

# TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION OR PROBLEM

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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.*

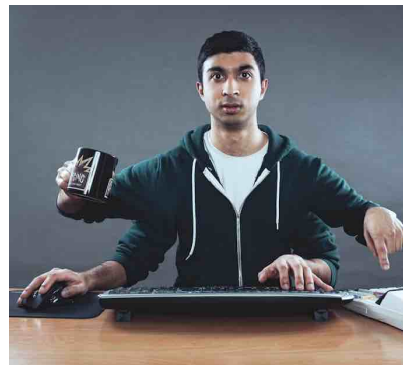
## THE SOLUTION IS FOUND IN THE PROBLEM...

Digital technology is creating problems for individuals and society in general. Many of my posts have pointed this out.

Sadly, most of those who are victims of technology are not even aware that it is a problem. And many of those who have found the solution have implemented the solution so successfully that they have forgotten or cannot remember that there was a problem.

It is as if there is a vague awareness things are not right but not much clarity about what it is.

The reason for this is that the solution is actually found in the problem. By this I mean that while technology is indeed causing the problem, it is also partly the solution.



If we are truly aware of what technology is doing to us and our troubled relationships with it then the technology starts becoming the solution and it is no longer a problem.

Let me explain this with a practical example. Tom finds that the mobile phone is constantly interrupting his work and is causing him stress and loss

of productivity. But he feels compelled to answer it every time it rings. He finds that if he leaves it ringing he is equally stressed. *The mobile phone is the problem!*

Now if Tom develops his internal system awareness he may well find that within his personality he has a high sense of duty, co-operation or propensity to anxiety. He will also now know that each time the mobile rings he has a bio-chemical reaction which stimulates his physiology and supports these upper level behaviours amplifying his responses that lead to increased stress.

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If Tom also develops his external system awareness he will know that he can do a range of things to his technology that will work symbiotically with his unique personality. For example if he has a high sense of duty he could filter his incoming calls by allocating ringtones that denotes categories, he can prioritize callers and only interrupt his work if the call is of a sufficient priority.



If he is high in co-operation then allocating ringtones to specific people or groups of people will help him satisfy his compulsion to answer all calls when they come in. He can just take those that matter the most immediately and have a message that politely says all calls will be returned by the end of the work day.



If Tom has a known propensity to anxiety he can even divert all calls to voicemail saying that all calls will be returned by the end of the work day. This will give him time to emotionally prepare and categorize calls which he can return at his optimum time.

The more aware you are of systems and understand the nested nature of systems in digital engagement the greater your potential to take back some control and manage the system to suit yourself.



In summary then, you begin by becoming aware of systems and how some systems (technology) are interacting with other systems (you). By understanding what is causing the relationships between the interacting systems you will start seeing what it is that you need to change to get you moving in the direction you want to go. The surprise here is that the technology-tools to help you take back control are in the very same tools that are causing you trouble.

## NESTED SYSTEMS

There are two major components to digital-engagement: the individual taking part in the engagement and the digital networked technologies with which the individual is engaging.

In order to differentiate the two systems, I have chosen to see the skin as the boundary or marker separating the two. I refer to systems within the individual as the 'internal environment' and I consider digital networked technology as being part of the 'external environment'.

There are however instances where determining what is internal and external becomes harder to decide, for example when digital engagement results in the outsourcing of cognitive processing like an excel spreadsheet of Google search. On the other hand, at times technology can become an integral part of the internal system as with 'deep brain stimulation' or 'pace makers'.

From this we begin to see that the relationship between humans and technology is the result of systems within systems that relate to other systems within systems.

## 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 App 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 to our list and be notified when it is released.



## MORE INFORMATION & READING

Beer, S. (May 16, 2012, 22 October). "What is Cybernetics? Conference." Retrieved 22 October, 2015, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJ6orMfmorg>.

Published on May 16, 2012 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.

**Digital engagement is all about understanding nested systems. How systems affect us, how we affect systems and what we can do to adjust them to suit our goals.**

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 and others in a world 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!

