

# YOU OR TECHNOLOGY

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*This article is based on research into digital engagement.*

*Research revealed the mechanism of human engagement with technology and why it affects people differently.*

## YOU OR TECHNOLOGY: WHO IS IN CONTROL?

Who you are will shape how you engage with Technology. It will shape how you use the tools in the first place and even how you interpret the results from your interaction with the devices you touch.



But digital technology is not a passive 'thing' that you pick up and use like a screwdriver or turn on and off like electricity from a socket. Digital Technology has the power to reach

into your life and change you, whether you agree to it or not.

There are experts in technology design who see your engagement with technology as a 'battle for your head space' They go to a great deal of trouble to make websites and the technology experiences 'sticky' and 'rewarding' so you will end up doing what suits them, not what suits you. If you are unaware of the processes that are taking place, then you are almost certainly being controlled to some degree.

A common comment during this research was that participants had a deep love/hate relationship with their preferred technology. Some however were seamlessly using it to great advantage and succeeding.

*Our quick quiz based on research into digital engagement will give you a score that shows how likely it is that you will manage Internet technologies successfully.*

The report explains your score and how your unique profile advantages or disadvantages your ability to successfully manage technology. It also suggests ways to improve your potential by using technology.

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## YOU AND ENGAGEMENT WITH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY – WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US

You touch technology many times a day. It filters your incoming information and filters your outgoing communications. It filters how the world sees you and how you see yourself.

A hundred times a day you receive micro-rewards, chemical dumps and information that trigger neurons in your brain. This stimulation is shaping who you will be tomorrow, and every day after that. You may not like it, you may disagree, you may even resist it, but it is happening. Technology is shaping you!

The first step to taking some sort of control is to understand how digital engagement works and what you can do about it. If you don't want to be a victim, you need to understand why the system controls you.

You will probably say “But it's the Internet – I know this! I've grown up with it. What can you tell me that I don't already know?”

You may be right. Maybe you do know it all.



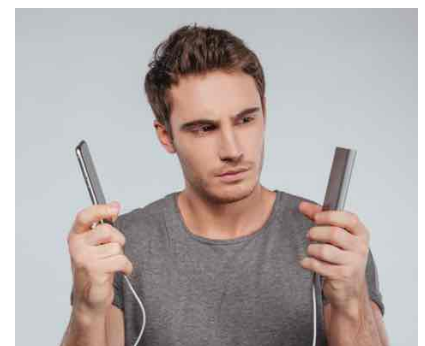
But maybe there are some things that bother you and you simply write it off as a time management issue or work pressure. Or worse, there are some things that SHOULD bother you and you haven't even thought about them. Prepare yourself for some surprises as you read further.

The original research hypothesis was that some personality types would be better suited to engaging with technology. If the solution was this simple, we could just tell people and it would change their lives. But the research revealed so much more. Some results are still a puzzle and no doubt future research will provide deeper explanations. However at the moment there are more than enough useful conclusions that can be shared. As with all things technology related – humans are playing catch-up in a fast moving game.

It would have been nice to simply say ‘people who have *this* particular personality will struggle with *that* technology – such as Facebook and indeed some research is finding relationships like this. But simply recognising a relationship does not explain why it happens or what can be done about it. Research that forms the basis for our quick quiz revealed a far more complex story and provided not only a way to measure your relationship with technology but also a way to improve your relationship.

To put this plainly – there is no direct relationship between any **one** personality trait and successful engagement with technology. If you want a solution that can be stated this simply, you are going to be disappointed.

HOWEVER, this research did find that people with certain innate behaviours do appear to find digital engagement easier.



More importantly it found that a personality types indicated as being less likely to succeed with technology could in fact overturned or reversed this trend with other personality traits. It all comes down to what traits *you* have and how *you* manage them.

This means we can offer you useful insights about how you currently engage as well as how you can better manage technology. The first step is to take a snapshot of yourself within the digital system.

Our quick quiz and supporting report provides two things simultaneously: firstly, it will tell you how things probably work in your life at the moment, and secondly it will challenge you to think about how you actually want them to function. The difference between the two is *your* opportunity to alter *your* world.

## EVERYBODY IS DIFFERENT – DID WE NEED TO SAY THIS?

Humans like to think they are different and unique. Yes, we are all as unique as snowflakes and we all have distinct experiences of the world.

But at some level when you review all snowflakes, you can start making useful observations about the behaviours and outcomes of snowflakes in general. They all have six points, are cold, they pack together and melt in the heat. While these are generalisations, they are still useful. This is what behavioural psychologists use to determine and understand the behaviour of individuals.

Unfortunately, when we get results of self-evaluation surveys we tend to extract or fixate on only part of our results, and dismiss or marginalise areas where we are not comfortable.



*So... can quick survey evaluations actually be useful to you?*

**Certainly!** They provide you with a starting point. But in order to make and progress you have to do some work to fit the results into your own unique circumstances.

With Digital technology this can work to your advantage.



Technology can be infinitely customised to advance many behavioural learning processes that previously took millions of years to accomplish. With digital technology you as a unique individual can find a narrow niche and develop specific circumstances that rewards your needs exactly. This results in easy and rapid behaviour changes.

*Considering that each individual is unique what is the point of simple evaluations?*

The short answer is that simple evaluations can be very useful particularly in the digital era. The world really is different to the one your parents and ancestors experienced, and it is technology that is altering human behaviour because digital technology is infinitely customisable. Using our App 'Digital Cognitive-System Solution' (currently under development) you will be able to enhance your behavioural learning and accelerate your behavioural evolution.

Your behavioural learning process starts with a snapshot of who you are

– the simple quiz or assessment. When you read the explanation of your results, you will start a feedback process that can rapidly reinforce or diminish your behaviours. By simply taking the first few steps you will begin the development of your system awareness, which is key to mastering technology. Further discussion and explanations are in my book [“Who Broke My World”](#).

## PERSONALITY AND ENGAGEMENT

The following discussion gives you an example of how digital engagement is affected by your innate behaviours (personality) and your understanding of related systems.



Research showed that people who scored high in Extraversion were less likely to engage advantageously with technology. This is a nice easy generalisation at one level but it is only part of the picture. The research also showed that if the Extravert individual also had their highest score in

dutifulness (a subscale of the Conscientious trait), then the generalized answer may not apply. The reason being that the individual’s sense of duty to respond to technology, such as emails and SMS, may well result in the individual becoming more deeply engaged, not less engaged since they may be constantly checking Facebook or replying to messages. It is all about how one behaviour affects the other as a system and how the behaviours are amplified by technology. Simply being aware of how the system is working in your life changes your system awareness and increased your advantage.

The research also showed that people high in Openness would be suited to the Internet. However, if they also scored high in one particular subscale of Neuroticism identified in the research then they could become ‘addicted’ to the bio-chemical dumps they receive from repeated micro rewards and each time-wasting mouse-click would distract them from their goals. This combination could result in negative social behaviours; for example online gambling or gaming. This complex interference is also explained in more detail in the book ‘Who Broke My World’.

Humans are complex, the digital environment is also complex. So when you bring the two together in an intense and iterative way, it quickly gets quite messy.



*This seems like there are too many variables –Its impossible to understand.*

It is not that difficult! It is like unravelling tangled string you simply have to find one starting point: a simple quiz may be your starting point.

We believe that only you will truly know what feels right – no other person in the world can tell you definitively who or what you are. If answers do not ‘feel right’ then you should seek a deeper truth. The role of this research and information is to present you with the means and methods for finding your own unique truth and practical useful solutions.

If you would like to read more about these concepts visit [www.spencer-scarr.com](http://www.spencer-scarr.com).



## WHAT'S NEXT?

A simple quiz cannot adequately accommodate the uniqueness of each individual so we are developing an App called 'Digital Cognitive-System Solution'. This online App will allow you to accumulate your own answers over time and provide you with feedback and insights that are unique to you and your situation. This system will allow you to probe your own profile to increasingly greater depths, helping you to understand the awesomeness that is you as you define and achieve your personal goals.

We believe people will like this tool and find it a fun and constructive way to track and monitor their own progress as they shape their behaviours to achieve what they want out of life.

If you would like to be kept informed you can sign up and be notified when it is released.



## MORE INFORMATION & READING

Damasio, A. (2014). Antonio Damasio on the autobiographical self and why it evolved. F. Mendes and C. R. Oliveira, Vimeo. Autobiographical Self, Damasio

Spencer-Scarr, D. (2015). Digital Engagement: Personality Is The Context Of The Text. Proceedings from the 12th Annual Meeting of the Document Academy, Sydney, University Press Akron.

**How we engage with technology leads some individuals to advantageous digital management but others become disadvantaged. This makes digital engagement socially significant.**

Diane Spencer-Scarr

*Diane is a systems specialist focusing on digital engagement and the second order cybernetic relationships that result from the intersection of human and networked technology.*

This report flows from the research and work of Dr Diane Spencer-Scarr who has studied how we engage with technology and why this is changing us and our societies. There is no other issue that is more universal and transformative at every level. Some of the results have been startling and counter intuitive.

She found people who were successfully exploiting technology were doing simple things that anyone could copy. She believes these ideas should be shared. In this and other publications you will find ideas from her research that could benefit you the world in an age driven by digital technology.

Diane's background was in the creative arts, education and business before she moved to academic research. She has an impressive list of publications and a distinctive name so a quick visit to Google will reveal her work!

