

Digital Immediacy

Imediatismo Digital

Look around you.... Even if you don't like it (or admit it), the world around you (and its reach) has been extremely changed by technology. Since the emergence of the personal computer (in the 80's), its popularity (in the following decade), the arrival of internet (in the second half of the 90's) and, above all, the revolution caused by the invention of the 1st iPhone (2007) and the subsequent popularization of the mobile devices market, known as *smartphones*, our life turned around and became completely dependent, and sometimes addicted to technology.

Make a small test, walk for a few minutes on the street and see the amount of people accessing or connected on their smartphones. I bet more than 70% of them will be in this situation. We live in an era when there is a need for information each timer faster and more urgent, and our *smartphones* have become an extension of work. Today we have more and more information available, or better saying, in our pockets.

However, like everything else in human life, there are two sides of the same coin, an advantage and a disadvantage, a good side and a bad side, you just have to choose one.

In the past, we used to set a date by telephone, setting time and place, and we waited patiently for the arrival of another person. Today, we set the way, and we use instant messaging and sometimes geolocation applications to find out if the person is already on the way or close to coming.

Patients, co-workers, students, everyone wants information/answers each time faster. They are messages and emails to be answered that will load you and bury you, accumulating more and more work. We live in the era of "digital immediacy," in which a minute is an eternity, and we need to compete for the other person's attention with the instant messaging system. We have learned to become multi-tasking human beings, and we need to talk about several things at the same time.

On the other hand, immediacy also provided a fast dissemination and access to information. I remember the trouble to find out scientific papers before the Internet era. We needed to look among the bibliographic references the articles that would interest us, and look them up one by one in the printed magazines that were available in major libraries at the universities, ask permission from the librarian and take a photocopy. We needed to request those copies that did not exist physically at the university to partner libraries that had them, so we asked them to send us a photocopy. At last, when the printed volume was not in any of the partner libraries, we wrote a letter directly to the author to request a copy of the original article. A simple bibliographical research lasted for months, sometimes years. Besides the accumulation of files and folders with photocopied papers, they had to be cataloged afterwards in some way so that the other members of the research could use them or at least to find that information. Today we can make a bibliographic review and get the articles necessary to prepare a scientific paper sitting in the comfort of our home / office.

This digital immediacy has also changes the relationship with our patients. Like it or not, they have how to catch up with us faster by searching on the internet for our email or even our mobile phone. Their exams are generated in powerful computers and their medical record is electronic, as well as their appointments. Not to mention the access to information about prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases. "Dr. Google" has become a "competitor" in the obtainment of information about diseases, a role that was previously reserved only to medical professionals. Today the doctor should be prepared for all the questions imposed by the patient and their eagerness for quick answers as soon as they enter the office.

As a result, the statements that we hear the most today are: "I'm busy!", "I don't have time for that!" and "Today is not possible, let's do it later!" We need to know how to handle this enormous amount of information / tasks of the daily life. Thinking of it, various methods have been created to better manage time and this avalanche of things to be solved. It is worth highlighting the method known as GTD ("Getting Things Done" by David Allen: <http://gettingthingsdone.com/>).

With the arrival of the applications for *smartphones*, this methodology can be used more efficiently and really integrate our everyday life. There are 2 very interesting applications for this purpose; one of them is a powerful notes organizer (evernote: www.evernote.com) other task manager (wunderlist: www.wunderlist.com). However, it is not just installing them on your device, you should really integrate them to your routine.

“Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans” (John Lennon, 1940-1980), so make the right choices, better manage your time, and save money to spend on those who love you.

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