

DIGITAL DEMENTIA: EVALUATING THE IMPACT ON TRADITIONAL  
VALUES IN PERSONAL AND SOCIETAL CONTEXTS

Katarína Valčová<sup>(\*)</sup>

**Abstract:** *This article investigates 'Digital Dementia', a term that metaphorically describes the cognitive and social consequences of excessive digital technology use, particularly its impact on the erosion of personal and societal values and ethical principles. Digital Dementia signifies not just a decline in cognitive and social skills due to digital overuse, but also a potential weakening of moral and ethical compasses, leading to a shift in traditional value systems. This interdisciplinary study views the phenomenon through sociological, psychological, and pastoral care lenses, offering a comprehensive analysis of its implications for individual behaviour and societal norms.*

*Sociologically, the paper examines the transformation of societal values in the wake of digital technology, highlighting a drift from established ethical standards and community-oriented principles. Psychologically, it explores how digital engagement affects individual cognition, behaviour, and value formation, potentially leading to a diminished capacity for empathy, critical thinking, and moral reasoning. The role of pastoral care is scrutinized in terms of guiding communities through the ethical challenges posed by digital advancements and preserving core values in the digital era.*

*Empirical studies are referenced to underscore the adverse effects of excessive screen time on memory and attention, the rise of 'phubbing' and 'digital zombies', and the resulting decline in the quality of social interactions and awareness. These findings point to a broader cultural shift where traditional values and ethical norms risk being eclipsed by digital culture's demands.*

*This paper argues for a critical re-evaluation of the role of digital technology in shaping our moral landscape. It calls for an engaged response from social institutions, including religious organizations, to address the ethical implications of this digital transformation and to advocate for the preservation and revitalization of traditional values in a rapidly evolving digital world.*

**Keywords:** *Digital Dementia, Phubbing, Societal Values, Ethical Principles, Sociological Impact, Psychological Effects, Moral Deterioration, Value Shift.*

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<sup>(\*)</sup> Prof. Dr., Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the landscape of digital interaction has been notably marked by the emergence of “Digital Dementia”, a term coined to encapsulate the adverse repercussions of extended digital device usage on cognitive capacities and social behaviours. Simultaneously, the emergence of “Phubbing”, which refers to the act of disregarding (ignoring, neglecting) others in favor of one’s smartphone, has become an integral part of modern social interactions, adding to the complexity of how the digital world affects human relationships. Phubbing, a combination of ‘phone’ and ‘snubbing,’ exemplifies the intricate difficulties encountered in preserving the authenticity of human relationships in the face of the pervasive nature of technology. The inclusion of the term “phubbing” in our everyday language draws attention to a rising worry about its ability to gradually weaken the quality of face-to-face encounters, promote feelings of social isolation, and reduce overall happiness in relationships. Digital zombies refer to individuals who are excessively connected to their digital devices, such as smartphones and computers, to the extent that they prioritize their online activities over real-world interactions and experiences.

The individuals described as being glued to their screens, constantly

engaging with digital content and technology, which can lead to negative effects on their cognitive abilities, memory, attention, and overall well-being are labelled with a term “digital zombies.” If people become so engrossed in their digital devices that they may exhibit behaviors akin to being in a trance-like state, detached from their physical surroundings and interactions, they, indeed, behave like “zombies”. And yes, there are potential consequences of excessive digital device usage on individuals’ mental health, social interactions, and overall quality of life.

As technology becomes an ever-present fixture in our lives, embedding itself within our value systems and ethical paradigms, this paper seeks to unravel the complex interplay between digital advancements and their implications on human dynamics. Through a multidisciplinary lens, we aim to shed light on the expansive consequences of our digital engagements, with a particular focus on phenomena such as Digital Dementia and Phubbing, and their collective impact on the fabric of human relationships.

## 2. “Digital Dementia” – potential or real danger?!

The term “digital dementia” refers to a significant reliance on portable digital devices and the subsequent detrimental impact on cognitive functions, including

memory and attention. The condition is distinguished by difficulties in memory, challenges with maintaining focus, and a lack of emotional stability. The word gained popularity through the works of Manfred Spitzer and Theo Compernelle.

In 2012, Manfred Spitzer, a German neuroscientist and psychiatrist, strongly asserted his view on smartphones: he believed that they have detrimental effects on youngsters, causing illness, diminished intelligence, and addiction. He advocated for allowing smartphone usage without supervision only beyond the age of 18. In his 2012 book “Digital Demenia”, the author delves deeper into this concept and issues a grave cautionary message about how our dependence on technology for memory and cognitive functions is leading to the deterioration of our brains. In addition, he contends that the greater our consumption of digital media, the more our memory deteriorates. Moreover, excessive engagement with digital media can result in speech and learning difficulties, concentration deficits, heightened stress levels, and depression. Contrary to that viewpoint, certain scientists hold a different opinion, asserting that these devices hold significant value in the modern era. They argue that these devices can offer substantial benefits and it is crucial for children to develop responsible usage skills at an early age.

Dr. Theo Compernelle is a highly qualified professional with a medical degree and a PhD. He specializes in the field of stress and resilience, focusing on both individuals and businesses. He is an expert consultant specializing in work-related stress and is renowned for his research on brain functionality. Dr. Compernelle has authored literature on the phenomenon known as “digital dementia”, which refers to an excessive reliance on portable digital devices and its detrimental impact on cognitive functions, specifically memory and attention. Additionally, he has gained recognition for his contributions in the field of mental health and stress management, and has been prominently featured as an authority in films and publications pertaining to this subject. Although Dr. Compernelle is not specifically a strategy specialist, CEOs seek his guidance in stress and resilience.

Dr. Compernelle highlights the negative consequences of extended usage of phone or computer screens on children’s behavior. Excessive screen time can result in adverse impacts, including heightened irritability, reduced attention span, and disturbed sleep habits. There could be a potential association between the amount of time spent using screens and the presence of symptoms related to attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in

children.

In addition to the concept of “digital dementia”, it is vital to acknowledge the concept of “digital displacement.” This refers to the situation when excessive use of screens substitutes crucial activities like outdoor play, social contacts, and family time, resulting in adverse behavioral effects on children. The potential addictive nature of screen-based activities may result in mood swings and behavioral difficulties in children.

What are the precise consequences of prolonged exposure to screens?

**Irritability:** Extended exposure to screens can result in heightened irritability in young people, as they may experience agitation and frustration when their screen time is stopped or restricted.

Excessive screen usage has been associated with a decline in attention span and concentration, which can have a negative effect on learning and academic achievement.

**Disrupted Sleep Patterns:** The emission of blue light from screens may hinder the synthesis of melatonin, a hormone responsible for regulating sleep, resulting in disturbed sleep patterns and difficulty in initiating sleep.

Research indicates a positive association between excessive screen usage and the occurrence of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

symptoms in young people, suggesting an elevated risk.

Digital Displacement refers to the phenomenon where excessive screen time replaces crucial activities such as outdoor play, face-to-face social contacts, and family time. This substitution can result in behavioral changes and decreased involvement in real-world experiences.

Screen-based activities can be addictive and contribute to mood swings in young people, resulting in changing moods and behavioral problems.

Parents and caregivers should be aware of these effects and take proactive steps to ensure that children have a balanced amount of screen time. They should also encourage other activities that promote healthy behavior and development.

Within the realm of young people, digital dementia refers to a recently identified condition resulting from the excessive and compulsive consumption of digital media. Multiple studies have examined the potential harmful effects of excessive use of digital media on cognitive functions, specifically memory and attention.

Digital dementia is not an officially acknowledged medical illness, and its existence and effects are still a topic of discussion among scientists.

### 3. “Phubbing” – new phenomenon

“Phubbing” is a neologism formed

by combining the words “phone” and “snubbing.” It refers to the act of deliberately ignoring someone in a social situation by focusing more on one’s mobile phone than on the individuals present. This conduct is becoming more acknowledged for its capacity to detrimentally affect interpersonal interactions, as it redirects focus away from the current company in favour of digital connection, frequently resulting in the person being ignored feeling unappreciated or alienated.

The Macquarie Dictionary introduced the term “phubbing” as part of an effort to identify a growing social phenomenon. Since then, there has been a growth in research on phubbing, which has drawn attention to its extensive prevalence and the diverse array of its impacts on society. Studies have shown that phubbing, which refers to the behavior of prioritizing the use of a mobile device over interacting with someone, can reduce the quality of face-to-face interactions. This can lead to feelings of exclusion and have a detrimental effect on relationship satisfaction. When an individual experiences phubbing from a partner, friend, or family member, it can diminish the perceived effectiveness of communication and the degree of intimacy in the relationship, resulting in emotions of neglect or conflict.

The term “Phubbees” refers to individuals who are being disregarded

or overlooked as a result of phubbing. These persons are being ignored or overlooked in favor of the wrongdoer’s cell phone. Research indicates that those who excessively use cellphones, a behavior sometimes referred to as phubbing, may encounter many negative emotional conditions. These include decreased self-esteem, increased social discomfort, feelings of jealousy, and worse satisfaction in their relationships. This subject has attracted significant academic interest, leading to studies that investigate its psychological effects, societal norms on mobile phone usage, and strategies for mitigating its impact on personal and professional connections.

As a result of the increasing worry over phubbing, there is a demand for greater public consciousness and personal attentiveness towards phone usage, particularly in social situations. Recommendations for addressing the problem involve implementing designated areas or periods where phones are not allowed during social events, promoting honest discussions about phone usage with loved ones, and individuals actively choosing to prioritize face-to-face interactions over digital ones when in the presence of others.

In the digital age, it is increasingly vital to comprehend and tackle the issue of phubbing in order to maintain social

health and well-being. This highlights the necessity of finding a balance between our online activities and our interactions in the physical world.

#### **4. The Social Dilemma (2020) – an eye-opening documentary**

“The Social Dilemma” is a documentary that explores the potentially hazardous effects of social networking on human behaviour, as technology specialists express concerns about the consequences of their own inventions. The film incorporates interviews with technology specialists in a documentary format, as well as dramatizations that effectively demonstrate how the architecture of social media platforms fosters addiction, manipulates individuals’ perspectives, emotions, and actions, and disseminates conspiracy theories and false information. The film’s main premise is the existential peril that social media presents to society, since it has the power to manipulate and sway the public for business purposes through surveillance capitalism and data mining.

The documentary presents a persuasive argument for the immediate necessity of ethical rules and regulatory oversight for social media platforms in order to reduce their detrimental impact on society, democracy, and human well-being. The text supports the idea of reassessing the role of social media in society and urges for measures to hold

the technology industry responsible for its effects.

**Tristan Harris**, a former Google Design Ethicist, and co-founder of the Centre for Humane Technology, plays a prominent role in the documentary. The author explores the manipulation of users’ psychological weaknesses by social media platforms to optimize user engagement. Additionally, the author delves into the notion of a ‘attention economy’, where human attention is treated as a valuable commodity.

The primary inquiry being discussed: What are the methods employed by social media platforms to catch and control our attention?

Harris underscores that social media applications are specifically engineered to capitalize on psychological susceptibilities, fostering compulsive behaviours that guarantee users allocate a greater amount of time on these platforms. He contends that the “attention economy” operates on a fundamentally competitive basis, with platforms engaging in a struggle to capture user attention to maximize advertising revenue. Harris promotes the ethical restructuring of social media networks to prioritize the welfare of individuals before financial gains.

**Jaron Lanier**, a computer philosopher, discusses the business model employed by social media platforms. This model aims to maximize

user engagement to gather data that can be utilized for enhancing targeted advertising, hence earning profits.

**Main Question Addressed:** What is the operational framework of social media platforms, and what is its impact on society?

Lanier critiques the fundamental economic framework of social media, which depends on maintaining user engagement to amass vast quantities of data for the purpose of targeted advertising. He cautions that this paradigm results in a decline in personal freedom and privacy, as personal data is turned into a commodity without the informed agreement of individuals. Lanier proposes that adopting a more ethical business model, potentially by implementing direct payment for services, could help alleviate these problems.

**Aza Raskin** is a co-founder of the Centre for Humane Technology and is credited with inventing the concept of infinite scroll. Raskin examines the impact of features like as endless scroll and push notifications on user engagement, which in turn contributes to the development of technology addiction.

**Main Question Explored:** What is the impact of design choices in technology on user behaviour and well-being?

Raskin examines the deliberate use of design elements like endless

scroll and push notifications, which are intended to prolong user engagement and contribute to the development of technology addiction. He contemplates the moral obligation of designers and developers to produce technology that prioritizes the welfare of users rather than capitalizing on their attention. Raskin promotes a movement for technology that is considerate and compassionate, prioritizing the well-being of consumers in the creation of goods.

**Justin Rosenstein**, one of the co-inventors of Facebook's "Like" button, contemplates the unintended repercussions of social media features that were initially created to foster connections among individuals but have also played a role in problems such as addiction and the dissemination of false information.

**Main Question Addressed:** What are the unforeseen repercussions of social media features specifically designed to facilitate interpersonal connections?

Rosenstein expresses apprehension regarding how elements like as the "Like" button, designed to promote connection and optimism, have also played a role in fostering social comparison, jealousy, and dissatisfaction. The author explores the propensity for social validation to become addicted and its potential to result in adverse psychological consequences, particularly among younger individuals.

Rosenstein proposes reconsidering these characteristics in order to mitigate their detrimental impacts while maintaining their capacity to facilitate social connections.

**Tim Kendall** is a former President of Pinterest and former Director of Monetization at Facebook. Kendall discusses the competitive pursuit of attention within the social media sector and its harmful impact on society, such as the dissemination of conspiracy theories and the exacerbation of political divisiveness.

Main Question Addressed: What are the social consequences of the rivalry for attention on social media platforms?

Kendall examines the fierce rivalry of social media platforms in their quest to attract user attention, resulting in strategies that prioritize user engagement at the expense of content quality. He emphasizes the significance of these platforms in disseminating false information, promoting conspiracy theories, and exacerbating political conflict. Kendall advocates for a reassessment of the criteria used to determine success in social media, proposing a transition towards measurements that value the overall welfare of society.

**Jonathan Haidt**, a social psychologist at New York University, examines the influence of social media on the mental well-being of adolescents,

specifically focusing on the rise of despair and anxiety among teenagers as a result of their online activities and comparisons with others.

Main Question Explored: What is the influence of social media on the psychological well-being of adolescents?

Haidt examines the increase in depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems among adolescents, drawing a connection between this trend and the growing prevalence of social media usage. The author examines the ways in which platforms facilitate social comparison, cyberbullying, and a persistent feeling of inadequacy, especially among adolescent females. Haidt supports implementing age restrictions, imposing limits on screen usage, and fostering the creation of better social media settings specifically tailored for teenagers.

### **5. Changes in the behaviour and thinking.**

Tristan Harris is a prominent detractor of the methods employed by social media platforms to exploit human psychology to cultivate addiction and control behaviour. In “The Social Dilemma” and his other works, Harris analyses the psychological effects of social media, highlighting the deliberate design decisions that aim to generate addicting user experiences. This text provides a detailed explanation of

Harris's observations regarding the psychological impact of social media, specifically emphasizing the addictive moments and the resulting outcomes.

***The psychological mechanisms underlying social media addiction.***

Harris notes that social media use intermittent positive reinforcement, a reward system akin to slot machines, to foster addicted behaviours. Users engage in repetitive and uncontrollable behaviour of scrolling or checking alerts in eager expectation of social benefits like as likes, comments, or fresh content, which results in obsessive use.

**Social Comparison and Esteem:** The platforms are intentionally created to take advantage of our inherent need for social comparison and validation. Observing the carefully selected and presented aspects of other people's lives might result in emotions of insufficiency, envy, and diminished self-worth, which can contribute to adverse mental health consequences.

Harris highlights that social media intensifies the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), which is the unease that a captivating or intriguing event may be occurring in another location at the present moment. This compels users to often monitor their devices in order to maintain connectivity, resulting in heightened screen usage and the possibility of developing an addiction.

***Psychological Implications***

**Diminished Attention Span:** The incessant influx of notifications and the ceaseless stream of content might result in fragmented attention, diminishing the capacity to concentrate on tasks for prolonged durations and potentially affecting productivity and learning.

Social media's addictive and comparison qualities might contribute to mood disorders, such as anxiety and sadness. Harris emphasizes the heightened vulnerability of younger users, particularly those who are more prone to engaging in social comparison, to potential risks.

**Sleep disruptions** can occur due to excessive utilization of social media, especially when done right before going to bed, which can disrupt the normal sleep cycles. The emission of blue light from screens can interfere with the generation of melatonin, resulting in difficulties in initiating sleep and causing sleep deprivation.

**Social Skills Erosion:** Although social media offers a venue for digital engagement, Harris points out that it can also undermine in-person social skills. The absence of non-verbal clues in digital communication can hinder emotional intelligence and the capacity to manage intricate social situations.

**Dependency and Withdrawal:** Similar to other forms of addiction, individuals can develop a reliance on social media, resulting in withdrawal symptoms

such as heightened anxiety, anger, and feelings of isolation when attempting to decrease usage or disengage.

Harris promotes a more compassionate approach to designing technology that gives priority to the welfare of users rather than focusing on engagement numbers and advertising profits. He urges digital companies to embrace ethical design practices that take into account the enduring effects of their products on consumers' mental health and societal well-being. This entails reconsidering notification systems, revamping the feedback mechanisms of likes and shares, and developing tools that enable people to exert control over their digital experiences rather than being subject to them.

Harris, in his role with the Centre for Humane Technology, seeks to initiate a transformation towards technology that values and safeguards users' psychological well-being. He advocates for regulatory supervision and comprehensive industry modifications to tackle the societal and personal difficulties presented by social media.

Jonathan Haidt provides a vital viewpoint on the psychological and cultural consequences of social media, specifically for teenagers and young adults. Haidt's research, both in "The Social Dilemma" and his broader academic work, centres on the impact of

social media platforms on the increased prevalence of mental health problems among teenagers. Specifically, he highlights the role of these platforms in fostering anxiety, depression, and the deterioration of social unity.

Haidt's findings on the influence of social media reveal a notable escalation in levels of anxiety and depression. Haidt emphasizes the connection between the surge in social media usage and the heightened prevalence of anxiety and depression among the youth. He highlights that these networks can intensify feelings of inadequacy and alone, as users contrast their daily lives with the idealized portrayals others showcase online.

In his work, Haidt explores the detrimental impact of social media on the social fabric, specifically by weakening in-person communities and fostering divisiveness. He contends that these platforms enable the formation of echo chambers and filter bubbles, which separate users into groups with similar ideologies, hence exacerbating division and diminishing empathy among diverse social groupings.

Haidt shows significant concern on the influence of social media on adolescents' self-image and behaviour. The platforms' focus on measurable indicators of popularity (such as the quantity of likes or follows) might skew the self-esteem of young individuals

and result in behaviour that prioritizes seeking online approval over genuine self-expression.

### *Haidt's suggestions*

**Enforce Age Restrictions:** Haidt proposes implementing more stringent age limitations for the usage of social media. He supports implementing regulations to prohibit or significantly limit minors under a specific age (perhaps 16 or 18) from using social media platforms in order to safeguard their mental health.

The author underscores the significance of providing education to both young users and their parents regarding the potential hazards linked to social media. This involves promoting an understanding of the platforms' ability to worsen mental health problems and techniques for using social media in a more mindful and beneficial way.

Haidt advocates for the integration of digital literacy into educational curricula as a means to impart critical thinking abilities to young individuals in relation to digital content. This entails instructing students to identify and analyse misinformation, echo chambers, and the persuasive design strategies employed by social media networks.

Haidt endorses Tristan Harris's concept of "Time Well Spent" and advocates for the development of social media platforms that encourage

meaningful interaction rather than simply focusing on the amount of time users spend on them. This involves developing functionalities that improve real-life connections and promote the formation of communities, rather than encouraging feelings of seclusion and competition.

Haidt proposes that governments and regulatory agencies should enforce laws on social media businesses to safeguard the mental well-being of users. In addition, he urges tech companies to proactively reconfigure their platforms to be less addictive and more favorable to fostering pleasant social interactions.

Haidt's contributions to the discourse on social media and its impacts are crucial, especially his emphasis on the developmental and psychological well-being of younger cohorts. His suggestions provide a clear direction towards creating a more wholesome digital environment that promotes, rather than weakens, societal well-being and unity.

## **6. Changed moral compass**

Social media has a widespread impact on ethical ideals and moral behaviour, which is closely connected to individual behaviour, professional honesty, and societal norms. The advent of the digital era has brought about significant ethical dilemmas, particularly with the delicate balance between privacy and transparency. Social media platforms,

which are essentially created to promote the sharing of personal information, frequently blur the distinctions between private and public domains, so increasing the likelihood of identity theft and unjustified allegations of wrongdoing. These dynamics emphasize the importance of users being well conscious of the ethical consequences while sharing personal information on these networks.

The contrast between privacy and openness has significant impacts on persons' self-perception and value. Conditions like Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) and Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) demonstrate how social media can intensify feelings of insecurity over one's physical appearance and identity. This is due to constant comparisons and the desire for validation through carefully constructed online personas. On the other hand, if used wisely, social media may strengthen relationships and boost self-confidence by offering opportunities for self-expression and community support.

Excessive screen time during critical developmental periods can lead to mild cognitive impairments in young individuals, potentially increasing their risk of early-onset dementia in later adulthood. The study suggests a significant projection of a 4-to-6-fold increase in rates of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) from

2060 to 2100, far exceeding previous estimates. These findings underscore the detrimental effects of prolonged screen exposure on learning, memory, attention, emotional regulation, and overall brain development, which are similar to symptoms observed in mild cognitive impairment (MCI) seen in early stages of dementia.

The excessive use of digital devices is also associated with negative impacts on mental health, including an increased risk of mental disorders and substance use, both known risk factors for dementia. The document outlines how chronic sensory stimulation via screen time affects adolescents' and young adults' cognitive, emotional, and behavioural disorders, potentially leading to underdeveloped cognitive-behavioural abilities before adulthood.

The extensive screen time has broader implications for young people's relationships and their ability to create and maintain them. It is linked to poorer physical health, reduced activity, increased risk of being overweight, and declines in global intelligence, posing risks for cognitive decline later in life. These factors contribute to impaired social interaction, exacerbating feelings of loneliness and depression and impacting the overall quality of relationships. The phenomenon of "phubbing" is specifically mentioned as contributing to relationship

dissatisfaction, breakups, and divorce by providing an avenue for infidelity-related behaviours.

We certainly observe the need for immediate implementation of preventative measures, including public education, social policy, and healthcare interventions, to address the projected increase in ADRD. These measures are crucial for avoiding widespread societal and economic distress. It calls for a focus on traditional learning over digital learning and encourages non-digital enrichment activities as part of a broader strategy to mitigate the negative effects of excessive screen time on young people's cognitive health and social well-being.

Furthermore, social media has redefined ethical concerns in professional settings by combining personal and professional identities and intensifying the difficulties of upholding integrity and establishing distinct job boundaries in the face of rapid information sharing. PR practitioners often face ethical dilemmas, such as navigating influencer endorsements and using data mining for targeted marketing. These issues raise important concerns about the genuineness of online relationships and the ethical use of personal data for corporate benefits.

When considering these ethical complications, it is clear that the influence of social media goes beyond

individual actions and affects broader interpersonal dynamics and moral behaviour. The occurrence of negative phenomena such as "phubbing", which refers to the act of snubbing someone by using one's phone, not only reduces the quality of interpersonal contacts but also promotes feelings of neglect and insecurity. This poses a challenge to the trust and closeness that are essential for maintaining healthy relationships. This highlights the urgent requirement for clear limits and open communication to protect the fulfilment of relationships in the online world.

To navigate successfully the ethical and moral dilemmas presented by social media, it is essential to embrace a comprehensive approach that includes education, regulation, and personal self-reflection. This strategy seeks to promote ethical conduct in online contacts and protect against the erosion of personal and professional principles. Moreover, recognizing the potential of digital platforms to have adverse effects on mental health and cognitive development, particularly in young individuals, requires the adoption of proactive measures to mitigate risks and encourage a healthy use of digital media.

Overall, as social media becomes an essential part of everyday life, its impact on ethical comprehension, moral conduct, and interpersonal connections

requires a careful and knowledgeable approach. It is essential to prioritize education, ethical reflection, and preventive actions in order to maximize the advantages of digital connectedness while minimizing its possible negative effects. This will create an environment where personal integrity and the quality of human connections may thrive. The exploration of social media's impact on ethical values and moral behaviour reveals a landscape rife with challenges and opportunities. The ethical dilemmas presented by social media usage necessitate a thoughtful approach to digital communication, emphasizing the importance of ethical guidelines, education, and regulation to safeguard personal integrity and professional standards.

The impact of social media on human relationships and family life is multi-dimensional, affecting both in positive and negative ways. Research and expert opinion highlight the significant influence of social media habits on intimate connections, communication, and overall mental health within families and relationships.

### *Negative Impacts*

**Intimate Partner Disconnection:** A notable portion of individuals report feeling neglected or ignored by their partners due to distractions caused by cell phones and social media. This disconnection can extend to feelings

of insecurity, especially when partners engage with ex-partners or social media influencers online, potentially eroding trust and intimacy.

**Parasocial Relationships:** Social media facilitate the formation of one-sided emotional bonds with public figures or influencers, known as parasocial relationships. These relationships, while seeming real to the individual, are devoid of actual interpersonal interaction, possibly detracting from real-life connections and contributing to unrealistic expectations in personal relationships.

**Comparison and Insecurity:** The curated and often idealized presentation of lives on social media can lead to unhealthy comparisons, affecting self-esteem and satisfaction within one's own relationships. This "comparison trap" may lead to discontent and feelings of inadequacy when comparing the everyday realities of one's own relationship to the highlight reels presented by others.

### *Managing Social Media's Impact*

To mitigate the negative impacts while leveraging the positive aspects of social media on relationships, several strategies can be adopted:

**Setting Boundaries:** Establish clear guidelines around social media use, particularly during quality time with partners or family members, to ensure that digital engagement does not detract

from personal connections.

### ***Positive Impacts***

**Enhanced Connectivity:** Despite its challenges, social media also offers positive contributions to relationships, such as maintaining connections with distant friends and family, and providing platforms for support groups and mental health resources. For many, especially the younger generation, social media is a vital tool for feeling supported and connected.

**Support and Education:** Social media serve as a hub for accessing relationship advice and mental health support from professionals. This availability of resources can encourage individuals and couples to seek help, potentially strengthening their relationships.

**Communication and Transparency:** Open dialogue about each partner's social media use and expectations can prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. Being transparent and honest about online interactions is crucial for maintaining trust.

**Quality Time:** Prioritizing uninterrupted time together, without the presence of digital devices, can help strengthen bonds and improve relationship satisfaction.

**Awareness and Self-Reflection:** Individuals are encouraged to reflect on their social media habits and the influence these have on their self-esteem and relationships. Unfollowing

accounts that promote unrealistic standards or induce negative feelings can help maintain a healthier self-image and relationship perspective.

### **7. Conclusion - What kind of values are we actually following and promoting?**

The discussion surrounding "Digital Dementia" and the emerging phenomena like as "Phubbing" represents a crucial point in our digital development, leading to a reassessment of the principles, ethics, and moral conduct that shape human civilization in the digital era. The widespread use of digital platforms has brought about a significant change, not only in cognitive ability and social connections, but also in the moral principles that influence individual and collective behaviour.

As the line separating the digital and physical domains becomes more permeable, a contrast between privacy and openness arises, questioning conventional ideas about how we engage, disclose, and exist in an interconnected environment. The ethical dilemmas presented by social media's promotion of extensive personal data sharing have significant ramifications for identity, security, and autonomy, leading to hazards such as identity theft and unjustified scrutiny. The digital landscape has gradually but profoundly altered our view of ourselves and our sense of value. This is evident in the rise

of diseases such as Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD) and Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), which highlight the psychological impact of constantly comparing ourselves to others and seeking approval online.

The shift in cultural ideals and ethical comprehension is mirrored by alterations in moral conduct, as evidenced in the interplay of personal and professional interactions. The phenomena of “phubbing” represents the decline of genuine human ties in favor of temporary digital interactions, illustrating a larger pattern of decreasing empathy, critical thinking, and moral reasoning. This change in behavior has significant consequences for the structure of society, as digital contacts increasingly determine the level and intensity of connections, often leading to negative outcomes.

Therefore, it is crucial and urgent to request a thorough reassessment of the impact of digital technology on our ethical framework. This highlights the need for active participation from all sectors of society, such as religious organizations, educational institutions, and legislative authorities, to tackle the ethical consequences of digital transformation. This entails promoting the conservation and rejuvenation of customary principles in the face of swift technological advancement, guaranteeing that human relationships, compassion, and moral

soundness continue to be fundamental to our social structure.

In order to successfully traverse the intricate digital landscape, it is essential to promote a well-rounded digital consumption pattern. This involves placing emphasis on establishing limits, fostering open communication, and prioritizing meaningful interactions in both personal and professional aspects of life. Consciousness and introspection on one’s social media behaviour can be powerful tools in reducing the negative impacts of digital interaction, fostering healthy self-perceptions, and maintaining the authenticity of relationships.

Ultimately, the investigation into “Digital Dementia”, “Phubbing”, and their resulting impacts serves as a clear and urgent reminder to reevaluate and readjust the principles, standards, and ethical conduct that form the foundation of human civilization in the digital era. This prompts a shared self-reflection on the ideals we support and promote through our online interactions, encouraging a deliberate exploration of the digital environment that respects the profound, varied, and respectful nature of human relationships. By doing this, we are reasserting our dedication to a society that appreciates empathy, honesty, and the depth of real connections outside of the online bubble.