

Saving Souls in the Jungle of Technology

The Technology Assault on our Children and What Parents and the Church can do About It

Sponsored by ***Joseph's Workshop***

The Problem – Our children are being threatened and destroyed by unbridled technology – Psychologically, socially, medically, spiritually, culturally, historically and academically.

The Solution – Parents have primary responsibility for preparing their children for a life of faith, prayer and holy adulthood. Joseph's Workshop's mission is to assist parents and help prepare them for that mission in the most effective manner possible. All objectives in conformance with Church teachings.

Presentation Series

We shortly will be hosting a three-part, three week series of presentations:

Week 1 – Introduction, topical overview and solicitation of difficult questions

Week 2 – Artificial Intelligence disruptions: What it is; Where it's going; Our biggest concerns and challenges

Week 3 – New technology and social media disruptions – Recent and expected developments & protections

Proposed future additional follow-up activities – including, a newsletter, small group sharing sessions, and video presentations.

**WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTION, TOPICAL OVERVIEW
AND DIFFICULT QUESTIONS**

Topical Overview

Introduction to Joseph's Workshop. Why, what, how, when. Goals and objectives.

Technology and social media – smartphones, burner phones, gaming boxes, screens in general and their associated social media platforms and tools (apps) are raising havoc with many children. These addicting new 'toys' are causing serious and often permanent psychological, social, developmental and academic problems in far too many children.

In this series of presentations, we will cover new technologies that will most likely impact your children. A special session is devoted to artificial intelligence and its implications. We will give best estimates of trends and where these technologies can be expected to be in five years.

New protections are anticipated and some are already available and will be discussed. Ongoing legislative initiatives; teachers unions concerns, and others (E.U.).

Psychological help and retraining therapy; Jonathan Haidt's new book, *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*

Difficult Questions

We are looking for the most difficult problems parents are facing and the deep questions for which they seek answers. We will be listening and noting them, with the intention of addressing the more important issues in subsequent sessions and communications.

<p>WEEK 2 – ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE DISRUPTIONS – WHAT IS A.I.; ITS FUTURE AND OUR GREATEST CONCERNS</p>

What is Artificial Intelligence?

Why now? Why the seemingly sudden interest? Three factors have come together in the past few years and have created a great demand:

- Powerful computing technology: (GPUs, Cloud computing)
- Massive amounts of data (Internet sourced)
- Unlimited money (Tech giants: Google (Alphabet), Apple, Meta, etc.)

This is a very fast-growing business

Unheard of market capitalizations and predictions in the trillions of dollars – with all the attendant temptations and dangers (“The love of money is the root of all evil”)

What is A.I.?

- History – Where did this thing come from? Failures of some of the early pioneers and how they have been overcome.
- Types of A.I.: Perceptive/cognitive; Generative; Large language; AGI.
- Weaknesses and dangers (Illustration of a typical system, showing four weak spots where developers or others can insert bias.)
- Some common terminology

Applications?

Today there are several dozen A.I. systems in existence in just about every realm of human endeavor. We will only address those that may affect families and children more directly. A few examples: Google Translate, DeepMind, ChatGPT, Gemini, BARD, Real Estate (Rex), Pornographic and other nefarious applications, Alexa, A.I. that is hidden inside of many current application and robot dolls for children, etc.

The Future of Artificial Intelligence

What new A.I. developments will most affect us?

What is being planned; what are some of the more likely future shocks to our spiritual and earthly existence? A review of current wide ranging academic and business plans, reviews and predictions.

How can we prepare?

What are the dangers? What are A.I.'s faults, limits and weaknesses and how will they affect us? Specifically, our children, our home and family, Dad's job and family income, our parish and our Church, our community, society and our very civilization.

What must parents know and how should they prepare for the coming disruptions? What is the likely future role for our priests and episcopate?

What is currently being done to control and regulate A.I.?

Should there be government regulation? (Every other potential danger in our society already is regulated.) What is the private sector already doing? How should responsible Catholic Christians respond in our public and political arenas?

**WEEK 3 – NEW TECHNOLOGY
AND SOCIAL MEDIA DISRUPTIONS**

New Technology

The end game of technology developers and providers is and always has been to make money. Today, children account for billions of dollars in revenue for companies like Apple, Google (Alphabet), Facebook and TikTok.

Smartphone privacy is a great concern. There are remedies to this and other screen-related problems, such as geotracking but few parents are aware of their availability or are actively using them.

In this section we will also briefly discuss some of the new technology developments you may not be aware of, including medical and quasi-medical devices that can alter behavior.

Social Media

Recent congressional hearings have pointed out that social media is designed to be addicting, such that the users will be encouraged to interact without end. Several studies have shown that this permanently affects and impedes the normal development of both the mental and the physical development of children.

New social media applications are in development. Many of these will be even more addicting and harmful. Parents need tools and advice to protect their children. We will describe some of the more harmful ones and what you can do to protect your loved ones.

Helpful Information Sources for Parents

We plan to provide some reference sources where parents can keep up to date with this rapidly changing field.