

Public Abstract

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As we e-mail, text, and Tweet, mobile technology is redefining the boundaries between absence and presence, as well as private and public. Technology allows us to control how we present ourselves and where we put our attention. However, these devices also seem to have control over us: our bodies, our communities, and our relationships. Winston Churchill once said, we shape our buildings, which in turn shape us. The same can be said of our mobile technologies. Smart phones are changing our lives, sometimes for better, sometimes for worse, and sometimes without us realizing it. I believe we can influence the development and deployment of technology if we are mindful and aware of what the media has to offer and what the consequences may be.

This body of work examines the physical and psychological shaping that is occurring as we integrate mobile devices into our lives. In this paper, we will thoughtfully consider how mobile technology has become a poignant player in our connections and daily rituals.

My intention is not to deter people away from their devices; this work is not an attack on mobile technology. Rather, it asks the reader to reflect on his or her own habits. I am asking users to develop a more self-aware, examined relationship with their smart phones. I hope that through this examination, users will begin to ask questions about what is most sustaining in human relationships and customs.