



# Smart choices?

Aside from their convenience, smartphones offer young people a world of possibilities that carry a hefty amount of responsibility and require both self-control and good judgment. Are the kids up to it?

**S**MARTPHONES enable us to **access** the internet anytime, anywhere. With such convenience, people are getting more and more attached to their mobile electronic gadgets.

Spending too much time on these devices can disrupt life, and that is happening to many people. Some, especially young people, may even become addicted to these devices.

Students hooked on IT gadgets may suffer low grades. Their relationships with friends and family will deteriorate as they **obsess** over their digital world to the exclusion of everything else.

Some hide their 'screen **addiction**' from their parents, teachers and friends. Attempts to cut back on screen time are often unsuccessful. Some will become reclusive, preferring the virtual world to the real one. Prolonged usage of computers or other digital devices can cause a host of health problems. It can hurt the eyes, and strain muscles and tendons.

**Excessive** screen time can also lead to a shortened attention span, and delay speech development in youngsters. Computer use often leads to a **sedentary** lifestyle, which increases the risk of health conditions such as obesity and heart disease.

Below are other ways gadgets with internet access have had a major impact on modern life.



## The 'qi di' culture

NOT all bad conduct is punishable by law. But in the IT age, people who **commit** moral wrongs could be subject to another kind of 'justice'—qi di (起底).

Qi di means to dig up and make public the personal background of the perceived wrongdoer, otherwise known as doxing.

Information being revealed usually includes the person's name, address, and the school or organisation he or she is attending.

**Vindictive** netizens might think they are doing the community a service. But qi di is, in essence, a form of revenge, or even bullying.

In some cases, revenge-seekers act before getting their facts right. Some even **target** the wrong person.

Qi di is something that should be actively discouraged.

## selfie

SELFIES – pictures of oneself taken using mobile devices – have become a global phenomenon.

These self-portraits are often shared on social media. They have the effect of reinforcing one's self-image, and can be a means of self-discovery and expression.

Public figures, meanwhile, use selfies as an image-building tool.

But shared selfie pictures can draw

**n e g a t i v e**  
**c o m m e n t s**,  
**which could**  
**lead a person**  
**to become**  
**dissatisfied**  
**with, or insecure**  
**about, his or her**  
**body image.**



## Community involvement

SOCIAL media have helped to fan social movements.

It is easy to organise actions on the internet. Views, photographs or videos can spread quickly, or 'go viral', on Facebook or Twitter, and spur action from others.

The internet has encouraged students to take part in public affairs. It makes them feel the impact of their action, which they believe will help society.

## Self-image

SELF-image is the way an individual sees himself or herself.

It is a view of one's own behaviour, abilities, values and attitudes. It also covers one's body image, gender and self-esteem.

There are three kinds of self-image: subjective me: the kind of person I think I am; ideal me: the kind of person I want to be; social me: how I think other people are seeing me.

Self-image is a dynamic concept that has changed in recent years because of the popularity among netizens to share their personal life on social media using smartphones.



## Self-control

THE smartphone is a fascinating device because it has so many functions and interesting features.

Some people are, however, so fascinated by it that they let their lives revolve around these devices.

It is common these days to see people losing themselves in their iPhone or iPad.

They check for new messages even when they are with friends, riding public transport or walking on the street.

Not everyone has the self-control to limit their screen time. Many have thus become addicted to their mobile devices.

## Interpersonal relationships

SOCIAL media have both positive and negative effects on interpersonal relations.

They help friends and family to stay in touch constantly. Users get instant feedback from one another.

They also make it convenient to set up gatherings and parties, and help users make new friends and expand their social circle.

But you cannot always trust people you do not know on the internet, because information they post about themselves may not be true. There are also bad people online who prey on the young and innocent.

Some users, meanwhile, become overly concerned about getting 'likes' from 'friends'.

It is common these days to see everyone checking their smartphones at gatherings, lunches or dinners.

Such lack of face-to-face interaction is definitely not helping to build good relationships.

## Bandwagon effect (從眾效應)

BIRDS of a feather flock together, and so do people with similar views and interests.

People like to read like-minded views and express opinions and post information to people who will likely agree with them.

They hope to gain approval from others, but there is no guarantee that they will get it.

And when they do not get the kind of endorsement they are hoping for, they may feel frustration and isolation.

