one of the pre-installed modified ones.)

If using cloud services (for synchronised contacts, calendars, backup functions, ...), those are also offered by companies other than Big Tech, including those which sell pre-modified phones. (It is worth remembering the Big Tech services are free of charge, because we ourselves are the product. They don't sell services to us, they sell us as a service to 3rd parties (who pay for our data and ads, which in turn implies the more we interact with the service, the more of our life they absorb, the more ad revenue they get - this is why it is all designed to be so addictive and absorbing)).

Caveat: With such modified phones, a few apps might not work; especially banking-related ones. Google and the banks artificially (as in: without having genuine legal reasons) prevent this on a technical basis. That said, compatibility was never a problem for me personally, and I did use two banking apps in the past.

Post by “Cassius” of May 17, 2024 at 12:43 PM

I use Newpipe on Android and Freetube on Linux because there's no way I am going to watch all those Youtube ads!

Several years ago I ran Cyanogen on my cell phone but I haven't done that recently - need to get back to it.

Lot's of good stuff on F-droid, and I favor free open source software whenever possible.

Post by “Julia” of May 18, 2024 at 2:22 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I ran Cyanogen on my cell phone

Those who don't have (and don't want to build) the technical skills required to make any of this themselves are, as of today, probably be best served with /e/OS. I've never used it myself, but from what I hear and what I can tell, it provides a complete “everything just works out of the box” experience.

A bit of background as to what /e/OS or Cyanogen even are: There is the Android Open Source Project, or AOSP. When a manufacturer produces a phone, they take the AOSP and add vendor- and device-specific modifications; the result is colloquially called a ROM. Unlike with desktop operating systems, where the same DVD can install on any computer, ROMs need to be device-specific to function. Because nobody else produces a ROM for a specific device, costumers are effectively forced to buy a new product when the old one stops receiving updates - which is entirely a choice of the manufacturer, who simply stops making updated ROMs.

This annoyed many people, so they started making their own ROMs. One of those was Cyanogen, which is now called LineageOS. It is the most popular, and gets modified further to

give rise to yet more variants (derivatives). To use an analogy: "There's the car model XYZ, but derived from that there exist the XYZ Racing and the XYZ Double Cab." The most important LineageOS derivatives are: Lineage For MicroG, /e/OS, iodéOS, and DivestOS. Besides those, there are two more major ROMs based directly on AOSP (like Lineage itself): CalyxOS and GrapheneOS. For those who have (or want to build) some technical skills, GrapheneOS is probably the most interesting choice (if I bought a new phone today, I'd probably install Graphene, but in reality I still run LineageOS).

Because installation ROMs are device-specific, not every device is supported; so when intending to do this, it is important to check the ROM website and purchase a supported model - and in either case, listen to Cassius, when he said: 😊

[Quote from Cassius](#)

I favor free open source software whenever possible

Post by "Cassius" of May 18, 2024 at 3:30 AM

That's a great summary and consistent with my experience too, and good advice, especially the part about making sure when you buy a phone that it's compatible with an alternative ROM, because otherwise vendors like Verizon tend to lock them down so they cannot be modified.

I have found basic knowledge of Linux to be invaluable, and though I am by no means an expert, "By the way I use Arch" is a worthwhile nerdy joke if you can find the time to invest.