

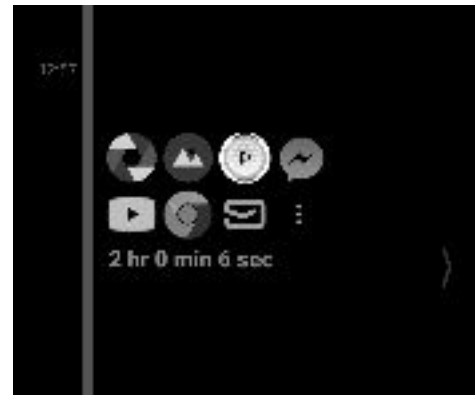
Lent Project Reflection

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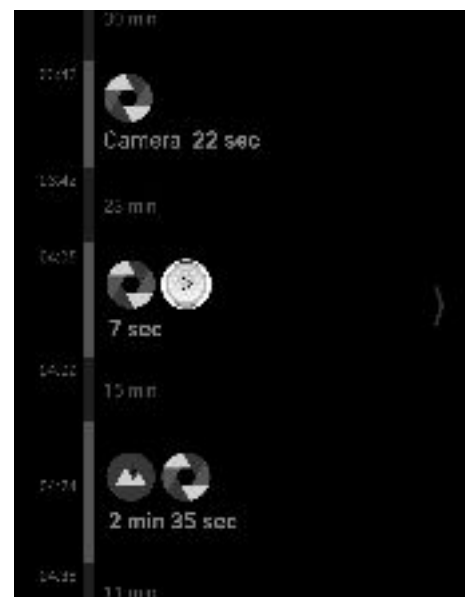
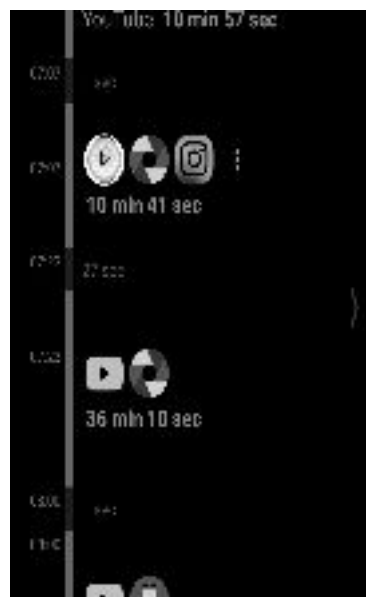
Prompt: “What did I learn from reflecting on my use of technology over Lent, and why does that matter?”

Have you ever left your house without your phone in your pocket? It’s similar to the feeling you would have if you left the house without any shoes on. During lent, I chose to journal on my phone usage because I feel like I have a dependency on my mobile device. Furthermore, while I am usually doing work on my computers, I typically use my phone for accessing social media or passing the time when I have nothing to entertain me. I approached my goal of reflecting on my phone usage with the assumption that my time is valuable. My technological habits, like any other habit I have, truly do have spiritual significance according to my worldview. Therefore, learning how to be a good steward of my time and energy is a meaningful exercise.

I use the QualityTime app on my phone to track how much time I spend on my phone. For reference, on the average weekday, my phone is used for 6 hours, and it spikes to about 8 hours on the weekend. For the first half of Lent, I tried reducing my phone usage down to about 2 hours a day. During the following half of Lent, I used my phone obsessively, and basically tried to use it from the time I woke up until I fell asleep. When I was analyzing the data collected on the QualityTime app, I realized a few things about the time that I spend on my phone. The following images illustrate what I learned:



When I saw the amount of time that I was spending on my phone, it was eye-opening. If all of the time I spend on my phone was spent on a different endeavor (like learning how to play a new instrument, for example), I would be able to expand the skills that I have and would probably experience more personal growth. Additionally, I realized that I have no reason to complain that there “aren’t enough hours in the day” to complete the work that I need to do.



Another thing that I realized was that, if one uses one’s mobile device consistently, you can learn almost anything about that individual. If you had the information from the image on the left, you could see what time I went to bed, the last app I was looking app before I went to bed,

and what time I woke up. The image in the center shows that I habitually look at my phone, turn it off, and then look at it again a couple of seconds later. Finally, using the image on the right, I can determine what I did on that particular day. That day, I was outside doing gymnastics and filming my flips. Actually, by looking at the information on the QualityTime app, I can determine, or even remember, what I did on almost every day that my usage was recorded. This is pretty terrifying, in my opinion, because if I can determine what I was doing based on this kind of information, an algorithm can too.

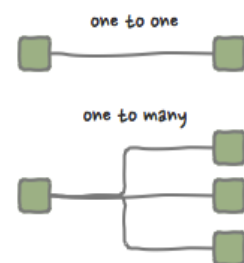
In light of these observations, I determined that I should start reducing the amount of time that I spend on my mobile device because I will have more time to spend on things that I really care about (art, music, reading, flipping, independent learning, etc.), and there will be less information about me recorded on my device. However, if I plan on reducing the amount of time that I spend on my phone, I need to determine what parts of my phone usage are good and beneficial so that I can cut out the uses for my phone that are less beneficial.

By comparing the uses for my phone that seemed meaningful to the uses of my phone that seemed wasteful, I recognized a pattern. While I felt that scrolling through random photos that my friends had posted was not a meaningful use of time, the time that I spent messaging or video chatting with people I really care about seemed better used.

Additionally, I like the concept that the figure to the right illustrates.

One-to-one communication felt more beneficial to me because I felt like I was having a true, social interaction with that person. However, whenever I posted something, or viewed someone else's post, that

interaction seemed inherently less social. Interestingly enough, interacting with individuals in the



comment section of a post felt more socially stimulating than simply viewing or making posts because it is a type of one-to-one communication. As a result of these observations, I have decided that, in the future, I want to focus on communicating with others in the most direct and socially stimulating way.

Using the information that I observed about mobile device usage, I will be able to take an active part in my team's development of our final project. Our team will be building the UI for a phone system that will allow users to easily and quickly look at the information and notifications on their devices that really matter to them, reducing the amount of time they spend on their phone and increasing the quality of their phone usage. I believe that this kind of project is important because, by thoughtfully using the wondrous gift of mobile technology, we can better accomplish our goals and connect with those whom we love and care about. As for me, I plan on continuing to reduce my phone usage, and I want to spend my time interacting with others in the most socially stimulating way. That way, in the future, when I leave my house and forget my phone, I won't think twice about it.