

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXPLORING MODERN TECHNOLOGY ALONGSIDE DIGITAL WELLBEING

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Overview

In an era defined by constant digital connectivity, the concept of “digital wellbeing” is examined – the intentional effort to ensure that technology enhances rather than diminishes our personal, professional, and community lives. While digital tools offer undeniable benefits, they also present challenges to mental health, productivity, and relationships that require deliberate human-centered responses.

Key Challenges

- Prolonged social media use contributes to feelings of loneliness and inadequacy through constant social comparison.
- The blurring of work-life boundaries due to digital communication leads to technology fatigue and distrust.
- Children and adults alike struggle to self-regulate screen time without intentional guidelines and oversight.

Core Principle

Drawing on an IBM rule from 1979, “a computer can never be held accountable,” there is the argument that technology is a tool, not a decision-maker. The responsibility for healthy tech use lies with people, not machines. The guiding question applies to every digital challenge is, “What is your human-centered solution?”

Seven Strategies for Digital Wellbeing

1. Hold humans accountable, not technology. Recognize that machines cannot be blamed; people must take ownership of how technology is used.
2. Be the “human behind the screen.” Adults and educators must set, model, and consistently enforce expectations around technology use.
3. Distinguish essential vs. non-essential screen time. Essential screen time is tied to a specific instructional or productive outcome; non-essential screen time is not.
4. Create tech-free zones. Designate physical spaces or time periods free of devices to reduce distraction and encourage face-to-face interaction.
5. Prioritize families in the process. Parents should model healthy habits, establish offline routines, and implement a “tech-free hour” at the start and end of each day.
6. Facilitate open conversations. Encourage dialogue around technology policies and usage with teachers, students, and families rather than defaulting to blanket distrust.
7. Leverage trusted organizations for resources. Organizations such as Youth Digital Wellbeing and CoSN offer co-created, practical tools for students, families, and educators.

Conclusion

Digital wellbeing is not about rejecting technology, it is about using it with purpose and intention. By combining digital literacy, self-regulation, and open communication, individuals and institutions can transform technology from a source of stress into a powerful tool for learning, growth, and connection.