

Victoria University

September 15, 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE

Most students can't go a full day without technology

Victoria, B.C.- How long do you think you can go without using technology? In a study done by the University of Victoria, dubbed "The Unplugged Project," 1000 students from around the world were asked to go for 72 hours without accessing technology, including phones, radio, television, or hand held devices. Within 24 hours of the study, over half of the students participating had quit, and a significant amount of students reported feelings of mental and physical distress when avoiding technology.

Dr. Barry Jensen and his co-researcher Kim Fields noted that college students experienced considerable increases in anxiety levels when required to unplug for even one day. In addition, students found it extremely difficult to stay away from technology for the full 72-hour period. The results were consistent around the globe, as Jensen and his team tracked data from University of Victoria students as well as students in 10 other countries of the world including the United States, Brazil, South Korea, England, China, Germany, Italy, France and Russia.

Researchers found that 550 students quit within 24 hours and by the end of the 72 hour abstinence from technology, only 15% of students had remained in the study. "Most students exhibited signs of mental and physical distress, similar to those found in addiction, in trying to stay away from technology," Jensen explains. "A clear majority were unable to voluntarily stay away from computers, televisions, cell phones and MP3 players for the full 72 hours."

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The study measured how the students were feeling throughout the study. "Students reported having heart palpitations, sweaty palms, and feelings of general anxiety and depression during the period they were trying to stay away from technology, similar to withdrawal symptoms of addiction. Many even used the word 'addicted' in their own self-reports," says Kim Fields.

A full copy of the report and research results can be obtained by logging onto the university website www.research_unplugged@vu.ca for more details.

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About Victoria University

VU has about 8,500 undergraduate students and over 18,000 alumni.

The university has a faculty of communication, which includes a graduate program.

VU has 12 distinct academic departments, offering 95 programs and 62 areas of study.

Dr. Barry Jensen teaches communication theory and research methods, and has a PhD in communication. Kim Fields is a professor of communication and teaches media writing.

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