



Animated video serie «Little Green Bags»

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The digital good life

Computers, mobile phones, tablets – they have become more than mere pieces of technology. They are the doors to a brave new world – a world of connectivity, vast information and endless business opportunities. And it has become pretty crowded out there. Facebook is almost as populated as China, Twitter at least as big as Brazil.

And the thresholds to the digital world are about to become invisible, to be reintegrated into our bodies and souls. Imagine accessing wikipedia within the blink of an eye – literally – or meeting friends in World of Warcraft without moving a single part of our bodies. How are we, as individuals, supposed to deal with these overwhelming developments? How can we be not only successful but also happy in our digitalized private and professional lives? In other words: What is a digital good life?

Should we reread the stoics? Abstain from all digital allurements and lead the life of a technological monk? Or live digital life to the fullest – without reflecting upon it? Of course the answer lies in between. Our research points to five key dichotomies that need to be balanced in order to find success and happiness in a digitalized world. Five clearings in the digital jungle.

One: The Me and the We

In the digital world, many people feel lonely but they are not alone. What we see, however, is a distortion of the real. Inter net users tend to present highlight reels of their lives: Why aren't we spending our free time with Tom Cruise in Mexico eating Shark Sushi while tanning our perfectly photoshopped bodies, flying a helicopter made by Google? It is important to make ourselves aware of this distortion every now and then – otherwise we suffer from envy and fear of missing out. Think twice each time before you mail, tweet, post and comment. What's in it for me and what for the others? Am I posting for competition's sake or because it makes sense? Caring about the right balance between overand undersharing will pave the way through the thicket of the digital world.

Two: The known and the unknown

Beware of your bubbles: Each time you access the web via google, use facebook, listen to music on spotify or buy on amazon, algorithms feed you your preferred information diet. As long as you feel comfortable squatting in your comfort zone there will be only more of the same – which is not only boring but also hinders you from evolving personally AND professionally. Remember how you have met your partner? What made you fall in love? Individuals and organisations need disruptive forces to move forward.

Use different search engines and delve into the netherworlds of the web! But also, look for relevant information offline. Talk to your real human friends about new music, discuss politics with strangers on a train. Go slumming in unknown communities! It helps maintain a well balanced information diet and leads to «Serendipity» or «accidental sagacity»: pleasant surprises that evoke creativity and new ideas. The balance between the known and the unknown has always been the space of human innovation.

Three: The give and the take

The digital world is a world of conversations. But those conversations will dry out if no one is partaking in them. Of course, if you don't cast your vote the democracy still keeps running. And if you don't answer yahoo questions or post an article on wikipedia once in a while you will still be able to profit from them. But how much longer will it be possible to ask the internet for advice, to crowdsource and peer produce ideas and products if you keep acting like a digital couch potato? A contribution on the web is similar to a handshake in real life. The more we virtually shake hands, the more we establish trust. That's not only true for the individual user: organisations can help boost trust as well: by clearly communicating their terms of business and privacy, by linking virtual and real life outlets; We use your data and you get the best offer. The balance in reciprocity!

Four: The private and the public

Are you looking for a new job? Of course, the HR manager in charge has long undergone a digital background check on you. No need to be a member of the NSA to follow your digital footprints. But internet users tend to confuse the personal with the private. Personal pieces of information ARE the Internet's lifeblood. Thanks to them the Internet is a public well of storytelling, full of explicit and implicit knowledge. However, there are aspects in life that are not only personal but also private. Often, impulsive actions or devious privacy settings have horrible consequences.

Become a storyteller, turn your online presence into a serial novel, a must read for the people you care about. But what consequences can I expect? When do I want the curtains to be closed? Check the privacy settings of your search engines and social networks regularly! And, most importantly, align your public and your private persona. Your digital life is not a twofold affair with two different selves but a balance in authenticity.

Five: The On and the Off

The digital realm IS a brave new world. Billions of potential friends on facebook and quite a few interesting articles on wikipedia. But the Internet is also stressful and addictive. Checking your emails every 10 minutes? A new tweet by Lady Gaga? Oh and look at this sweet little cat playing with a...FOCUS! Choose depth over breadth every now and then. Also, human beings love the concept of social ambience. Thanks to the internet we will never feel alone again! But these feelings are deceiving. Go to a real bar, get drunk, sob around in the dark. THIS is social ambience.

Human kind has ALWAYS loved highlighting the downsides of new media. Writing makes us stupid, Plato said. Thanks to television, human kind has lost its moral values and computer gaming is the root of all evil. It's not THAT bad. But do ask yourself once in a while: Is whatever I am doing worthwhile? Does it relax or inspire me? Do I really need to pull that cellphone out of my pocket again? That's it. The five dichotomies will free you from

digital stress and despair and allow you to be a focused, respected and sociable online citizen. And by the way: Try pressing that little button in the upper right corner once in a while. Unplug. Get out of your digitalized mind and into your body. Turn it off. Now.

Direct link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tUMnwkMSeg