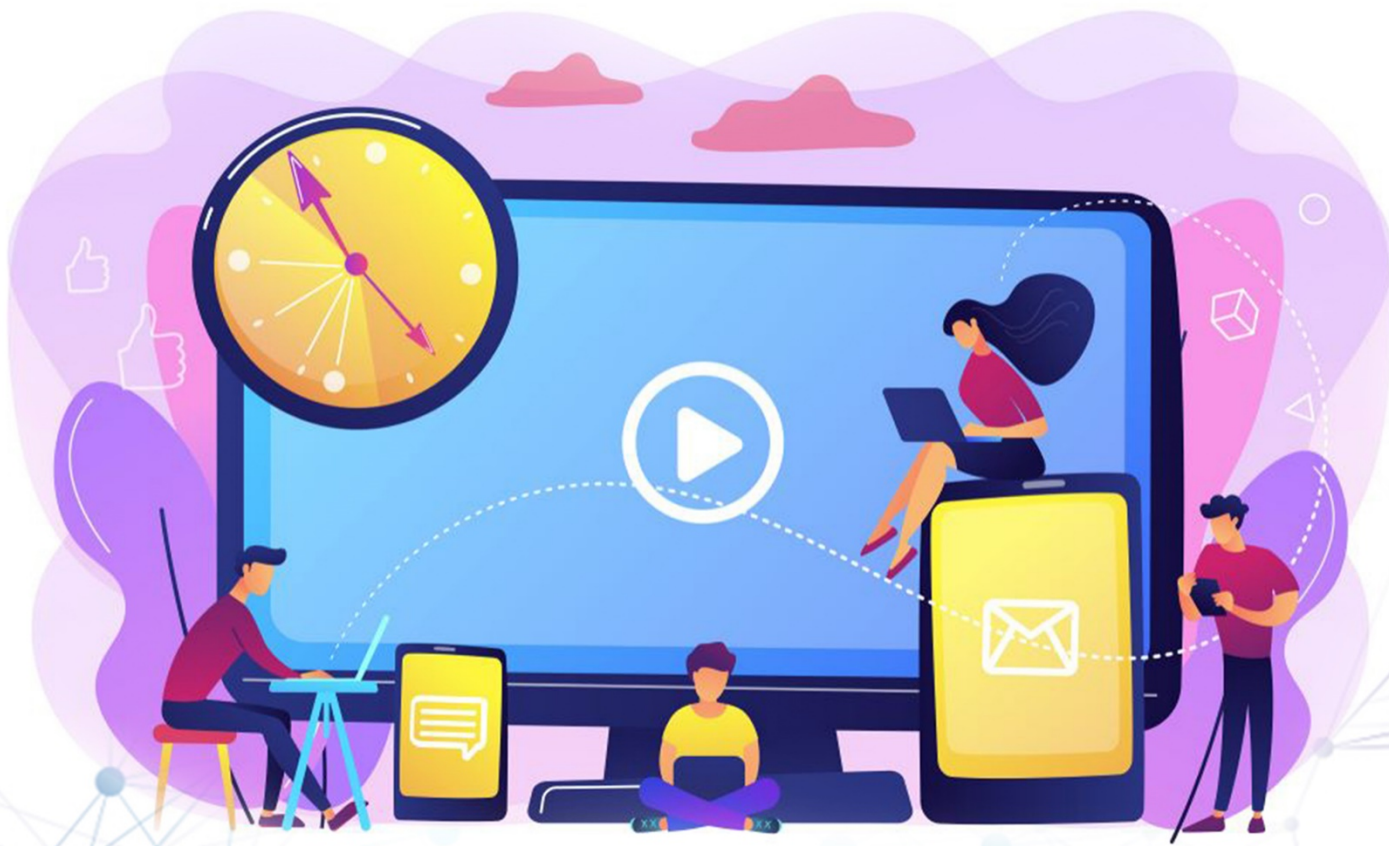


# No One is Doomed TO SCREEN ADDICTION

Included  
The First Step Guide To A Digital Detox



**Karine A. Galland**

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## INTRODUCTION

This ebook is based on my experience as a digital detox coach since 2017. It is meant to help you better understand the various facets of screen addiction so you can prevent it and fight it. I also want to give hope because there is no such thing as an incurable and inevitable global tech scourge, no one is doomed to screen addiction.

### WHAT IS SCREEN ADDICTION?

Screen addiction is characterized by an irrepressible drive to check one's phone, an inability to quit video games or stop binge watching tv shows. Addicts can't resist the temptation even if they are fully aware that it's somehow harmful to them or others.

**This behavioral addiction resembles substance addictions in many regards.** It has a profound negative impact on many aspects of the addict's personal and professional life. It can severely damage self-confidence and social relationships.

Since it is a fairly recent phenomenon, we lack perspective and there are few in-depth scientific studies on the topic. To this day, screen addiction has not been officially recognized as a disorder, which means there is no defined protocol to combat it yet. Faced with the growing demand for help, mental health and coaching professionals are making empirical progress to best support people in distress.

### MY EXPERIENCE WITH SCREEN ADDICTION

**Behind the generic term of screen addiction lies a multitude of individual stories and issues.**

I have helped many people who felt they were scrolling their life away. Each of them was dealing with stress and low frustration tolerance in their own way. Each of them finally succeeded in reducing their screen time thanks to digital detox coaching. This holistic kind of support, action-oriented and non-judgmental is perfectly adapted to behavioral addictions.

**Thanks to coaching, you can learn to use devices in a more conscious way, you can regain serenity and live the meaningful life you aspire to.**

This ebook will show you how.

*Karine A. Galland*

## HOW DOES SCREEN ADDICTION START?

Even if you spend a lot of time on screens, that does not necessarily mean you're addicted. The duration matters, but **the frequency of the compulsions, the emotional state associated with the behavior and the impact on your daily life** make the difference between a temporary excessive entertainment and an addiction.

### SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

- Sleep deprivation due to time spent on screens.
- A tendency to develop strategies to spend time on favorite device.
- An increasing frustration when unable to use screens.
- Recurrent conflicts with family and close friends, especially about screens.
- The incapacity to change your behavior despite your awareness of the risks.

47% of smartphone users have already tried to limit their use, only 30% of them feel they have succeeded.<sup>1</sup>

### ADDICTIVE CONTENT

We can set up our devices in order to support us in many aspects of our daily lives: enhance our productivity, connect to dear ones, acquire knowledge and skills or improve our health. All of that can be addictive, but **distraction is, by far, the main source of screen addiction.**

*“Screens grant us 24/7 access to any entertainment so many people are like Pinocchio in Pleasure Island, unable to set boundaries, lost in this virtual amusement park.”*

<sup>1</sup> 2018, BankMyCell's

## Video games

Immersion in another world, be it more beautiful, more violent, funnier or more creative than one's own, can make humans forget everything else.

There have been video game addicts since the 1980s, but the World Health Organization only officially recognized the "video game disorder" in 2018.

## TV shows

The most addictive programs are those split into numerous episodes, all ending on a cliffhanger. The possibility of immediate access to shows' full seasons added to the "auto-play next episode" option is very hard to resist.

## Social Media

Social Media addresses the need for recognition that some people find difficult to obtain otherwise. "Likes" activate the brain's reward center, which provides repetitive mini-booster of dopamine that people associate with a positive experience. It's not bad per se, but it can be addictive when social media becomes the main source of pleasurable experiences in one's life.

**26% of 18-22 years old estimate they spend more than 5 hours a day on social networks.<sup>2</sup>**

People can be addicted to seeing and being seen, seeing without being seen, sharing their thoughts, giving their opinion, receiving public signs of affection or validation of their skills...

## Information

It can be difficult to sort out what is important for us to know and what will clutter our memory unnecessarily. Clear knowledge of one's real information needs is necessary in order not to get drawn in the news feed's flow.

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<sup>2</sup> June 2018 study conducted by the IPSOS Public Affairs pour le Fonds Actions Addictions, la Fondation Gabriel Péri and la Fondation pour l'Innovation Politique, on a sample of 2,005 individuals representative of the French population aged 18 and over.

## Emails

Some people compulsively consult their emails and professional networks all day long.

An obsessive inbox checking habit can come from the Fear Of Missing Out or, on the contrary, the need for distraction from a meaningless job. It can also be due to a poor time management or just from ignoring how to create a system to help clear inbox on a regular basis.

Some emails addicts have a personal desire to be super reactive and super productive, some feel compelled to act like that because of a highly pressured working environment.

## Pornography

Today's version of this age-old obsession is cybersex: a behind-a-screen sexual stimulation with blurry physical, social and moral boundaries. It is accessible 24 hours a day and often free of charge, which makes it even more addictive. It can meet every extravert's and introvert's needs for exhibitionism or privacy.

9% of young people watch porn daily,  
with 5% watching several times a day.<sup>3</sup>

## ADDICTIVE DEVICES

- Television
- Computers
- Tablets
- Smartphones

Smartphones have progressively integrated almost all options offered by other screens; hence they are today the most addicting devices.

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<sup>3</sup> Same as ref.2

## THE SMARTPHONE REVOLUTION

When it comes to screens, there is a before and after the iPhone (2008). Steve Jobs claimed it was not just a technical innovation but a "revolutionary product", and that turned out to be true. This easy-to-use device through which high-performance technology meets both personal and professional needs soon became indispensable.

It is difficult not to become dependent on something that is entirely devoted to fulfilling your thirst for knowledge and entertainment.

Some people now describe their smartphone as an extension of themselves.

39% of French people believe that losing their smartphone would be equivalent to losing part of their memory.<sup>4</sup>

## NOMOPHOBIA: NO MOBILE PHONE PHOBIA

Elected Word of the Year 2018 by the Cambridge Dictionary Committee, it refers to the fear or worry of being without a mobile phone or unable to use it.

Symptoms: you regularly check that your phone is within reach, you feel bad when you can't find it or if it takes longer than usual to turn it on.

ADDICTED TO YOUR PHONE? TAKE THE TEST

Go to **Page 16** for

**TIPS TO SPEND LESS TIME ON YOUR PHONE**

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<sup>4</sup> Ipsos survey carried out for SFAM about French people's habits with their mobile phones from January 31st to February 4<sup>th</sup> 2019 - sample of 800 people.

## INTERNAL CAUSES OF SCREEN ADDICTION

*“Thanks to my coaching practice, I realized that there are 4 main causes of screen addiction, which sometimes add up. The good news is, they can all fade to harmless with personalized help and self-confidence reinforcement.”*

### BAD HABITS

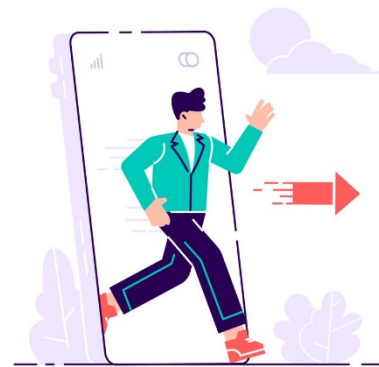
There are times when life takes over. It rarely happens overnight; one thing just leads to another and we do our best to cope with everything. Little by little, we lower our standards and become less engaged with our values, less in-tune with our needs. That's when we start developing “bad” habits. Eating in front of the TV, playing video games instead of exercising, checking emails in bed, scrolling our precious life away...

### INHIBITION

Screens open up vast possibilities of social interactions for introverted people. They can overcome their anxiety and fear of judgment by communicating anonymously with others. They can create an avatar and share their feelings without having to show their face or body. The down side is that, in the long run, hiding their true self isolates them even more. They somehow get stuck in this virtual world where they can express themselves freely but have increasing difficulties with real life interactions.

People struggling with their sexuality can also overcome certain inhibitions through screens and satisfy their impulses incognito.

**While the anonymity allows to escape from social judgment, it can also lead to great isolation.**





## AN UNSATISFYING LIFE

Loneliness, a dying marriage, difficulties with children, a meaningless job... there are many reasons why people seek refuge with screens and online communities. They become an easy, free and fun way to avoid dealing with a painful reality. At first, this escape seems inoffensive because it does not involve any illicit substance and no physical commitment to any risky behavior, but **as time goes by, avoidance through distraction is self-demeaning. And the "real" problem only gets bigger.**

## FOMO (FEAR OF MISSING OUT).

Constant fear of missing out on a professional opportunity, an important information, a message from a loved one... Fear of not being reactive enough, of disappointing peers, of dissonance... make people compulsively check out their phone and news feeds.



## POPULATIONS AT RISK

### ADDICTIVE PERSONALITIES

Some people tend to become quickly addicted, whether to a substance (caffeine, sugar, cannabis...), to a behavior (gambling, purchasing, exercising, working...) or to others (love partner, friend, children...). They are more likely to numb their emotions by seeking for constant stimulation which makes them particularly vulnerable to screen addiction.

#### Addiction replacement

Some people immerse themselves in screens to avoid succumbing (or relapsing) to another addiction (alcohol, food, tobacco, drugs...). This often occurs during or after the treatment process for the original addiction.

### PEOPLE OUT OF SYNCH WITH THE "NORMAL RHYTHM".

People who do not have a job with set hours, whether by choice or not.

- **Entrepreneurs**
- **People who travel a lot**
- **Students**
- **The Unemployed**
- **Stay-at-home parents**
- **Retired people**

Their addiction may come from boredom, personal or professional desire to connect, need to research and stay up to date with the latest news...

People on a budget are also very much drawn toward free online entertainment.

## CHILDREN/TEENAGERS

Children screen habits are their parents' responsibility.

Children with screen-addicted parents and children spending a lot of time alone are particularly exposed to screen addiction.

Overexposure to screens may lead to disruption in the development of children's personality.

**Screens are neither baby accessories nor baby sitters.**

**Screen time is not a reward nor a punishment.**

It is crucial to have regular conversations about screens with children as soon as they are exposed to them. Setting up rules will be a constantly evolving process as kids will grow up and science will be more precise on the topic.

Healthychildren.org can help you create your own *Family Media Use Plan*

## BABY-BOOMERS

Urban Baby Boomers seem to be particularly affected by screen addiction.

This generation has adopted all tech advances as they appeared and can afford to buy the latest models of all phones, tablets and computers. They are also used to a stimulating active life, that's why many of them did not choose their parent's sedentary retirement lifestyle (gardening, reading, knitting, fishing...).

Their need for connection sometimes keeps them online all day long and leave them with a feeling of intellectual frustration or sadness at the end of the day. **Retired people are also more sensitive to all physical pains related to screen exposure** (in their eyes, fingers, shoulders, neck...)



## BENEFITS OF A DIGITAL DETOX

*“A digital detox consists in reducing the time spent on screens to avoid its toxic effects. This may involve a period of complete abstinence, but the real goal is to start implementing a strategic and sustainable use of all devices.”*

### **A digital detox will improve your relationship with yourself.**

- Better sleep
- Less stress
- Better concentration
- Better productivity
- More creativity
- Higher self-esteem

### **A digital detox will improve your relationship with others.**

- Better listening skills
- Better communication skills
- More awareness in social interactions

### **A digital detox will improve your relationship with the world.**

- Different perception of time
- Reconnection to your environment

### **#sustainabledevelopment**

Switching off your phone at night will extend the life of your battery. Saving battery means saving Lithium, their main component extracted from South American salt mines. The environmental cost of these massive extractions is ramping up so every little thing counts!

## THE FIRST STEP GUIDE TO A DIGITAL DETOX

*"It's not about frustrating or punishing yourself, it's about reflecting on how you can align your use of screens with your lifestyle and your values."*

### 1- THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT

It is very important to make a precise assessment of your initial situation, as this will allow you to prioritize certain actions.

#### **What screen(s) are you having problems with?**

Computer, telephone, television, tablet...

#### **What kind of content do you get lost in?**

- Video games *(Always the same game? Do you play alone or with other people?)*
- Smartphone or tablet games *(Do you favor repetitive colorful games without any real purpose or more cerebral games like Sudoku, crosswords, mahjong?.)*
- Social networks *(Which ones? What do you actually do there: read, communicate, like, flirt, work...?.)*
- TV programs *(Which ones? Shows, sports, games, reality TV... How often?)*
- Online shopping *(What kind of items?)*

#### **How do compulsions happen?**

- When, how often?
- How do you feel before, during, after?

### What are the negative ripples in your life?

- Social isolation (*Problems with spouse, children, friends, colleagues...*)
- Lack of self-confidence (*Shame, guilt...*)
- Lack of sleep
- Organizational problems (*You don't have enough time left for what matters to you.*)
- Mood problems (*Irritability, instability, depression...*)
- Health problems (*Overweight, headaches, vision problems, carpal tunnel...*)
- Financial insecurity
  - You don't spend enough time on your business or job search.
  - You spend too much money online.

### What are the advantages of your addiction?

There are some, undoubtedly, since every addiction is based on a quest for pleasure, even if it is temporary or ephemeral. What you enjoy about this behavior is what traps you.

## 2- FIRST ACTION STEP

Once you have more clarity about how your addiction expresses itself and after identifying the different consequences on your life, you will have to choose a first action, a first objective.

Then set yourself a small challenge for your Day 1. A first attainable step that will give you confidence in your ability to progress. Picking a measurable goal will allow you to evaluate your result with certainty.

If you don't know where to start, choose a sleep-related goal. What could help you sleep a little better and/or a little longer?

*“Throughout the digital detox process, it is necessary to have a partner/coach to whom you can report your progress, your doubts, your relapses and your small victories. Ideally this person should be outside one’s close circle. Their non-judgmental support in all circumstances is key to your transformation.”*

### 3- PERSEVERANCE

Whatever the outcome of your Day 1 challenge is, share it with your partner/coach by describing precisely the emotions you went through and the difficulties you encountered.

Keep going for a whole week, even if your initial goal seems out of reach. Observe yourself every day and share your journey with your partner/coach.

### 4- PROGRESS

After a week, make a new assessment and re-evaluate the goal according to the results obtained and your revised expectations.

**It takes a minimum of 21 days to really adopt and embody a new habit**, so the first 3 weeks are crucial. You will then enter a period of consolidation where support is still important, even if discussions with your partner/coach may be less frequent.

Once you have gained momentum, you will experience the dynamic of change. It will be easier for you to set new goals and stick to them. You will become increasingly independent and see positive ripples on many aspects of your life.

#### The Screentime Genie

A group of researchers at Stanford University led by Dr. B.J Fogg has created an online tool to help you reduce your unwanted screen time. It provides you with solutions adapted to your own screen habits.

## TIPS TO SPEND LESS TIME ON YOUR PHONE

*“In order to reduce temptations and make sure smartphones remain tools at our service, they have to be less attractive. We can set them up according to our real needs and adopt new habits for using them.”*

### 1-EXPLORE DISPLAY SETTINGS

- **Home screen**

You can leave it black, without any "wallpaper".

*This also saves battery!*

You can insert a sentence reminding you of the danger of spending too much time on screens.

*This is only effective if the sentence is truly personalized and if you change it regularly.*

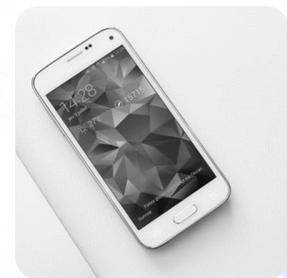
- **Icons**

Create thematic files (travels, photos, social networks, news, music...).

*This will also reduce the size, and therefore the attractiveness, of the icons.*

- **Shades of Grey**

Switching to a black and white display for a few hours will allow you to understand the role of colors in the attractiveness of your smartphone. Spoiler: It's very unsettling!



- **Brightness**

The ideal is to find a good compromise between a slot machine display and a gloomy eye straining screen. You just need to see clearly and avoid ocular fatigue.



## 2-CLEAN UP YOUR PHONE

### How many screens of apps do you really need?

Review each application. Which ones are really useful? Which ones make your life better and why? Which ones are unnecessarily time-consuming?

Delete all apps you don't use weekly. You can download them anytime when needed.

In your first screen, only keep the applications you use every day.

### Apps to the rescue!

Some Apps allow you to find out exactly how you use your smartphone: you can choose the aspects you want to monitor (time spent, time-consuming apps, number of times you've unlocked your phone...) and receive a detailed report every day or week. You can also set goals and ask to be notified when you are drifting. These are excellent tools for an initial assessment and a good way to test your ability to "detoxify" yourself.

Be careful not to become addicted to these apps, they are meant to help you temporarily to get clarity and adjust your screen time.

## 3-TURN OFF NOTIFICATIONS

### Notifications are a major source of distraction.

Allowing a notification means giving your power to social marketing people to interrupt you whenever they decide to do so. Is it what you really want?

If you prefer checking each app at your own pace, in a more conscious way, then it's wiser to limit the number of notifications.

Sound notifications are especially alienating; the brain is no longer able to fully concentrate after hearing them, it needs to know why the notification rang.

Written notifications, the well-named "push" and all the red dots indicating the number of new messages bring up an almost irresistible sense of urgency in us. We feel compelled to check them out.

*“It’s up to you to determine the emergencies  
that are worth being interrupted for.”*

## 4-ADOPT NEW HABITS

### **Silent Mode**

Make this your default mode and your focus will improve by far.


### **"Do not disturb"**

It is very useful to set this option carefully as it allows you to decide who has the right to interrupt you and when. You can schedule quiet time slots, allow only certain callers to reach you at all times in case of emergency, program automatic responses...

### **Smartphone out of your sight**

As often as possible, leave it in your bag, on a shelf or in another room. Not in your pocket where you can feel it at all times, which will sooner or later trigger the desire to check it.

If you still need to use it while you are working, leave it face down on the desk.

 *When someone leaves their phone on the table during a meeting, even face down or off, other people have the feeling that the phone owner is not fully available and somehow not attentive to them.*

### **Create restricted areas**

Dinner table, the couch when you watch a movie, the bedroom, the bathroom, the car when you're driving..

### Phantom Vibration Syndrome

A study<sup>5</sup> has shown that 89% of smartphone owners perceive vibrations indicating notifications even though their phone has not vibrated. Users who have an intense emotional connection to receiving SMS report being more disturbed by this phenomenon than others.

<sup>5</sup> Michelle Drouin, Daren H. Kaiser, and Daniel A. Miller - Computers in Human Behavior, Volume 28, Issue 4, July 2012, Pages 1490-1496

“Finding a personal solution increases the chances of success,  
that’s why I always encourage my coachees to be creative.”

## 5- BE CREATIVE

You know yourself more than anyone else, so deep down inside you have clues and resources to make this digital detox way more fun than it sounds.

### Identify your strengths

Apart from being online, what do you like doing?

What activity lights you up and makes time flies?

What do people reach out to you for?

Is there something most people struggle with but you happen to breathe through that? What makes you special to your dear ones?

### Make it playful

Once you have found your talent(s), ask yourself how your skills and unique personality could help you reduce your screen time.

Here is an idea from a client who was a sweet tooth...

- Put your smartphone in a box conceived for food cravings at night. The box is equipped with a lock and a timer. You just have to set your offline time every evening. It is ideal for people who struggle with their willpower since there are no overrides until the timer hits zero.

...and another one from a tech lover:

- Generate a new complicated password every night to block access to your favourite, but time-consuming, websites. Write the code on a piece of paper that stays at the office until the next day. Do it as fast as possible and don't read the code out loud to lower your chances to memorize it.

It worked magic for them, what could be *your* trick?

**The idea is to find a way out of your unhealthy habits with screens and also to create a new system you feel proud of.**

## CONCLUSION

### Less Screen Time means More Freedom!

There is no miracle recipe to beat screen addiction, but it is possible to progressively reduce your time on screens and adopt a healthier lifestyle.

If you are still struggling and feel unable to regain control despite your efforts, you need outside support.

Whatever unsatisfying screen time habits you may have can be addressed.

I can coach you to get rid of toxic behaviors and implement a sustainable use of screens aligned with your values. I am at your service to help you move forward at your own pace, without judgment and in complete confidentiality.



### Here are the benefits of a digital detox coaching



Less Stress



Better Time Management



More Creativity



Stronger Self-confidence



Better Sleep



Fewer Family conflicts

[Book your free session now\\*!](#)



\*20-min video session