

Media Fast Assignment

Many would probably love to believe that technology does not play that big of a role in their daily lives. Some may think that it does help them from day to day, but they probably believe that they can live without it for a short period of time. Well, this theory was tested for me with this media fast assignment. Being deprived of technology for a mere 24 hours opened my eyes to the role that technology plays in my daily life.

Lack of technology for 24 hours caused me to do a large amount of planning before the assignment commenced in regards to how I was going to spend my time and order my day. I decided to do my media fast over fall break since I was going to be staying at the University of Richmond instead of going home (I would have been more tempted to use technology at home). The way that I decided how I was going to spend my time really depended on how I felt. I didn't have a timeline, and I was trying to use my fall break to try and relax. Although I planned in advance so that I wouldn't have to use technology, I kind of just did things that I wanted to do for the rest of the day as to not stress myself out.

I began the fast as soon as I woke up. I woke up to the tune of silence and not my usual musical alarm from my cell phone. I had to go the whole day without using my microwave, so I ate meals that didn't require its use. I completed some homework assignments that didn't require me to use my laptop or other forms of technology and this took up a few hours of my time. At one point, I did use my cell phone to use my dictionary app to look up a few words that I didn't know in one of my readings. I realized that I do not even have a dictionary or thesaurus in my room, which I never paid attention to before because they aren't needed. For the rest of the day, I went to visit my friend

who stayed on campus, thought about life, did workouts in my room and then I had to go to work for 9 hours that night. When I went to my friend's room, I had to use technology in order to swipe into their dorm building and thankfully they were in their room since I couldn't give them any notice that I was coming. The remainder of the time I spent sleeping.

For me, the fast was not that terrible. I considered it a mini vacation from my daily hectic schedule. When I found myself getting bored or restless, I just did some push-ups or sit-ups until the feeling passed. At those times, I would have probably liked to watch television as a preference to doing those things, but not out of necessity. I think one of the reasons it wasn't as hard as I thought it was going to be is because one, I did it during a time where I was supposed to be relaxing. Two, I love having time to myself to just think about my life, my future and to also reminisce on the past. Doing this reminds me of the things that I consider important in my life, it grounds me and also motivates me to do better. Also, spending time with my friend was fun because our schedules are so busy that just taking out some time to talk not only passed the time, but it was something I enjoyed because we don't get to just talk for hours often.

I did have to do some minor planning in advance to prepare for the fast. I completed assignments that would be due the day of the fast in advance that required the use of a laptop or the Internet. I also had to buy food that I could eat without using the microwave. I had to text my family and friends to let them know that I wouldn't be able to use my phone, FaceTime, the Internet or any other ways they may try to contact me so that they wouldn't think that I was ignoring them. I had to do these things so everyone knew what was going on and wouldn't be alarmed by my lack of response. This relates to

McLuhan's concept of the global village, because my family and friends are constantly concerned with what I am doing, which is most likely a result of technology being able to connect us in such an intimate way.

Apart from changing my daily routine to fit the fact that it was fall break, I didn't have to change my daily routine that much. My body is programmed to wake up at a certain time, so I woke up around the same time that I normally would have. I didn't have to run around campus or go to class, so I just did things that I normally would have on break, besides watching TV or tweeting. It was basically a vacation for me without technology, besides the fact that I had to go to work later on that day.

I do not think that this media fast made me reconsider how I use electronic media. If I had to go without technology on a school day where I had to go to class, meetings and to work, I might have. But since I had set aside this day to relax, it really wasn't an eye opener for me. Besides noticing that I don't have a dictionary or thesaurus, I didn't notice a great change. Technology is amazing and definitely is helpful in everyday life, but when you have your mind set on just taking some time out of your busy schedule to relax, and then notice the absence of alarms going off and people trying to get a hold of you, it's actually pretty nice. This experience also made me realize that I cannot accurately gauge how significant of a role electronic media plays in my life. Like I've said before, I wasn't in my "natural habitat" or my day-to-day element. In order to get a better gauge on this, I would have had to use technology on a school day when it is high time for me to be using technology.

As far as the significance of technology in my everyday life, I would say that it does play an integral role. Technology helps me, above all to stay connected, save time

and to stay organized. I still enjoy the simplicity of doing things that don't require technology, like writing letters, writing notes or reading newspapers and books. Over the summer, I love having time myself to just read a good book on my way to work or when I have nothing else to do. But, I cannot deny that my cell phone, organization apps, laptop and especially my many music devices are very important to me and help me to function better. I feel like technology is an enhancement and timesaver, but it is not the end-all, be-all of our daily lives. This idea is the opposite of popular ideology that we cannot get along without the use of our technology. I think that if technology was to be stripped from everyone, we could still function just fine; it would just be different. With technology, we love the gratification that we get out of it. For example, Uses and Gratifications research identifies three things that we get out of technology are global information, entertainment and a sense of community/social networking. We could get along without these things, but they add more color and enjoyment to our daily lives. This may be the reason why I love technology and wouldn't want to go without it.

In the end, this assignment was still fun. It helped me to relax even more than I probably would have with the use of technology. It did make me think about the Digital Divide and how it is very possible that this is how some people around the world, or even in the U.S. live their lives everyday. I wonder how these people would feel if we were to switch places for 24 hours, with them getting technology and I being completely removed from it? Would they agree that technology is wonderful or would they feel the opposite? I wonder. That is one major thought that I was left with after this assignment, and I am glad that I had the opportunity to participate in it.