

Avoiding a technological anxiety attack

March 10 2020, by David Bradley



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Almost everywhere you look where two or more people are gathered together, someone is staring at the screen of a mobile phone or other device, swiping left, swiping right, tapping icons, scrolling...

...some research would suggest that the world is addicted to its smartphones and tablets. Another, more positive, interpretation would be that as a social animal we are simply better connected across our societies and globally than any earlier generation could ever have dreamed of. There are pros and cons to our so-called 24/7 connectivity. We are by turns better informed in a more timely manner about local happenings and global events. We have access to almost any piece of information we might need almost instantaneously. We can "speak" to almost anyone we might ever need to, from friends and family, work colleagues, celebrities, politicians, and business leaders.

Conversely, there are times when email, [social media](#), news notifications, trending updates, and viral memes might become overwhelming and people talk of taking a digital detox. They disconnect, albeit temporarily, they go, to a limited extent, off-grid. We talk of finding me [time](#), being mindful, mental wellbeing, and simply avoiding the endless stream of cat/dog videos that seem to pervade even the most stringently business-like timelines on our devices.

Work published in the International Journal of Networking and Virtual Organisations, has investigated the notion of technology-induced job anxiety and how it arises during what we used to think of as non-[work time](#), the out of hours period at the end of each day, the weekends, days off, vacations etc.

Jinnan Wu, Nannan Wang, Wenjuan Mei, and Lin Liu of Anhui University of Technology in Ma'anshan, China, suggest that the way in which work-related technology invades our purportedly [personal time](#) needs detailed investigation. In their paper, they were keen to look at how this invasion affects job anxiety itself.

Fundamentally, the study shows that "techno-invasion positively predicts job anxiety. However, employees have better organizational support and

demonstrate computer self-efficacy ([personal control](#) over their digital domain in other words) show less job anxiety. Moreover, when an employee has good computer self-efficacy but perceives organizational support as being low, they can still avoid much of the anxiety felt by those who have less control of their digital realm even if they are well supported by their organization.

In other words, employees learning to have more [self-control](#) outside of work time and not succumbing to the pressures of job-related technological notifications will inevitably reduce [anxiety](#) relative to those employees who do not feel in control.

More information: Jinnan Wu et al. Technology-induced job anxiety during non-work time: examining conditional effect of techno-invasion on job anxiety, *International Journal of Networking and Virtual Organisations* (2020). [DOI: 10.1504/IJNVO.2020.105520](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJNVO.2020.105520)

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