

Digital Advancement: A Boon or a Bane

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Abstract-Advancement in digital technology has greatly revolutionized our lives leading to rapid industrialization propelling the economics world over. The incubation period for adopting this technology was definitely chaotic and challenging but intelligent human brains made it sustainable through innovations and experimentation. The exponential growth in internet and mobile technology in the last two decades has immensely benefited mankind with exposure to various tools and devices. The adoption of new techniques, software, and applications in the public domain still needs to be carefully monitored for making our lives comfortable and stress-free.

A survey was conducted to explore the impact of digital advancement on human lives through Google Forms. The responses have been analysed to understand both the advantages and disadvantages of this transition in human life. The result of this survey can be summed up as follows:

(i) All the respondents use smartphones and almost 92% do online shopping. Most of them pointed out that platforms using digital technologies attract more customers for their benefit. Digital platforms usually incentivize individuals to buy more than needed as responded by 67% of the respondents.

(ii) A sizable number of surveyed people (almost 67%) believe that enhancement in digital technology leads to a better connection between human beings. Although people spend more time interacting on social platforms, most of them (60%) agree that social media is causing more stress than joy. So it will not be wrong to point out that virtual interaction is leading to more anxiety and stress and is responsible for many modern lifestyle-related problems.

(iii) Most of the respondents (81%) agree with the fact that excessive and compulsive exposure to social media is hampering their interpersonal relations with friends, family, and relatives. Addictive use of social media leads to a universe of unknown people having fixed mindsets, biased opinions, and judgemental qualities. This kind of overexposure to social interaction is already taking an individual to disastrous consequences and making them insomniacs with difficulty concentrating and prone to various illnesses.

(iv) A plethora of information on digital platforms is distracting people to pay attention and focus on relevant topics. This habit of logging in and logging out is becoming an addiction and nowadays people generally wake up with their mobile phone in hand and the last thing they check out before sleeping is once again their same gadget. Despite all these distractions still, 63% of the surveyed sample maintain a healthy balance between their online and offline activities.

(v) An onslaught of digital technology is undoubtedly making our lives miserable and prone to stress and it is important to take a break from these digital monsters. Respondents were asked to list out the strategies for disconnecting from technology and finding time to relax and recharge. The most obvious choices suggested are connecting with nature, meditating, playing outdoor games, doing yoga, reading, writing, spending more quality time with friends and families, and listening to music. A very interesting and surprising strategy given by a few people is to observe a complete fast from their gadgets for a day or two.

(vi) Some of the futuristic digital advancements may include 3D (three dimensional) Printing, New Energy Solutions, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), 5G Cyber Security, etc.

(vii) Although it has been pointed out by most individuals that advancement in digital technology leaves both a positive and negative impact on their lives, a balanced approach to adopting technology is a sustainable mode of survival in today's world.

(viii) It has been observed that respondents, by and large, are happy to use various digital technologies for their benefit and they left no stone unturned in favor of emerging and fast-moving technology. Major benefits that are liked by people are maps, GPS, the pool of information from multiple search engines, the role played for the advancement in medical diagnostics and treatments, online shopping sites, and social interaction at the touch of a button.

(ix) About three fourth of the respondents believe that technology is a threat to humanity. A strict policy framework must be implemented as mandated by most individuals for optimal use of digital technology for human upliftment.

(x) The rapid evolution and advancement in digital technology is at a comfortable level with the 64% of the respondents who are adopting these technologies quickly to enhance their day to day lives. A different question to the individuals throws an interesting result that almost (62%) are totally baffled as they could not keep pace with the fast changing technology and developed a felt out syndrome.

Index terms: Advancement, Digital technology, Digitization, Internet, Positive and Negative impact

I.INTRODUCTION

The digital world has revolutionized every sphere of our life. All our domestic, business, and commercial activities have been greatly influenced by the onslaught of digital advancements. The fast pace of digital transformation has significantly involved every individual using these technologies in varied sectors like banking, social media, education, entertainment, health, advertisements, business, commerce, etc. [1]. Although digitization has made our life easier, the transformation of this world has been marked with challenges. People needed to reskill themselves to learn and keep pace with the changing technologies [2]. Digital tools have become so indispensable in every sphere of life and sustenance without them is almost impractical [3]. The overindulgence of these tools sometimes brings negative influences in our life [4]. In order to study the impact of this digital revolution a questionnaire was given to almost a hundred individuals and their responses were collected and scrutinized.

II RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The transition to digital transformation has been very swift and empowered us with its various applications [5]. The benefits of digitization have largely been welcomed by the people at large but adoption of this new virtual world also comes with some strings attached. Therefore people were selected from all walks of life to give their valuable feedback.

III DATA

A google form was circulated in various groups and about a hundred individuals shared their views on whether advancements in digital technology is a boon or bane and the data collected is analyzed in the present study.

IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The digitisation has greatly impacted and touched almost all dimensions of our life including work, home and family welfare. The Internet has metamorphosed every aspect of our life by updating our knowledge, empowering our intellect with new skills, and bringing new communication tools for our social media interactions [6]. Digital technology has become an integral part of our life with lots of benefits but at the same time we cannot ignore the negative influences created by this bombardment [7]. The objective of this research is to know about the potential impact of digital advancement on the well-being of people. The responses of our questionnaire are summarized below

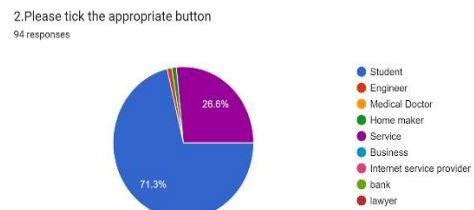


Fig. 1: The pie chart depicts the profile of the respondents

The surveyed sample comprised 71% students and 26.6% professionals from various fields as depicted in Fig. 1

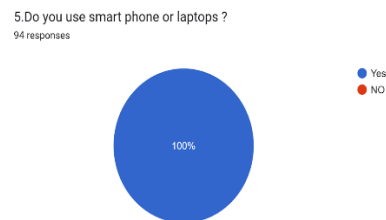


Fig. 2: A graphical description of respondents using smart phones/laptops

All the participants owned smart phones or laptops so they could share their first hand experience of using digital technology as shown in Fig. 2.

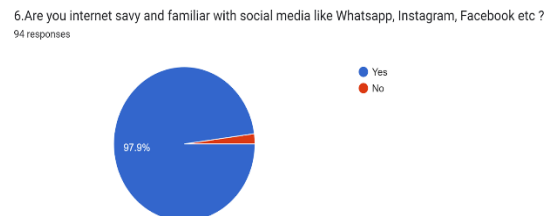


Fig. 3: The percentage of respondents who are familiar with the internet and social media

Almost all the respondents use the internet along with various social media platforms named whatsapp, instagram and facebook as shown in Fig. 3. Nowadays these platforms have become very popular means of communication and most of the respondents are extensively using them.

8. How many hours in a day you are hooked up with social media using either smart phones or computers.
94 responses

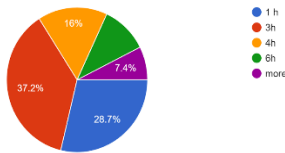


Fig. 4: Pie chart showing the number of hours respondents devote to social media

The influence of the digital revolution can be seen from the fact that the internet is omnipresent in our lives and that the majority of the people are always hooked up with their digital tools for more than one hour daily except for 29% of the people surveyed as shown in Fig. 4.

10. Do you prefer online shopping?
93 responses

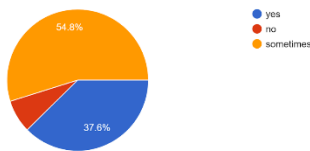


Fig. 5: A graphical picture showing the percentage of the surveyed sample preferring online shopping

It seems online shopping, online banking and online trading have become the preferred tool for most people (92%) and seriously challenging the old form of brick and mortar establishments as depicted in Fig. 5. Online platforms usually display multiple options to select the products and their promotional activities are sometimes value for money which makes them more attractive for buyers.

11. Is digital advancement able to influence you to buy more stuff (groceries, clothes, stationery, cosmetics, jewellery etc.) than required?
93 responses

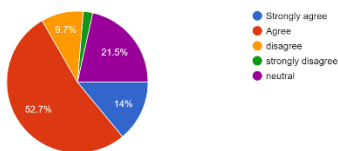


Fig. 6: The pie chart shows the impact of digital advertisement on consumer buying patterns

The commercial and marketing sites use artificial intelligence to lure the consumers to buy more and repeated campaigning brings more revenues for these companies and this fact is supported by 92% of the people surveyed as depicted in Fig. 6. Sometimes unreliable suppliers on these sites usually sell inferior quality or fake products to dupe the prospective buyer. In fact, online frauds are increasing rapidly because of our overindulgence to use any app without verification creating a substantial drain on people's money.

13. In your opinion enhancement in digital technology (social media interaction) leads to
92 responses

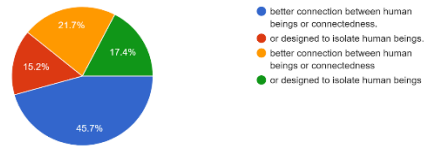


Fig. 7: A graphical representation of the impact of social media interactions

The global connectivity through social media platforms is emerging as a blessing for the family and friends who are separated for their work/study related commitments as voted by 67% of the people surveyed as shown in Fig. 7. The addition of these platforms sometimes make people isolated from the real world because they hardly meet each other personally.

14. Frequent interaction among people through social media creates more stress than joy.
92 responses

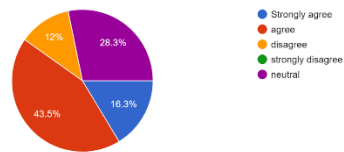


Fig. 8: Statistics depicting the occurrence of stress among respondents through social media

Majority of the respondents believe that frequent interaction among people through social media creates more stress than joy (Fig. 8). Sometimes real life pleasures are overshadowed by our urge to upload moments of joy to get more likes and followers. Most of the time this habit gives more anxiety than happiness.

15. Use of internet or social media leads to
89 responses



Fig. 9: A graphical representation of social media created ailments suffered by people

As per the above chart (Fig. 9) almost all individuals suffered one or more social media created ailments like lack of personal touch and face to face intermingling of thoughts and emotions. People are using more short scripted language of social media rather than discussing issues concerning human relationships. Physical interaction is the major casualty in the era of digital technology.

16. Do you think because of social media we are spending less time with friends, family and relatives?
91 responses

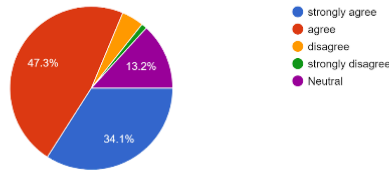


Fig. 10: Statistics depicting the views of people regarding their time spent with friends and family

Social media is consuming our time and attention to such an extent that we are spending less time with friends, family and relatives as advocated by 81% of the sample (Fig. 10). The frequent desire to seek solutions to our personal issues through social media is putting more relationship barriers among family members and friends. Misguided solutions from online strangers might distract an individual from their real problems which can be passionately discussed with friends and family members.

17. Humans are able to adapt easily as fast as the digital advancement.
90 responses

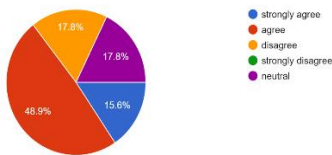


Fig. 11: A graphical representation indicating the percentage of respondents who can easily adapt to change in digital advancement

Advancements in the digital world are taking strides with such an enormous pace that only 64% of the people (Fig. 11) are in sync with the latest developments while the rest of the respondents are developing a feeling of being left out.

18. Does this lagging (that we are not able to adapt fast) creates mental stress.
90 responses

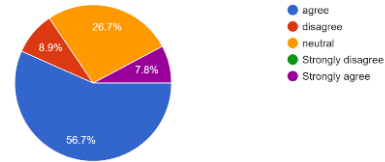


Fig. 12: The pie chart depicts the percentage of respondents having mental stress due to lagging in the adoption of digital advancement

Mental stress or fatigue is the response shown by 62% of the individuals as shown in Fig. 12 when they are not able to cope with the fast-developing world of digital technology.

19. Do you think wealth of information has created a void of attention?
91 responses

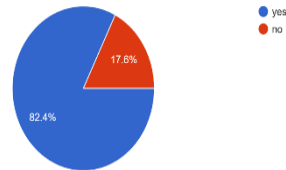


Fig. 13: The pie chart depicts the percentage of people who agree that wealth of information creates void of attention

A sizable number of respondents (82%) are of the opinion that the plethora of information available through various search engines might distract the human brain to focus on a particular issue. (Fig. 13).

20. Have you ever experienced any negative consequences as a result of over use of technology?
90 responses

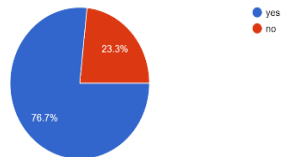


Fig. 14: Percentage of people who have experienced negative consequences of overuse of technology

Distracted learning has quite a detrimental effect on learning concepts related to education and other facets of life [8,9]. The juggernaut of this information definitely restricts human creativity and inhibits brain activity. The human brain has evolved through ages to have certain well defined neural connections. Exposure to multiple information creates too many links and wires in the brain which hampers its rational functioning [10]. This may lead to behavioral

problems as reported by the majority of respondents in the pie chart of Fig. 14.

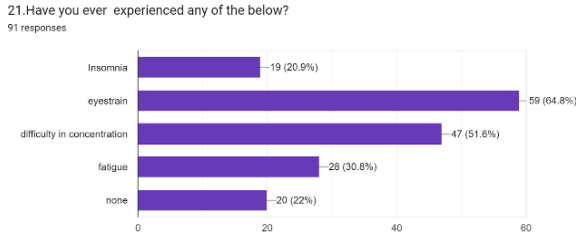


Fig. 15: Bar chart for the no. of individuals experiencing negative consequences of digital technology

The commonly observed ill effects of overuse of digital tools are insomnia, eye strain, difficulty in concentrating, and fatigue which is depicted in a bar chart in Fig. 15.

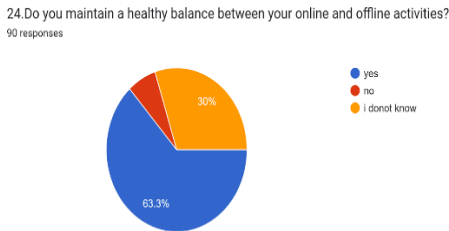


Fig. 16: The pie chart depicts the percentage of individuals who are able to maintain a proper balance between online and offline activities

It is a fact that we cannot imagine our lives without social media anymore, but can we find a better coexistence between our personal life and social media? The answer lies in the voice of the respondents (63%) (Fig. 16) who have given multiple options to maintain a healthy balance. The various suggestions for disconnecting from technology and finding time to relax and recharge are meditation, yoga, spending quality time with friends and family, walking, exercising, compulsive switching off from social media for a few hours daily.

Digital technology has made our lives easier and more comfortable. We can access any information from the digital warehouse by just clicking on our keyboards. The most common advantage shared by the surveyed sample is the accessibility to learn about any topic like fashion, music, dance, cooking, research etc. Long distance communication with friends and families, online shopping, and GPS are the most highlighted features enjoyed by the people. Almost all

sectors like education, entertainment, finance, medical and farming have been transformed through digital technology. People can up-skill, pursue their hobbies and update themselves by learning through this platform.

The surveyed sample envisaged very interesting developments in the field of robotics, astronomy, lightning fast speed of internet, smart homes and cars, cybersecurity etc.

Most of the respondents are concerned about the overuse of digital tools which can become addictive leading to isolation from the real world [11]. This disconnection may harm mental health and neurological problems [10]. Although digital users may share their thoughts, they are unable to cope up with the pressures of the real world which is very devastating for an individual. The apprehensions have also been raised for the freely available online content on all possible topics which may not be suitable for young minds. Cybercrime is an important issue highlighted by a few respondents. Some of the people have also expressed their concern for the extinction of birds due to the radiation emitted from the mobile towers.

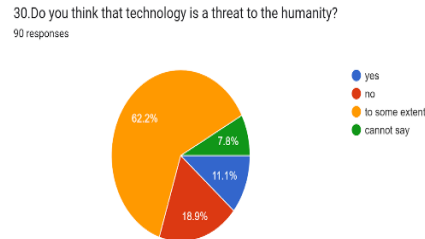


Fig. 17: The pie chart depicts the percentage of people who think that technology is a threat to humanity

Considering all these negative impacts, about 73% (Fig. 17) of the people surveyed consider technology as a threat to humanity if not used judiciously.

V CONCLUSION

Digital technology has become an indispensable tool in today's world and our daily lives are greatly impacted by the rapid advancements in technology. Undoubtedly we cannot imagine our lives without mobile, digital tools and social media. The collated data shows people are using various platforms to get information from multiple search engines using the

internet to update and upskill themselves. The most commonly used applications are online shopping, e-commerce, interacting through social media, online gaming and watching shows and movies on OTT (Over-The-Top) and maintaining excellent communication with friends and families through mobile video calls. No doubt people are becoming addicted to these applications at the cost of their physical and mental health. As a result of this people are getting isolated from their families but remain glued to their screens. The wild goose chase of garnering more likes and followers is driving people away from the real world and sometimes they engage themselves in foul practices by making fake identities.

In fact every invention or innovation always throws challenges and opportunities but the answer lies in its adaptability and sustained modifications. A judicious and sensible use of digital tools has been suggested by the respondents. They have proposed a self imposed ban from this digital world for at least a few hours everyday. The suggested measures should be adopted to make digital advancements a boon and not a bane for human life.

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