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## Lower secondary unit

# A balanced approach to using technology



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# A balanced approach to using technology

## Before you start

This unit is designed for students aged 12—13 years.

Before you start this unit it is important that you are aware of what your students, and others in this age group, are doing online and how they use online technologies. For some general information visit the 'What are students doing online?' section at www.cybersmart.gov.au/schools.aspx.

This section provides information on children and technology, including cybercitizen profiles, videos of students discussing their online activities and links to ACMA research regarding online behaviour.

## Teacher background information

The Internet offers a wealth of entertainment opportunities and is also a continually expanding learning resource. It offers an effective way to communicate, collaborate and engage with diverse audiences. Use of the Internet and various Internet-enabled devices has had rapid uptake among people of all ages, but is particularly popular with young people.

Young people can often become consumed with using technology, which leads to difficulties in maintaining a balanced lifestyle. It is essential that young people understand that leading a balanced lifestyle (which can, of course, include time spent using technology) is important for physical, social and cognitive health.

## Unit overview and objectives

This unit aims to help students to:

- understand that leading a balanced lifestyle is important
- recognise that spending too much time engaged with technology can have detrimental effects on other parts of their lives.

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- define what it means to have a balanced lifestyle
- determine whether their use of technology impacts upon their daily activities or their health
- assess their own level of technology use and consider how it impacts on their life.

## Unit duration

The time allocated to this unit will depend upon the prior knowledge and skill levels of your students. It comprises six activities, each designed to take approximately one or two 45 minute lessons.

## Required resources

- Worksheets 1—3
- A3 paper
- 'Jeremy's Friend' video at www.cybersmart.gov.au/wiseuptoit
- Interactive whiteboard (or several computers) with Internet access

## Further information

For more information, contact:

Australian Communications and Media Authority Cybersafety Contact Centre

Tel: 1800 880 176
Email: cybersafety@acma.gov.au

www.cybersmart.gov.au

## Activity 1: What is a balanced lifestyle?

What you will need:

- Worksheet 1: Lifestyle audit

Ask students to think about a typical day in their life. What do they do? Whom do they see? Ask them to share some activities they undertake every day. Now introduce the term, 'balanced lifestyle'. What do students think is required to lead a balanced lifestyle? Record their ideas.

Encourage students to consider:

- Balanced diet
- Adequate sleep/rest
- Physical activity
- Social interactions
- Study/education
- Recreation

Ask students to complete worksheet 1, where they will estimate the time they spend on various everyday activities.

Once completed, students share the results from their audits. Are there activities that they spend considerably more time on than others? What are they? Why do they think they spend so much time on these activities? Did the time allocated add up to 24 hours?

After completing the audits ask students if they believe they are leading a balanced lifestyle or not? Why?

Use the audits of all the students to compile a class graph of the ten most time consuming activities. Are the results surprising to students?

## Activity 2: Technology we use

Reflect on activity 1 and some of the issues that arose from completing worksheet 1. If the use of technology did not arise in activity 1 introduce it now. Ask students to estimate what fraction of their daily life is spent engaging with technology.

Give students ten minutes to write down the types of activities they engage in while using technologies such as mobile phones, computers, televisions, or music players (e.g. iPod). Some examples might include:

- Instant messaging (MSN)
- Texting (SMS and MMS)
- Chatting in public forums
- Social networking (Facebook, MySpace, Bebo)
- Blogs
- Wikis
- Pod or vodcasting (YouTube)
- Virtual worlds and multiplayer online games
- Video and photo-sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr)
- Microblogging (Twitter)
- Watching TV shows or movies
- Listening to music

In small groups, students to choose an activity, or one type of technology, and prepare a report to be delivered to the rest of the class. The report should address the following:

- Who created or developed the technology/ activity (if applicable)?
- A description of the technology/activity and how it works
- Benefits of the technology/activity
- Potential risks associated with the technology/ activity
- Three cybersafety tips for engaging with this technology/activity (if applicable).

## Activity 3: How often we use technology

What you will need:

- Worksheet 2: Technology audit

- Worksheet 3: Self reflection

- Worksheet 3a: Self reflection teacher notes

Ask students to complete worksheet 2 and critically analyse the results.

Once completed, ask students to share the results from their technology audits. Which activities do they spend the most time engaged in? What do they think it is about these activities that encourages/causes them to spend so much time doing them?

Students to create a bar graph (for the computer and/or mobile phone data) to illustrate the amount of time they spend on the various activities.

As a class, create a large graph of the ten activities on which students spend the most time.

After examining the individual and class graphs, ask students to work individually to complete worksheet 3. Later, as a class, revisit the self reflection questions and discuss students' use of the Internet, gaming devices and mobile phones.

# Activity 4: Online and offline relationships—part 1

What you will need:

- A3 paper

Ask students to reflect on the different ways in which they use the Internet to communicate with others. Consider email, blogging, social networking posts, instant messaging, online games, microblogging etc.

Have students consider the various people with whom they have online interactions. Ask students to draw three concentric rings on an A3 sheet of paper.

- Students place themselves in the centre ring.

- In the next ring students record people they communicate with online, but also know in real life. They should also note how they communicate with these people.

- In the outer ring students record people they communicate with online, but do not know in real life. They should also note how they communicate with these people.

The placement of people within the rings should reflect the proximity of their relationship to the student.

Once the students have completed the rings suggest that they review the relationships by asking the following questions:

- Do I communicate differently with people I know in real life compared with people I don't know in real life?

- What things do I share with people online? Are they different for people I know and don't know?

- Are there things I should not communicate to people I don't know in real life?

- Am I posting things publicly that should not be shared?

- How much time do I spend communicating with people online (this includes people I know and people I don't know)?

When the students have completed this activity ask the class to share some of their thoughts about online relationships. Make the point that the people furthest from the centre of the ring are the people with whom we should not share personal information. Emphasise that people we meet online, but who are not known to us in real life, may not be whom they say they are.

Explore the amount of time students are spending communicating online. Ask students to calculate what percentage of their online communication time is with people they know in real life and what percentage is with people they don't know. Then estimate how much 'offline' time they spend with their real life friends each week. Do they feel that their online and offline interactions are balanced?

# Activity 5: Online and offline relationships—part 2

What you will need:

- 'Jeremy's Friend' video at www.cybersmart.gov.au/wiseuptoit
- Interactive whiteboard (or several computers) with Internet access

Watch 'Jeremy's Friend'. It can be found at www. cybersmart.gov.au/wiseuptoit > Resources > Jeremy's Friend.

The video tells the story of Jeremy, a boy who is having a hard time at school and generally feels miserable about life. He escapes his problems by playing online games and building a relationship with another gamer.

After watching the video ask the following questions:

- Why did Jeremy get into playing online games?
- How often would Jeremy play online games?
- Why did he feel the need to make a 'friend' online?
- What personal information did Jeremy provide to his online 'friend'?
- Why did Jeremy think that he had found 'such a good mate'?
- In what ways did Jeremy communicate with his 'friend'?
- What were the mistakes that Jeremy made? What should he have done?
- What are the implications of making 'friends' online whom you do not know in real-life?
- What can you do if you find out that your online 'friends' are not who/what they say they are?
- What did Jeremy mean when giving advice about 'staying tuned'?

Students to discuss the potential risks of forming online relationships with people they don't know. What effect can online relationships have on maintaining a balanced lifestyle?

Consider:
- Use of computers and mobile phones means that people can maintain contact at any time of the day or night.
- Online relationships can cause people to become disengaged with real life friends.
- Online relationships can become all consuming for young people if the person online is telling them everything they want to hear and appears to be the ultimate friend.
- Young people may begin to neglect their study, sporting, or other commitments.

Students to discuss and then write a 'Balanced lifestyle pledge' which outlines what they consider to be the essential components of maintaining a balanced lifestyle.

**Important**

The video used in this activity contains themes that may be disturbing or unsuitable for some students. It may be necessary to seek the permission of a parent/ guardian before viewing it.

## Activity 6: Bringing it all together (assessment opportunity)

Students to plan a one-week balanced lifestyle timetable. It should include all the activities they need and want to do for the week. It may be necessary to recap the discussion from activity 1 and worksheet 1 in order to remind students of what they thought a balanced lifestyle should include. The timetable must contain what they believe to be an acceptable amount of time spent using technology (amongst their other activities).

Students to implement the timetable and (after the week is completed) perform a self assessment. Were students able to follow their timetable for the whole week? Why or why not? What were the difficulties that they encountered? Do the students think that leading a balanced lifestyle, particularly in regard to the use of technology, is something they can maintain into the future?

## Worksheet 1: Lifestyle audit

Name: _____

Perform an audit of your daily activities by filling in the table below. Extra spaces have been provided for you to add any other activities you do each day.

| Activity | Details of activity | Hours per day |
|---|---|---|
| Eating | | |
| Sleeping | | |
| Personal care | | |
| Socialising | | |
| Working | | |
| Being active | | |
| Relaxing | | |
| Studying | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | **Total hours** | |

## Worksheet 2: Technology audit

Name: _____

**Technologies I have at home:**

|  | Yes | No |  | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Computer | ☐ | ☐ | Xbox | ☐ | ☐ |
| Computer I use in my room | ☐ | ☐ | PlayStation / PSP | ☐ | ☐ |
| Internet access | ☐ | ☐ | Wii | ☐ | ☐ |
| Internet access in my room | ☐ | ☐ | Mobile phone | ☐ | ☐ |
| Gameboy | ☐ | ☐ | iPod / MP3 player | ☐ | ☐ |
| DS | ☐ | ☐ |  |  |  |

**The social networking site/s I use:**

| ☐ Bebo | ☐ Myspace | ☐ None |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Club Penguin | ☐ Superclubs Plus | ☐ Other (please name) |
| ☐ Facebook | ☐ Twitter | _____ |

**On my social networking site/s I have:**

| ☐ My first name | ☐ The suburb I live in | ☐ My mobile number |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ My last name | ☐ My school's name | ☐ My street address |
| ☐ A photo of myself | ☐ My birthday | ☐ My sporting club's name |
| ☐ Friends I don't know in real life | ☐ Friends I know through other friends | ☐ Friends I only know in real life |
| ☐ Privacy settings | ☐ A photo of myself in school uniform | ☐ Things I wouldn't want my teachers/parents/ carers to see |

**I play online games with:**

☐ Only friends I know in real life

☐ Online friends – I don't know them in real life

The chat features turned ☐ on or ☐ off

## Worksheet 2: Technology audit

Name: _____

**How I use my computer:**

Estimate how much time you spend on the following activities each week. There are some blank boxes for you to add any activities not listed.

| Activity | Time |
|---|---|
| Surfing the web—for fun | |
| Surfing the web—for homework | |
| Sending emails | |
| Instant messaging / MSN | |
| Webcam chatting | |
| Social networking, e.g. Bebo, Facebook or MySpace | |
| Watching and sharing information—YouTube videos etc. | |
| Word processing / PowerPoint for homework | |
| Playing games | |
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## Worksheet 2: Technology audit

Name: _____

**How I use my mobile phone:**

Estimate how much time you spend on the following activities each week. There are some blank boxes for you to add any activities not listed.

| Activity | Time |
|---|---|
| Text messaging (SMS) | |
| Multimedia Messaging (MMS) | |
| Making phone calls | |
| Downloading ringtones and applications | |
| Listening to music | |
| Accessing the Internet | |
| Viewing movies | |
| Playing games (including online) | |
| Taking photos or video | |
| | |
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| | |

## Worksheet 3: Self reflection

Name: _____

1.  How much time am I spending on these activities for entertainment?

    _____

    _____

2.  How much time am I spending on the computer for homework?

    _____

    _____

3.  Do I sometimes mix homework and entertainment? Does this have an impact on homework?

    _____

    _____

4.  Am I doing other offline activities to balance how much time I am spending online?

    _____

    _____

5.  Am I spending too much time on one Internet-based activity?

    _____

    _____

6.  What times of the day or evening am I engaged in these activities? Do I have time to rest, eat and do offline activities?

    _____

    _____

7.  Do I need to change how I allocate my time to online and offline activities?

    _____

    _____

# Worksheet 3a: Self reflection teacher notes

1. How much time am I spending on these activities for entertainment?

   Key issues:
   - How do students and fellow class members spend their time online?
   - How important is technology to them?

2. How much time am I spending on the computer for homework?

   Key issues:
   - How to use the Internet effectively for homework (sharing ideas such as search strategies, reputable sites etc.).

3. Do I sometimes mix homework and entertainment? Does this have an impact on homework?

   Key issues:
   - How do students and fellow class members balance social and homework time? Do they feel they have the right balance?
   - Is peer pressure a factor of online activities?
   - Does this impede their ability to complete work well?
   - Explore the fact that everyone is different in terms of study styles. Some people seem to do better with regular breaks from study for social interaction, while others are better off completing larger amounts of study before taking a break.
   - Encourage the class to share strategies for managing social and homework demands online.
   - How does their online homework and socialising approach fit with the approach their parents would like them to have?

4. Am I doing other offline activities to balance how much time I am spending online?

   Key issues:
   - What other activities do students engage in apart from technology?
   - What do they think is a good balance? How do they know?
   - What do friends and family think about the time they spend online or using mobiles?

## Worksheet 3a: Self reflection teacher notes

5.  Am I spending too much time on one Internet-based activity?

    Key issues:
    •   Explore as a class how to identify what an 'acceptable time' would be. What are the key factors?
    •   What are the indicators that somebody might be spending too much time on one activity?

6.  What times of the day or evening am I engaged in these activities? Do I have time to rest, eat and do offline activities?

    Key issues:
    •   Explore whether there are issues arising for any students because of the time spent online.
    •   Are there examples of friends or family who seem to be spending too much time online?
    •   How do you help someone who is spending too much time online?

7.  Do I need to change how I allocate my time to online and offline activities?

    Key issues:
    •   General exploration of practical strategies to change students' approach to online activities if the class feels this is necessary.