



Reviews

Desmurget, M., (2020). *The Factory of Digital Cretins. The dangers of screens for our children*. Barcelona: Península. 442 pp. ISBN: 978-84-9942-933-5.

Just two years ago, Michel Desmurget—a prestigious French neuroscientist and director of research at the National Institute for Health and Medical Research in France— published *The Factory of Digital Cretins. The dangers of screens for our children* — Femina award for French letters —, a work in which she addresses digital consumption and its consequences on childhood and adolescence.

The study - which is divided into two parts with several chapters and an epilogue - addresses the numerous harmful effects that the use of technology has on children and adolescents in full intellectual development through examples, graphs, comparisons, analysis of previous studies and various investigations.

At first, the author shows the effects that the abusive use of mobile devices from an early age has on the hippocampus and the cerebellum of young people, as shown by the numerous and rigorous scientific studies included in the book and that alarm about the disastrous consequences that it carries in their health and their learning. Sequels that are even greater if the adolescent comes from a disadvantaged family since the consumption time is greater and the parental control is less.

Likewise, Desmurget points out that the population is not aware of these risks because contradictory opinions are expressed in the media that come from specialists but also from people not versed in the subject who defend the interests of large technology companies before social interests. It supposes —according to the specialist— a significant difficulty for the citizen to determine which sources are reliable and to synthesize all the information that is broadcast daily in the media in which unreliable data, fallacious arguments or unproven evidence are mixed with scientific evidence. which causes a flood of data impossible to process.

The author demonstrates that there are no digital natives and that technology does not improve any brain at all according to the scientific evidence available to date. In addition, the skills that can be learned in a digital medium are not inferred —for the most part— to other areas, hence, as Desmurget exemplifies, if a child learns to play a video game, he only learns that, since he cannot extrapolate that learning in any area of your life.

The second part of the work is intended to review the consequences that these users suffer in their physiological system after the early and continued use of technological means. The duration or efficiency of sleep and the memorization of what has been learned are altered, which has disastrous repercussions in the school environment and their learning. The research shows that the scientific evidence ensures that the use of screens —whether for recreational or educational purposes— causes lower school performance and an impoverishment in the health of students, for this reason it is essential that minors do not develop a dependency on technology from an early age to avoid later problems.

For all these reasons, the neuroscientist assures that the work and control of families who must avoid the use of technology before the age of six is essential to promote good cognitive development and good academic results. It is devastating to verify that the continued use of these devices at an early age affects human interaction, the child's language and their ability to concentrate, attacking the basic pillars of human identity.

Desmurget's study demonstrates —in conclusion— that screens affect language, concentration, memory and learning in children and adolescents, pointing out that all of this is a public health problem that governments must address and that society you should worry.

A work that should not go unnoticed by anyone if we want to have a full development and live in a full society.

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