Stage 4, 5 or 6 Unit

TEENS & TECH with Andy Crouch

CPX

UNIT DESCRIPTION	In this unit students will explore the impact of their technology use on their sense of self, the quality of their relationships, and their overall health and wellbeing. The unit consists of a series of Andy Crouch clips which focus on the experiences and challenges faced by high-school students. Recorded in 2022, the clips address a range of relevant topics including 'screen addiction', 'the pressures of social media', and 'the nature and value of true friendship'. Each topic considers the ways in which technology can enhance or corrupt the expression of identity and the experience of relationship.
CHRISTIAN INTEGRATION	Christianity provides an objective criteria to evaluate the risks, benefits, and costs of our technology use. It helps young people to navigate their access to, and use of, communication technologies, by offering a realistic estimation of human nature and a framework for responding to the most common abuses and misuses of technology that young people experience. The Bible prioritises the importance of developing and sustaining healthy relationships., and while technology has the potential to enhance the quality of these real-world connections, it also has the capacity to amplify the human propensity to exploit and manipulate others. Any understanding of technology, and any strategies for healthy engagement, need to acknowledge its seductive nature, examining how it creates addictive and selfish patterns of behaviour, equipping students to develop mature and effective attitudes towards their technology use.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	− How significant is the impact of smart phones and social media on the wellbeing of teenagers? − How does the Bible's teaching on human relationships apply to modern technologies? − What limits and strategies do teenagers need to be able to use communication technology to enhance wellbeing?
TOPICS COVERED	- Devices v Instruments? - Superpowers v Your Own Powers - How to Disconnect without being Left Out - One Big Thing to Change - Icebergs v Ocean Liners - How to Build Real Friendships - How to Break Screen Addiction - The Universal Problem of Distraction *This unit is designed so that you can choose the topics and learning activities that will be most helpful for where your class is at. Each clip and the accompanying resources can be used individually, or you can build a small unit in any order or combination of topics.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	- Students will evaluate the impact of different forms of technology, including social media and screen usage, on their health and wellbeing. - Students will apply Christian principles to understand and propose solutions to the challenges posed by modern technology. - Students will create a personal action plan to manage their technology use effectively, incorporating strategies for maintaining balance between digital and real-world activities while considering spiritual and personal growth.
SUCCESS CRITERIA	- Students can demonstrate a thorough understanding of the effects of technology on various aspects of their lives. - Students can explain the kinds of strategies and limits that are needed to help them flourish in their device use and app engagement. - Students can develop a technology use action plan, including specific strategies and goals which will contribute to their overall wellbeing.
POSSIBLE ASSESSMENTS	**Research Task** – individually or in small groups, students explore one aspect of how technology impacts their daily lives (e.g., screen addiction, social media effects, digital vs. real-world relationships etc.). They identify existing data or conduct their own peer research, then report their findings to the class as a presentation, which should include visual aids and an opportunity for Q&A. Students could also be required to make recommendations for society and/or offer advice to individuals. **Personal Action Plan**: Students develop a detailed personal action plan that outlines how they will manage their technology use to balance their social connection, academic responsibilities, personal development, and spiritual growth. The plan should include specific goals, strategies for achieving them, and methods for monitoring progress and ensuring accountability. Students could also explain how their action plan aligns with their values and goals.
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	Andy Crouch is the author of *'The Life We're Looking For: Reclaiming Relationship in a Technological World'* and he delivered the 2022 Richard Johnson Lecture for CPX. You can watch the full recording of [Disconnected: Why Technology Keeps Disappointing Us](#) (56:35) and feel free to check out the [Andy Crouch Q&A](#) (28:44) as well. We also have a [Life & Faith Podcast](#) (33:56) with Andy that explores the impact of our screen time.

		Resource	Register
Unit Intro	The goal is to get students talking about their perspective on device use, and if possible, to highlight the gaps between what they believe about the risks/benefits/dangers of technology and what they practice in their daily lives. Suggested statements: • Teenagers would be healthier if smart phones didn't exist • I spend too much time on devices • Mobile phones have made the world a better place • 13 is too young to be given access to social media • It's impossible to truly disconnect from the digital world these days	[Human Barometer Activity](#)	
Clip 1	Watch: **'Devices vs Instruments'** – *What's the difference between a device and an instrument? How can I use my phone as more of an instrument than a device?*	Clip: [Devices vs Instruments](#) (1:26)	
Pair-Share	Students do a **Think-Pair-Share** on Clip 1 using the following: a. What is your initial reaction to the video? How much does the *device – instrument* idea make sense? b. Share an example of how you use your phone as a *device*, and another of how you use it as an *instrument*. c. Do you spend more time using your phone as an instrument or as a device?		
Read & Discuss	Students **read** two short articles and **discuss** the following questions: a. How do the arguments in these articles relate to Andy Crouch's words about instruments and devices? b. Discuss the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following quotes from Barney Zwartz's article? • *"So many people, when they feel lonely or anxious, pick up their phone and scroll, but it seems to lead to regret more than relief."* • *"Humans are complicated beings: hearts, souls and minds, created for serious relationships, which screen relationships mostly can only parody."* • *"Humans – embodied, spiritual, emotional, and longing for connection – can never be the same as machines."* • *"Social media can be educational, entertaining and many good things but what it builds is counterfeit community."*	Article: [Social media builds a counterfeit community](#) (2 min) Article: [Thriving in a technological age](#) (2 min)	
Small Group	In small groups students **read** two short articles, **discuss** how they demonstrate the ability of technology, when used as an *instrument*, to help facilitate genuine community, and then they **brainstorm** ideas for a new website or app that could be used as an instrument to help people engage more with the world as human beings.	Article: [Running with the cloud](#) (2 min) Article: [Community next door](#) (2 min)	

Clip 2	Watch: **'Superpowers vs Your Own Powers'** – *Technology allows us to do things which exceed our natural capabilities – it gives us 'superpowers'. In what ways is this good? And how can it be bad?*	Clip: Superpowers vs Your Own Powers (1:20)
Pair-Share	Students do a **Think-Pair-Share** on Clip 2 using the following: a. What is your initial reaction to the video? Does the concept of 'superpowers' make sense? Is it helpful? b. Share an example of when you've learnt to do something difficult over a long period of time. c. How much do you agree with Andy that exercising your own proper powers brings greater joy and satisfaction than exercising the 'superpowers' that technology gives us?	
Read & Respond	Students **read** Andy Crouch's article 'Our tech superpowers are no match for flow', then complete a comparison table between 'superpowers' and 'flow', listing the features of each that are unique or shared. As a group **reread** Andy's last paragraph, and **discuss** what you think he means. **Brainstorm** what it might look like to "choose the fullness of heart, soul, mind and strength" in our everyday lives.	Article: Our tech superpowers are no match for flow (6 min)
Debate	Facilitate a **class debate** on the statement: *'The 'superpowers' technology gives us aren't very good for us.'*	
Clip 3	Watch: **'How to disconnect without being left out'** – *Fear of missing out is a very real problem for today's teens. Many experience an unhealthy attachment to social media, but is there any way to disconnect without being left out?*	Clip: How to disconnect without being left out (1:11)
Pair-Share	Students do a **Think-Pair-Share** on Clip 3 using the following: a. What is your initial reaction to the video? Who do you trust for advice in this area? b. How healthy do you think this side of your life is? How balanced is your device use? c. What rhythms do you already have? What rhythms would you like to develop more?	
Read & Respond	Students **read** 'The art of missing out'. a. Students **complete** a Word-Phrase-Sentence Thinking Routine for this article. b. The class **shares** in pairs or as a group, how they feel about their use of social media and their devices. The areas they are feeling challenged in, or optimistic about, in terms of their device use.	Article: The art of missing out (8 min)
Read & Discuss	As a class **read** 'Before you click'. Students **discuss** any experiences they've had of being 'disconnected' or 'off-grid'. They talk about the emotions they were aware of in this time, what was uncomfortable and what they enjoyed.	Article: Before you click (2 min)

	Lead a **class discussion** around how much 'online' time they need to stay truly connected. They also discuss the most helpful habits which will ensure they use their time on devices in effective and productive ways.		
Clip 4	Watch: **'One big thing to change'** – *Helping students to reflect on where they use their device. A brief clip encouraging students to reflect on the purpose of the bedroom and why it's not a great place to 'corrupt' with device use.*	Clip: One big thing to change (1:14)	
Pair-Share	Students do a **Think-Pair-Share** on Clip 4 using the following: a. What is your initial reaction to this clip? How much sense does it make? b. Do you use your phone in your room? If so, is this something you would like to change? Why or why not? c. Andy sees 'deep rest' as an essential part of being human. How important do you think 'deep rest' is?		
Poster Walk	Facilitate a quiet class discussion by setting up a **Poster Walk** using these suggested questions: • What is the purpose of a bedroom? What is it for? • How do devices impact the quality and quantity of our sleep? • How can devices help us to have healthy sleep habits? • How can our devices help us to grow in our faith? • In what ways do our devices have a negative impact on our rest? • In what ways do our devices have a negative impact on our study? • How can devices help us to truly rest and relax?	Create Posters: Engagement Gallery	
Create	In pairs students **record a short clip** of their own, responding to the question: *'What is one thing you would recommend other teenagers change in terms of their device use? One change that would make a big difference?'*		
Clip 5	Watch: **'Icebergs vs Ocean Liners'** – *Exploring the balance between the private and public sharing of our lives. Considering a healthy balance between what we choose to make public and what we keep private.*	Clip: Icebergs vs Ocean Liners (2:05)	
Pair-Share	Students do a **Think-Pair-Share** on Clip 5 using the following: a. What is your initial reaction to the video? b. What do you think is the ideal balance between the public and private self? How are you going on this? c. How much pressure do you feel to publicise your life for the approval and recognition of others? d. Which parts of your life would you put into the following categories? Public, Private, Personal		
Read & Discuss	As a class **read** the short column 'Khloé, Instagram, and Losing Control', and then discuss the following: a. What is your opinion on how Khloé's responded to the sharing of an 'unfiltered' image? b. How much do you agree with the Tim Keller quote, *"To be known and not loved is our greatest fear"*?	Article: Khloé, Instagram, and Losing Control (2 min)	

	c. If you were a famous influencer, how would you approach posting on social media?		
Create	**Produce** something creative titled 'IRL', exploring the limits of our online identities and the sense of worth we can find in them. (A drawing, digital image, poem, song, short story, drama, etc.)		
Clip 6	Watch: **'How to Build Real Friendships'** – *Has the nature of our friendships been impacted by our constant connection through social media? What are the ingredients of building strong and enduring relationships with friends?*	Clip: How to Build Real Friendships (2:26)	
Reflection	Students respond to the message of the video by writing down one statement that they thought was true, one comment they may not agree with, and one question that they now have.		
Group Share	Facilitate a **Human Barometer** activity using the following statements: • Using social media improves friendships • Social media helps teenagers to build confidence • Modern technology makes it easier to have many connections, but harder to build deep friendships • Healthy friendships experience disagreement and hurt • Forgiveness is an essential part of all healthy relationships	Human Barometer Activity	
Reflect	Students complete this sentence 'True friendship means …' and then share their response with the class.		
Extend	Students **read** ONE of the articles 'Loneliness and the cost of true community' and 'We are all in the social media gutter looking at the stars', and write a 2 paragraph summary reflecting on the difference between connection and community, or connection and conversation.	Article: Loneliness… (9 min) Article: We are all… (5 min)	
Clip 7	Watch: **'How to Break Screen Addiction'** – *The addictive nature of our devices is well known and a familiar experience for most teens. It is possible to get help and develop some intentional strategies to build healthier habits.*	Clip: How to Break Screen Addiction (2:10)	
Pair-Share	Students do a **Think-Pair-Share** on Clip 7 using the following: a. What is your initial reaction to the video? How did it make you feel? b. Which word best describes your relationship with screens? addiction, dependency, occasional misuse, use c. Have you ever taken a break from technology, and if so, did you experience the stages that Andy describes?		
Watch & Discuss	As a class **watch** the short video (filmed during the Covid lockdowns) 'Appreciating the abundance of the ordinary'. **Survey** the class on their personal experience of 'zombie scrolling', 'FOMO', 'time sinks', 'gaming addiction' etc. **Discuss** our natural tendency to miss the significant because we are being distracted by the screens in front of our face. Students **reflect on and share** the last time they enjoyed the 'ordinary'.	Clip: Appreciating the abundance of the ordinary (1:59)	

Research & Respond	Students **research** recent statistics on device use, and **compare** their own habits and screen time to the average. Invite the class to **share** their opinions on what healthy limits for teenagers should look like these days.	
Extend	Students **create** an infographic with the title 'How to break screen addiction – and the benefits of doing so'.	
Clip 8	Watch: **'The Universal Problem of Distraction'** – *How do we ensure that we are truly present with those around us, and able to give our full attention and focus to the tasks we are engaged in, and the relationships we value.*	Clip: The Universal Problem of Distraction (1:22)
Pair-Share	Students do a **Think-Pair-Share** on Clip 8 using the following: a. What is your initial reaction to the video? How big a problem is this for you and your friends? b. Describe a time when you have experienced someone else being distracted by a screen? How did it feel? c. Do you think screen-addiction is a bigger problem with your generation than other generations? Explain.	
Read & Respond	Students **read** the article 'Pay attention, lest we forget how' and **complete** the Values-Identities-Actions Thinking Routine. The author says that *"Encounters with Jesus in the gospels are luminous with this quality of attention – all of them."* Students **rewrite** this thought in their own words and illustrate it with an example from the Gospels that they appreciate.	Article: Pay attention, lest we forget how (5 min)
Extend	As a class watch the TED Talk 'The art of paying attention'. In pairs, students do the activity at the start of the video (1:20 – you may choose to only watch up to 4:30). Students reflect on the experience and discuss: • Did you notice things about your partner that you didn't notice before? • What might be different if we approached all our interactions with people with the same level of focus and attention that we used for this activity? How would that change the way your interactions feel?	Clip: The art of paying attention (13:09)