

USING TECHNOLOGY MORE WISELY



The first slide sets up a reflective journal, it is really important for students to attempt this, as it will make them think. Try to get them to jot down how long they spend on social media each day (instructive in

itself as they will be adding lots of minutes here and there) as well as time spent on computers, games consoles and also with things like microwave cookers, contact lens cleaning etc.

SESSION 1: What is our relationship with the technologies we use?

With the **technology is what technology does** slide you might consider the roles as jobs. For example a social media app is a bit like having a personal assistant, a microwave is a chef, an inhaler is a nurse, a home entertainment system is an events organizer etc. You might also ask students to make notes of their discussions with a particular emphasis on writing down first thoughts and last thoughts.

Developing our examples – mobile phones slide:

Next is a chance to develop our thoughts on these technologies. The slides encourage students to consider mobile phones and addiction. There are plenty of sites that offer former drug addicts the chance to discuss how it felt to have an addiction, and you might include one of these at this point and ask students which words would change if someone were to replace the particular drug with a mobile phone. Younger students may prefer the analogy of a teddy bear or comforter. Certainly this might explain why

students are only ever happy if the smartphone is in their school bag.

Developing our examples – Our other ideas slide:

Having reviewed smartphones, there will still be plenty of technologies raised in the earlier slides left to discuss. Certainly they may be just as addictive, just as useful, just as much of a positive influence. Yet they may not be. In the last part of this session students can discuss these other items. One way they might do this is via silent debates where they have a big piece of paper and write the name of the technology in the middle (you might do this ahead of time so each group discusses something different – e.g. inhalers, games consoles, computers, glasses, bicycles). Each student has a different colour pen and writes their thoughts about the technology in response to the prompt questions on the slide. At the end of the task you can ask them to print their names in the colour they used so you can assess how well everyone contributed.

SESSION 2: How can we improve our relationship with the technologies we use?

This session starts with a basic audit to reflect on the previous session and to add a little depth. The aim is to assess how 'in control' students feel they are when they use different kinds of technologies. There are extra challenge tasks built in, and depending upon the age you use this with you might want to make these tasks mandatory.

Poster Time slide: everyone likes a good poster, but a good poster can be hard to make, especially when the instructions are somewhat lacking. Therefore students need the option to decide what to include. This task can be done in their notebooks individually,

or it can be done as a group for walls. In any case you can offer them a heading and then leave the rest up to them, just score the poster later using the formula on the slide. The marks on the slide should guide the students and offer them a sense of priority. This is also the first time in this slate where students will have been asked to consider qualities explicitly. Try to make sure they note these at the end of the poster task. Any follow up discussion might focus upon why these qualities matter in relation to the area they were looking at, and whether they feel they have enough of these qualities themselves.



SESSION 3: Is technology improving our societies?

Having looked at our personal relationship to technology and the ways we might improve our basic relationships, we now consider whether something is ever really good or bad, perhaps there are shades of grey around technologies. This also allows us to consider whether the person who invents the technology is to blame, or whether it is the people who use it.

Should the developer care? slide: here the students are encouraged to think about moral and social responsibility. Try to help them think about whether they would be happier taking credit in one situation

more than another, whether it depends who they are talking to, or which of the things they had developed.

A sliding scale slide: drawing a line on the board, ask students to plot where they feel the different technologies might best be placed. If you use a rope, or something similar, you can lay it on the floor and ask students to come up and stand at the relevant point. If you use the rope, you can then ask students to step away if they think society would be better off without their example. If they stay on the rope you can then ask them why.

SESSION 4: Considering some Case Studies.

With an older, or more able group you might ask them to research people at the forefront of technological advancement. The slides here are really just a starting point for the time conscious, or for those working with younger students. As you work through the case studies note any qualities students mention so you can review them later (i.e. Oppenheimer showed great courage, the Japanese Emperor showed great courage).

The Atomic Bomb slides: the first question asks us to consider how much scientists should concern themselves with how their inventions are used. As a class you might discuss whether the inherent dangers make this more of an issue than if they were creating contact lenses, for example.

Channel 4 and Smokescreen slate: this is an interesting project designed to help young people use technology more skillfully. There are plenty of others out there you can replace this slide with, including your own eSafety programmes in school. Here I would offer students time to think about what the programme is and then to think about what it is trying to do. How is it helping people to use technology more skillfully? What problems is it trying to end? What were the motivations of those who made the programme? What qualities do they want us to develop? What qualities are they showing in developing the programme? The writers of smokescreen found young people thought there was too much emphasis on protection from sexual things and not enough on other areas.

SESSION 5: Reflections on how we might use technologies more skillfully

Technology as an amplifier slide: The reflection begins by thinking about how the way students use technology shows who they are. We live in a very sharing society and our use of technology can offer hints of who we are as people. The sorts of technologies they might choose are up to them but

it is probably worth steering them towards including social media as at least one of their four. The sentence starts ask for how they think they might be seen by others when using the technology, and the reasons for this. The sorts of answers you get will vary depending upon the technology discussed. It is a





good opportunity to address such things as ‘sexting’, but also how we see others in society (if for example you chose ‘inhalers’). It is also important to realise there does not need to be a negative spin on our use of technology. Someone who uses a ‘moog’ well might be considered favourably, and someone who can use a defibrillator might be a hero. How students write it up is open to some freedom, younger students might draw themselves and illustrate themselves with descriptive words drawn from the task, older ones might write a few reflective paragraphs.

In session two students thought about some qualities in relation to the posters they created, and in session 4 they looked at the sorts of qualities the people showed in the case studies. Now they can reflect upon whether they feel these are qualities that matter to them, and how desirable these qualities really are in those we entrust with developing our technologies of the future.

Looking Back to Look Forward slides: these encourage reflection about the qualities discussed so far and would allow the students to end with a mission statement for the future, one which helps to ensure technological advances are in safe hands.

The final slide asks them to reflect on the homework they have been doing. There are just a few questions to get them thinking. Reading a book like *How to Thrive in the Digital Age* by Tom Chadfield will offer more insight and little extras (studies show Americans get more happiness from playing Second Life than from getting a new job, ‘love’ is a three times more common search term than ‘sex’ on Google) which you can use in sessions.