

Can I live offline?

Course last update: 2020 04 22 11:36

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General

Most people completing this course will have a mobile phone and access to the internet. This is considered normal for the majority of the population, though some remote areas have less reliable internet access. We consider what it would be like to live without electricity in '[Living off the grid](#)'. Here, we consider what it might be like to live without the internet, specifically.

Communication

Online communication can be sorted into two categories:

- one-to-one interactions such as email and instant messaging, and
- one-to-many interactions such as news and social media

Communication change (5 coins)

The internet has replaced or changed many other forms of communication. Letters are now lovingly referred to as 'snail mail', for example!

1. Complete the '[Communication change template](#)'.
2. Upload the template to the '[Communication change submission](#)'.

Phones

Smartphones and 'dumb' phones

Watch the next video to hear from some people who have chosen to use 'dumb' phones rather than smartphones:

Playing time: 4:11

[watch](#)

The people in the video above discuss how the phones they use don't support GPS, so they still rely on their friends' phones for maps. None of them talk about communicating less, though.

What are phones for? (5 coins)

1. Phones have increased enormously in function to the point that they now enable much more than just communication.
2. Every time you pick up your phone over a 24-hour period, make a quick note of what you are using it for.
3. At the end of the 24-hour period, look at the list of what you used your phone for and see if you notice any patterns.
4. Calculate the proportion of phone use that involves directly communicating with others, and the proportion of phone use that involves other things.
5. Post the proportions as percentages on the '[Phone use forum](#)', along with the three things you use the phone for most other than one-to-one communication.

Phoneless

Some people choose to give up mobile phones altogether, going one step further than the people in the video above who chose to use 'dumb' phones instead of smartphones. In the next video, someone describes their experience of giving up their mobile phone altogether for one month:

Playing time: 5:20

[watch](#)

A world without phones (5 coins)

Some people argue that phone make people anti-social, but Luke found that not having a phone was the least sociable time he had. This makes sense, given the fact that his friends kept their phones, and continued to use them as an important medium for communication. But what if no-one had a phone? What if everyone had to rely on face-to-face communication? How would this change your life? How would it change the world? Post your thoughts on the 'No phones forum'.

The internet

The disinhibition effect

Psychologists studying online communication have discovered that people behave differently online. The 'disinhibition effect' describes how people behave in a way online that they never would offline. This can lead to a culture of conflict, disrespect, and bullying. People in the next video confront one another in public using the same language you might see online. What do you think happens?

Playing time: 2:02

[InRealLifeBeStrong.invid](#)

Standing up (5 coins)

In the video above, strangers intervene and stand up for the person being bullied. This doesn't tend to happen online, though. Why do you think that might be? Have you seen it happen before, or not? Share your thoughts on the '[Standing up forum](#)'.

Social impact (5 coins)

The next video argues that overall, online communication has had a negative impact on society:

Playing time: 3:59

[watch](#)

After watching the video above, answer the following questions on the '[Social impact forum](#)':

1. Do you agree with the video? Why or why not? Feel free to start a new thread or respond to someone else's post.
2. The video claims that most young people don't remember a life without the internet. Is this true for you? What are your earliest memories of information and communications technology? How have these technologies changed through your lifetime so far, and where do you expect they might go in the future?

Resources and Activities

resource: Communication change template

Resource file: Communication change template.docx

forum: Phone use forum

After tracking your phone use for 24 hours, post the percentage of phone use that involves directly communicating with others, and the percentage of phone use that involves other things. Also post the three things you use the phone for most other than one-to-one communication.

Link: [Phone use forum](#)

forum: No phones forum

What if no-one had a phone? What if everyone had to rely on face-to-face communication? How would this change your life? How would it change the world? Share your thoughts below.

Link: [No phones forum](#)

forum: Standing up forum

Why do you think strangers do not tend to intervene and stand up for people being bullied online? Have you seen it happen before, or not? Share your thoughts here.

Link: [Standing up forum](#)

forum: Social impact forum

Respond to the questions about the 'Communication throughout the years' video here.

Link: [Social impact forum](#)

assign: Communication change submission

Link: [Communication change submission](#)

Knowledge

Search engines

Google

Have you ever tried to do the same Google search 15 minutes apart and found you got different results? This is because Google chooses listings according to their popularity and their relevance both to your search terms, and to you. Businesses use something called 'Search Engine Optimisation' to increase the chance that their page will occur in searches, partly by working out which words produce the result they want. In the video below, Google explain how their famous search engine works:

Playing time: 5:15

[watch](#)

Search algorithms (5 coins)

Search engines like Google use complex algorithms to determine which pages appear and in what order. You can read more about that [here](#).

1. Take a look at the link above and find three different things that affect the results of a Google search.
2. Post your findings on the '[Search algorithms forum](#)'.

Video

Online video (5 coins)

As you have no doubt noticed, many businesses use online video marketing.

1. Take a look at [this](#) article about video marketing and find three interesting statistics.
2. Post your statistics on the '[Online video forum](#)' along with a prediction about how you think each statistic might change over the next few years, and why.

YouTube

According to [this](#) article by Forbes, the highest-paid YouTube star in 2018 was a 7-year-old called Ryan ToysReview! How do people earn money on YouTube? They allow YouTube to insert advertisements into their videos, although they can only do this if they have more than 1000 subscribers. Take a look at the video below if you'd like to know more:

Playing time: 7:22

[watch](#)

YouTube celebrity (5 coins)

YouTubers effectively have their own TV channels, and when they get popular enough they can make money from advertisements and partnerships. Answer the following questions on the '[YouTube celebrity forum](#)':

1. How hard (or easy) do you think it is to become a successful YouTuber, and why?

2. Have you ever thought of starting a YouTube channel? If you did, what kind of content would you make?
3. If your goal was just to get as many views as possible, what kind of videos would you make?

Before the internet

Research

How did people find out things before the internet existed? The first port of call would often have been a printed encyclopedia. For current affairs, you might have gone to a newspaper or TV news. For specialist knowledge, you probably would have taken a look at a printed academic journal. These media are now all online: Wikipedia has replaced the print encyclopedia, online news sources are replacing printed newspapers, and academic journals are being published online rather than in print. Watch the next video for 25 more things people do less now that we have access to the internet:

Playing time: 6:59

[watch](#)

Online versus print (5 coins)

Many news sources publish both online and in print.

1. Find a printed newspaper and read it carefully for 20 minutes. Use an alarm to time yourself.
2. Find the same publication online and read it carefully for another 20 minutes. Again, use an alarm to time yourself.
3. Answer the following questions on the '[Online versus print forum](#)':
 1. What did you learn?
 2. What was it like reading a printed newspaper? Was it different to reading the online version? If so, how?
3. What are the benefits and drawbacks to each medium?

Old ways (5 coins)

The next video features another 25 things people did before the internet:

Playing time: 8:29

[watch](#)

1. Watch the video above and choose two things that might be improved if they returned to how they were done before the internet.
2. Post your choices along with an explanation of why you chose them on the '[Old ways forum](#)'.

Microform

Microfilm and microfiche are used to scan and store old data. They have been used to archive pre-internet media, including newspapers, films, and other documents. They can only be read using a special reader, so they can be a bit hard to use. Take a look at this video to see how a microfiche reader works:

[watch](#)

Imagine if each time you wanted to find out about something that happened in the past you had to find it on microfiche! It could take hours to find something that you can find on Google in seconds.

Your birthday (5 coins)

Some libraries and museums still have microfiche archives.

1. Find a library with a microfiche machine.
2. Visit the library in person and use their microfiche machine to look up what happened on your birthday 50 years ago.
3. Post your findings on the '[50 years ago forum](#)', along with a brief reflection on your experience with this activity.

Resources and Activities

forum: 50 years ago forum

1. Visit a library in person and use their microfiche machine to look up what happened on your birthday 50 years ago. 2. Post your findings below, along with a brief reflection on your experience with this activity.

Link: [50 years ago forum](#)

forum: Old ways forum

Watch the video about things people did before the internet and choose two things that might be improved if they returned to how they were done before the internet. Post your choices here along with an explanation of why you chose them.

Link: [Old ways forum](#)

forum: Online versus print forum

1. What did you learn? 2. What was it like reading a printed newspaper? Was it different to reading the online version? If so, how? 3. What are the benefits and drawbacks to each medium?

Link: [Online versus print forum](#)

forum: YouTube celebrity forum

1. How hard (or easy) do you think it is to become a successful YouTuber, and why? 2. Have you ever thought of starting a YouTube channel? If you did, what kind of content would you make? 3. If your goal was just to get as many views as possible, what kind of videos would you make?

Link: [YouTube celebrity forum](#)

forum: Online video forum

Post three statistics from the article below, along with a prediction about how you think each statistic might change over the next few years, and why.

Link: [Online video forum](#)

forum: Search algorithms forum

Post three different things that affect the results of a Google search here.

Link: [Search algorithms forum](#)

Entertainment

Social media

Popularity of social media

Social media are a popular source of entertainment, with [49%](#) of people using them globally. In 2019, internet users spent an average of [2 hours and 24 minutes](#) per day using social media!

Time spent on social media (5 coins)

How much time do you spend a day on social media, and what social media platforms do you use the most?

1. Respond to the '[Social media choice](#)' to indicate approximately how much time you spend on social media each day. Note that instant messaging, YouTube, and streaming sites like Twitch are all considered social media. Your choice will be shown anonymously.
2. See if you can find the average number of hours spent on social media in Australia, then answer the following questions on the '[Time spent on social media forum](#)':

1. How does your social media use compare to a) the Australian average, and b) the global average?
2. Do you think you might be over- or under-estimating your social media use? Why or why not?

FOMO

Fear of missing out (FOMO) describes the fear of missing out on an opportunity or experience, particularly one that others are having. It can manifest as a fear of regret about having spent your time in one way, when you feel it could have been spent differently. Social media can cause FOMO, with people comparing their own life to the lives they see posted on Facebook or Instagram. Watch this short film for a short exploration of the concept:

Playing time: 8:26

[watch](#)

Media representations (5 coins)

How do you and the people you know depict yourselves online? What aspects of life do you choose to share? Is this an accurate depiction of the life you lead? Do you ever experience FOMO? Why or why not? Share your thoughts and experiences on the '[Media representations forum](#)'.

Video

The fate of TV

Streaming services like Netflix and Twitch are becoming more and more popular, with older video formats like TV and movie theatres declining in viewership. In 2019, for the first time, people spent [more time online](#) than watching TV, globally. This suggests a big shift in consumer behaviour away from more traditional media. The role of the broadcaster is changing, too, as more and more people make content. Anyone can set up a website or a YouTube channel, for example. Watch this video for a history of television, to see where things evolved from:

Playing time: 3:26

[watch](#)

Video consumption (5 coins)

How do you consume video content? Do you watch TV? Do you watch videos on YouTube? Do you watch streamers? Do you watch on-demand streaming services like Netflix? Do you go to the movies? Discuss your habits and preferences on the '[Video consumption forum](#)'.

Offline

No internet

The couple in the next video realise that they spend an enormous time on social media, so they choose to quit the internet and TV for one month. Note that there's some mild swearing in the video.

Playing time: 13:09

[watch](#)

About half-way through the video, the woman realises she has no offline hobbies or interests. Without the internet, she has a hard time finding things to do. She discovers a few offline activities by the end of the month, but she returns to her online habits by the end of the video, despite the fact that she doesn't really enjoy them.

Watch the next video for a spoken word poem about how children spent their time before the internet:

Playing time: 2:41

[watch](#)

Offline entertainment (5 coins)

Most people would find themselves with several free hours each day if the internet became unavailable. What would you do for entertainment without the internet or TV? How would you fill your time? Share your thoughts on the '[Offline entertainment forum](#)'.

Books

Reading

Books have been changed by the internet, but they haven't been replaced - in fact, they are still quite popular, with [65%](#) of Australians reading a book at least once per week. Watch the next video for a look at how to get the most out of your books, through the art of 'active reading':

Playing time: 4:40

[watch](#)

The next video looks at why reading remains an important and worthwhile past-time:

[watch](#)

The benefits of reading (5 coins)

What was the last book you read? Did you get any of the benefits from the video above? Share your thoughts and experiences on the '[Benefits of reading forum](#)'.

Resources and Activities

choice: Social media choice

Approximately how much time do you spend on social media per day?

forum: Time spent on social media forum

1. How does your social media use compare to a) the Australian average, and b) the global average?
2. Do you think you might be over- or under-estimating your social media use? Why or why not?

Link: [Time spent on social media forum](#)

forum: Media representations forum

How do you and the people you know depict yourselves online? What aspects of life do you choose to share? Is this an accurate depiction of the life you lead? Do you ever experience FOMO? Why or why not? Share your thoughts and experiences below.

Link: [Media representations forum](#)

forum: Benefits of reading forum

What was the last book you read? Did you get any of the benefits from the video above? Share your thoughts and experiences here.

Link: [Benefits of reading forum](#)

forum: Video consumption forum

How do you consume video content? Do you watch TV? Do you watch videos on YouTube? Do you watch streamers? Do you watch on-demand streaming services like Netflix? Do you go to the movies? Discuss your habits and preferences below.

Link: [Video consumption forum](#)

forum: Offline entertainment forum

Most people would find themselves with several free hours each day if the internet became unavailable. What would you do for entertainment without the internet or TV? How would you fill your time? Share your thoughts below.

Link: [Offline entertainment forum](#)

Health and wellbeing

Identity

Online identity

Social psychologists see identity as flexible and multifaceted, changing with context. Think of how you behave when around your friends, compared to how you behave with family. People also tend to behave differently online and offline. The video below explores that issue a bit:

Playing time: 3:10

[watch](#)

Selves (5 coins)

Respond to the following questions on the '[Selves forum](#)':

1. Can you think of two contexts in which you express different sides of your personality? Why do you think this happens?
2. Are there any situations where you feel free to express yourself fully? If so, when is that?
3. Do you behave differently online to how you behave offline? If so, how?
4. Is your online self any less 'real' than your offline self? Why or why not?

Addiction

Digital detox

The video above argues that it's possible to get addicted to likes and other forms of online approval. In the next video, someone who spent more than seven hours a day on their phone went on a two week digital detox. Be aware that the video features some mild swearing.

Playing time: 8:27

[watch](#)

At the beginning of her digital detox, Hayley had her brain activity measured using an electroencephalogram (EEG) at Nottingham University. When she looks at her phone but can't touch it, her brain activity resembles that of an alcoholic who looks at a drink but can't drink it!

Internet addiction (5 coins)

Internet addiction is seen as a serious public health issue in China, where teenagers are sent to reeducation camps to curb their internet use:

Playing time: 7:11

[watch](#)

Watch the video above and then answer the following questions on the '[Internet addiction forum](#)':

1. Do you think the young men in the video above benefit from the internet addiction camp? If not, how do you think their parents should respond instead?
2. At what point do you think it's fair to say someone is addicted?
3. What are some of the problems with internet addiction? Why do you think people make such a fuss about it?

4. Why might people become addicted to the internet?
5. Do you think you could develop an online addiction? That includes videos, instant messaging, social media, online gaming, and every other use of the internet.

Mental health

Selfies

Millions of selfies are uploaded to the internet each year, and it's interesting to consider why they are so popular. The psychologists in the short video below argue that selfies are a healthy way to explore your identity, particularly during adolescence:

Playing time: 1:29

[watch](#)

In contrast, the comedian in the next video implies that selfies are narcissistic, and they may be a sign of psychological distress:

Playing time: 7:25

[PsychologyoftheSelfiewithJPSears.invid](#)

The psychology of selfies (5 coins)

Which video do you agree with more? The first one which argues that selfies are fairly benign, or the second one which argues that they may be problematic? Why do you believe people take selfies? Do you think some selfie-taking behaviours are healthier than others? Share your thoughts on the '[Psychology of selfies forum](#)'.

Information overload

Some people are concerned that the torrent of distractions we find online may have a negative impact on psychological development and wellbeing. The next video outlines the theory that the internet encourages a shallow style of information processing, potentially stunting psychological development:

Playing time: 3:53

[watch](#)

Digital distraction (5 coins)

Attention is a skill like any other - through practice, people can become better at focusing and avoiding distraction.

1. Set aside two hours to do something unrelated to digital media. You could meditate, draw, go for a walk, write a poem, read a book, play an instrument, or practice a sport, for example. Really try to focus on whatever you choose to do.
2. Answer the following questions on the '[Digital distraction forum](#)':
 1. What did you choose to do for two hours? How was it? Was it difficult to resist distraction, or not?
 2. How often do you normally spend more than an hour focusing on something unrelated to digital media?
 3. Some people find it hard to focus on one thing for a long period of time. How well-trained do you think your attention is? Is it possible that digital distractions have taught your brain to constantly seek new stimulation? Or are you in good control of your attention?

Healthy phone use

In the video below, someone reflects on her own smart phone use and shares some things that have helped her develop a more healthy relationship with it:

Playing time: 5:45

[4TipsToBreakYourPhoneAddictionMayimBialik.invid](#)

Taking back control (5 coins)

Answer the following questions on the '[Healthy internet use forum](#)':

1. Would you like to gain better control over your use of digital media? Yes or no?
2. If yes, why, and what is one thing you could do to move in the right direction?
3. If no, why, and at what point would you consider it necessary to gain better control over your use of digital media?

Activities

Complete at least 25 coins' worth of activities below.

[Tech-free fun \(5 coins\)](#)

Create a flyer promoting an activity of your choice that doesn't involve digital technology. You can read about how to edit digital images [here](#). When done, add your flyer to a new page on the '[Tech-free fun Wiki](#)'. You can learn how to edit Wikis [here](#).

[Cyberbullying poster \(10 coins\)](#)

Create an anti-cyberbullying poster. You can read about how to edit digital images [here](#). When done, add it to a new page of the '[Cyberbullying poster Wiki](#)'. You can learn how to edit Wikis [here](#).

[Book review \(10 coins\)](#)

Write a review of a book you like, focusing on what you got from it, and why you think others should read it. Post your review on the '[Book review forum](#)'.

[10 ways to say 'I love you' \(10 coins\)](#)

1. Create 10 different communications to tell someone you love them. Each communication should be in a different medium. The recipient could be a friend, family member, partner, or someone who doesn't even exist. Possible media include:

- letter
- text message
- social media post
- sticky note
- video message
- phone call
- card
- poem
- painting
- song
- postcard

Post a list of the communications you made on the '[10 ways forum](#)'. You don't have to share the

communications themselves, though you can if you like. Include a brief reflection on the activity, too, commenting on the differences between the media - which ones take longer? Which ones feel more meaningful and why? (20 coins)

1. Choose one of the following topics:

- Cyberbullying
- Internet use
- Phone use
- Gaming
- Choose one of the following topics:
- Sleep
- Diet
- Exercise
- Mental health
- Offline social interaction
- Life satisfaction

Develop a one-sentence research question about the relationship between the topics you chose in questions 1 and 2. You should be more specific in your research question than in the topics above. For example, 'Is there a relationship between phone alarm use and amount of sleep?'

Develop an anonymous internet survey using [Google Forms](#) with two questions to get age and gender:

- How old are you?
- Do you identify as male, female, or neither?

Your survey should also include at least 5 questions to help answer your question. For example:

- Do you use your phone as an alarm to wake you up on the weekend? [yes / no]
- What time do you usually get out of bed on weekends?
- What time do you usually go to bed on Friday or Saturday night?
- Roughly how many hours of sleep do you get on Friday and Saturday nights?
- How often do you feel you get enough sleep on Friday and Saturday nights? [never / sometimes / usually / always]

Over the next week, send your survey to as many people as you possibly can. You can share it with friends and family, but you can also promote it online by sharing it on social media.

Analyse the results of your survey. Do they help answer your research question? For example, the above survey might find that men and women under the age of 20 who use their phone as an alarm are more likely to say they get inadequate sleep compared to men and women under the age of 20 who do not use their phone as an alarm.

Interpret your findings. To do this, write a paragraph about *why* you might see the results you found. In the example, you might theorise that people who use their phone as an alarm are more likely to keep it next to their bed, so they are more likely to use it at night, keeping them awake. You could even test your interpretation by looking more closely at the results of your survey - in this case, if the interpretation is correct, we might expect to see that people who use their phone as an alarm tend to go to bed later than people who do not use their phone as an alarm.

Post your findings as a full report on the '[Internet research forum](#)', with the following headings:

- Research question
- Method [how did you share your survey? how many people responded to it? what questions did you include?]
- Discussion [what did your results show? what did you learn from your study? did it help you answer the research question and if so, how? how could other studies answer the question more?]

[Digital debate \(20 coins\)](#)

YouTube is a popular platform for public debates, and virtually anyone is free to chip in.

1. Create a 3-minute video arguing either for or against the following debate motion: Overall, the internet is having a negative impact on human happiness.
2. Your goal is to convince the viewer of your perspective, either for or against the above statement. You can read about how to make videos [here](#).
3. Upload your video to YouTube and post the link on the '[Digital debate forum](#)'.

[Historical research \(20 coins\)](#)

Different sources tend to yield different information, on almost any given topic. Historians are very familiar with this fact, because they lack direct access to the past. They therefore have to rely on other historians as well as artefacts, including documents, from the era being studied.

1. Choose a historical event you would like to know more about. It should be at least 20 years old, though you can go as far back as you like. Examples include the first Russian Revolution, the Great Fire of London, the European invasion of Australia, and the fall of the Roman Empire.
2. Find out as much about the event as you can without using the internet. Most likely, you will need to begin by visiting a library! Record all the information on one document. Be sure to keep good track of all your sources.
3. Once you have a good deal of information about your chosen event, go ahead and research it online. Record the information you find on a new document. Again, be sure to keep track of your sources.
4. Write a 300-word comparison where you address the following points:
 - What facts differed between the online and offline information? In what ways did they give you a different picture of the event?
 - How did your experience of research differ online and offline? What are the benefits and drawbacks of online and offline research? Is it better to research online, offline, or some combination of the two? Why?

Post your comparison along with your references and what you discovered on the '[Historical research forum](#)'.

Resources and Activities

forum: Selves forum

Answer the four questions about your 'selves' below.

Link: [Selves forum](#)

forum: Internet addiction forum

Answer the questions about internet addiction below.

Link: [Internet addiction forum](#)

forum: Psychology of selfies forum

Which video do you agree with more? The first one which argues that selfies are fairly benign, or the second one which argues that they may be problematic? Why do you believe people take selfies? Do you think some selfie-taking behaviours are healthier than others? Share your thoughts here.

Link: [Psychology of selfies forum](#)

forum: Digital distraction forum

Answer the three questions about digital distraction here.

Link: [Digital distraction forum](#)

forum: Healthy internet use forum

1. Would you like to gain better control over your use of digital media? Yes or no? 2. If yes, why, and what is one thing you could do to move in the right direction? 3. If no, why, and at what point would you consider it necessary to gain better control over your use of digital media?

Link: [Healthy internet use forum](#)

wiki: Tech-free fun Wiki

Add your flyer to a new page here.

Link: [Tech-free fun Wiki](#)

wiki: Cyberbullying poster Wiki

Add your anti-cyberbullying poster to a new page below.

Link: [Cyberbullying poster Wiki](#)

forum: Book review forum

Post your book review here.

Link: [Book review forum](#)

forum: 10 ways forum

Post a list of the communications you made below. Include a brief reflection on the activity, commenting on the differences between the media - which ones take longer? Which ones feel more meaningful, and why?

Link: [10 ways forum](#)

forum: Internet research forum

Post your internet research report here.

Link: [Internet research forum](#)

forum: Digital debate forum

Post your video arguing either for or against the following debate motion: 'Overall, the internet is having a negative impact on human happiness.'

Link: [Digital debate forum](#)

forum: Historical research forum

Post your online and offline source comparison along with your references and what you discovered below.

Link: [Historical research forum](#)

Attachments

Communication_change_template.docx