

The Screen Time Dilemma

MUHAMAD IZZAT RAHIM

Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, UiTM Kampus Kuala Pilah

Too much of something is bad for us. This saying can be applied to our current situation where many of us are hooked in front of screens for hours every day. In the past, experts warned us that too much screen time could be detrimental to our health and well-being. However, since the Movement Control Order (MCO) started last year, we have spent most of our time in front of screens utilising gadgets such as smartphone, laptop, and tablet.

It was reported that the screen time of Malaysians has increased tremendously during the MCO. Although this is an alarming situation, it is unavoidable since many of our daily tasks and chores are done in front of screens nowadays. For instance, workers need to attend meeting, seminar or training via online platforms which require them to sit in front of a screen for few hours. On the other hand, the young ones are instructed to sit for online classes or complete their homework using electronic gadgets almost every day.

The increased screen time may have adverse effects on one's health and overall well-being. First, too much screen time causes individuals to lead a sedentary life which in turn can be the root of many diseases such as eye sore, obesity, chronic headache, diabetes, and many more. Psychologically, individuals who spend too much time with gadgets are at risk to feel lonely, stressed out or even suicidal. This goes to show that screen time is harmful for us if left unchecked.



Many experts believe that balance is key in this issue. It is understandable that screen time is unavoidable during the MCO. However, it is best to keep screen time at a minimum level. Experts suggest people to practice the 20-20-20 rules where individuals should take a break every 20 minute from screen time by looking at any object that is 20 feet (approximately 6 metre) away for a total of 20 seconds. This practice can avoid eye strain and relax the muscles. In addition, you can do simple stretching to increase blood flow in the body. Stretching is also a great stress reliever after a long hour in front of screens.

All in all, screen time has become embedded in our daily routine. In this pandemic time, it is quite hard to stay away from a screen for a long time. Thus, it is important for us to really take a good care of ourselves. Always be mindful and frequently check your screen time daily to achieve a well-balanced life.