# CONTROL AND QUESTION / THINK OUTSIDE THE BUBBLE

(INTRODUCTION)

This will be the introduction

# (CHAPTER 1)

# DISTRACTION AND PROCRASTINATION

If there is one thing that keeps coming back in the influence of the internet on personal life, it must be distraction. The infinite scroll, keeping us captive, autoplay that's on default on and *You Might Also Like* this mug with a cat-face.

*And their eyes glazed over*

Joelle Renstrom wrote a killer article. In the article the question if internet use is an addiction comes up. Her experience is remarkable because she teaches at Boston University, a very prestigious college. The trouble and work (and money) required to get in is apparently not enough to motivate students to leave their technological habits on the side in class.

Many examples of the "dark side" of computers and internet use can be found. In January 1985, some years even before the WWW, followers of Steward Brands's legacy of the Whole Earth Catalog, published an edition of their magazine *Whole Earth Review* titled *Computers as Poison*. Subtitled *All panaceas become poison*

(piece about it's –sometimes uncanny– equal to today's situation and talk about if stuff came true or not)

Her position in all of this is critical towards technology.

> "In Chongqing in China, sidewalks contain a special lane for people who can't be bothered to look up from their phones. And in the German city of Augsburg, there are traffic signals on the ground for people who would otherwise endanger themselves by failing to notice red lights."

> "multitasking instead of failing to focus."

> "Technology demands a significant amount of time and attention and has conditioned them to not question it. It takes up more and more of their bandwidth, and the net effect is lobotomising."

# TECHNOSTRESS AND A MAKEABLE AUDIENCE

And in this term I think there is a shift between the old and new generation. The inpatient millenial stands together with the outpatient Babyboomer on the sphere of the internet. The babyboomer spells doom while the younger generation is like "chill, grandpa." And what a nice situation to observe. Never before has the internet been used by people of such different ages. All ages use the network. The youngest don't know a life without it, the generations between might still have a vague idea of life before the internet and the older generations may be struggling to cope with digital technologies.

It shows in different ways. An interesting page to visit is the website of *Technostress* http://www.technostress.com/. In a Q and A, the authors describe the following situation:

> Q: You talk about TechnoStress in the home – how is technology affecting the family?
>
> A: The modern family is isolated, with each person wrapped in his or her own "Techno-Cocoon." Just take a look at the typical family looks at the end of the day … Mom preparing dinner while checking the answer machine, head glued to the portable phone while she returns calls. One child is playing games on the computer in his bedroom, another is talking on her own phone, and the youngest is playing Nintendo. Dad comes home later from work and goes immediately to the computer. And the kids seem to know so much more about computer technology that their parents are feeling intimidated and inadequate. In many homes we are seeing a loss of communication and a major shift in the power balance in the family.

The problem I have with this kind of critique is the stereotyping of the situation. For some reason, it sounds as if these Techno-critics have no better answer to the problems faced by technology than to draw a bleak picture of what a family is in times of rising technology. And while they have some valid points, all credibility is lost through the use of slogans, commercials for the book, and metaphore upon metaphore.

*Coping With Technology* @WORK @HOME @PLAY

But okay, maybe this made much more sense 20 years ago. Who am I to judge that. It is interesting however to see how it relates to the problems of the internet. The look and feel of their homepage is very particular to the years between 1990 and 2000. A lot of elements on the page are blatantly commercial, trying to convince you of selling

something. There are testimonials of different people that recommend the book, a link to *order your copy!!!*, pictures of the authors, resumes, and so the list goes on.

Now how do we compare this example with the current situation? For internet years, this web page is a dinosaur. Can it even be compared to internet culture of today? Let's speculate for a minute that Dr. Rosen and Dr. Weil would try to reach their audience online today. There would be two distinct paths they could take. The one option being comparable to the thing they did on their original page.

1. Make website
2. Launch website
3. Update website with relevant information

Now this is all fine and dandy but I have the feeling they would rather go for the more mainstream approach:

1. Set up a facebook page for events and updates on the book
2. Go on instagram, post pictures of daily activities related to everything surrounding the book. Use hashtags.
3. Link to personal twitter accounts
4. Link to website

Forgive my inadequate knowledge of internet marketing, there must be so many ways in which this formula can be expanded. But for the sake of comparing the two approaches, it's important to spot one big change, the change from a kind of autonomous internet, to a practice relying totally on services and platforms of third parties. To make money online, you have to build an audience -the makeable audience-, and keep them triggered through social media.

CRITIQUE: Our attitude nowadays to the internet, what's it like? Does it inspire action or apathy? Maybe both? In what way?

# CONCLUSION

*If design lives on, this is how it should work to deal with corporate powers, third, fourth, fifth parties' interests and, last but not least, the self.*