



The Invisible Computing Company



Device Distraction: Understanding the Problem, Re-Thinking the Solution

The Changing Mindset of Our Relationship with Technology

Overview

Technology and the ways we use it have grown exponentially. But with that growth, society has also become increasingly concerned over the intrusiveness of technology and the resulting social cost. We watch moments unfold on a screen while reality is pushed to the background. We share more (and sometimes more pointed) content and information with our social media networks than we often do in person. In the process, our personal interactions can suffer.

When our concern about technology distraction becomes strong enough, the natural human response is to temper—in this case to turn something off—to subtract or minimize the distraction. We delete or turn off apps. We take our children’s devices away. We put our phones out of sight or try to ‘unplug.’ Even tech companies have tried to address the concern by giving consumers new tools to help us moderate our usage (see Apple’s recent new Screen Time feature, for instance).

But our desire to unplug faces predictable challenges as newer, better technology continues to be adopted and more of our lives and business are online. This can create anxiety about missing out on the latest and greatest—from social media feeds to work updates and breaking information.

The fact is that technology isn’t going away, and the information and immediacy it provides us are incredibly beneficial but can also be disruptive. The problem is rooted in how we have adapted to technology. So while subtraction may offer a short-term reprieve from distraction, our continually growing reliance on technology means we will find ourselves stuck in a constant struggle with adopting more tech while at the same time moderating usage of other tech.

The solution to our technology problem may not rely solely on our own behavior, but instead how technology companies rethink the design and experience technology offers. But, what does that look like? There could be a new mindset of our relationship with technology—one where we shift the focus from trying to make our lives adapt to the technology and instead make technology adapt to, and even dramatically improve, our lives.

To explore these concepts—the impact of technology on daily social life, the effectiveness of technology self-restraint, and whose responsibility it is to adapt—Mojo Vision surveyed over 1,000 consumers in Fall 2018. The goal of Mojo Vision’s work was to explore consumer concerns over the pervasiveness, and sometimes invasiveness, of the technology in our lives. The intention was also to examine the possibilities of a solution that doesn’t involve removal or subtraction, but instead evolves technology in such a way that it is less intrusive, without sacrificing the many benefits provided.

Overall, key findings from the survey include:

54%

While most respondents said they **periodically subtract** devices from their life in one way or another, 54 percent said subtracting technology—namely phones and other personal devices—from their lives didn’t create the desired effect or they were unsure if the elimination had the desired effect

33%

Said **restricting tech** had no eventual effect or that their usage actually increased when they started using their device again

32%

Believe **that people, not devices** are the primary reason for excessive use

65%

Respondents believe we will continue to **rely on technology** more and more

36%

Yet, 36 percent of respondents don’t think there is a solution to problems with **excessive device time** because our reliance will only continue to grow

50%

Respondents think that future technology will **evolve to fit our lives** better

Technology Is Essential to Our Lives

Despite the increasing anxiety over our distraction with technology, most people seem to know and acknowledge that technology is essential to their everyday lives. Whether personal or professional, advancements in technology power communication and productivity at unparalleled levels.

Which Devices Are Consuming Our Time



Respondents say their mobile or smartphone is their preferred device

The Importance of Our Devices



Respondents consider their preferred device to be extremely important to them

How We Most Benefit from Technology



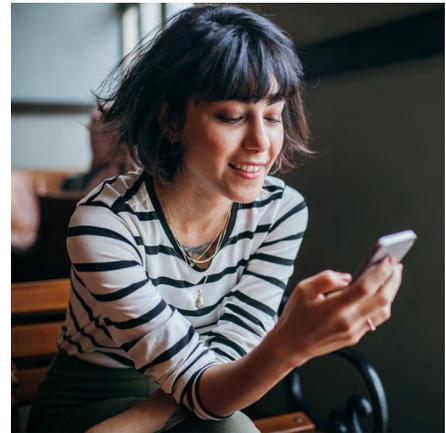
Of people believe that technology makes our lives easier



Of people believe that technology makes business better and more productive



Of people believe that technology makes connecting with people easier



69% would struggle through their day without their preferred device

Our Technology Problem

The scale balancing technology's benefits and its disruption in our lives seems to be tipping unfavorably. The instant access to information we enjoy today can also distract us from important things in our lives—from the relatively benign like checking email at dinner to the clearly dangerous, like texting while driving. The very technology that was designed to improve communication is now often a barrier to meaningful connections. We've become increasingly aware of and concerned by the fact that conversations are interrupted by devices and that devices have taken over more of our routine communication.

Concern Over Tech Distraction



Of people think that devices have become a distraction

Technology Hurting Connections With Each Other



Of people are concerned that technology has hurt our ability to connect with one another

Top three concerns people have over excessive time on devices are:

65% that it hurts the quality of our interactions

63% that it keeps us from being present for important moments

62% that it prevents people from interacting with each other

The Magnitude of Technology Interruptions



Of people say a tech device interrupts them from their daily tasks six or more times per day

Top three situations in which technology interrupts people are

47% when they're trying to concentrate

44% during family meals

40% during conversations with significant others, children or family

What's to Blame?



Of people say social media is to blame for too much time spent on phones or devices

No Way Out



Of people are concerned that technology will overwhelm our lives by becoming more intrusive and creating barriers around how we communicate with each other



92% are interrupted by tech during conversations everyday

Subtraction is the Knee-Jerk Response

When concern over preoccupation with technology and the resulting challenge with connecting with those around grows great enough, consumers set out to fix the problem. But the go-to approach so far has been to subtract—to take the technology away by varying degrees, from cutting down on incessant notifications to powering down completely.

Subtraction Is the Knee-Jerk Response

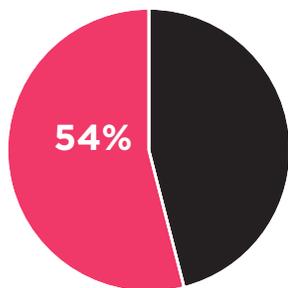
Top four actions that people said they are likely to take when they're concerned that they're spending too much time on phones or devices:

- 46%** set phones or devices to send them fewer notifications
- 44%** set phones or devices to a "do not disturb" or similar setting
- 38%** designate "no phone or device" times for themselves or family
- 37%** turn phones or devices off for a period of time

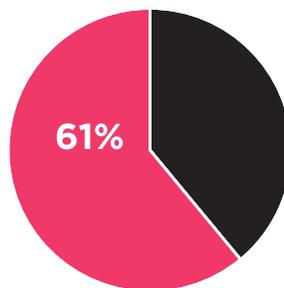
Why Subtraction Is Not the Long-Term Solution

The intent is that the "less-is-more" approach will lead more people to look up from their devices, become more present in the moment, be less distracted when it's most needed, and improve personal interactions. The problem is that people rely so much on technology and the positive changes it has brought, that ignoring or stifling that innovation is simply unrealistic.

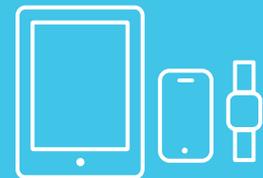
Subtraction Doesn't Solve Tech-Time Problem



54% said subtracting technology—namely phones and other devices—**didn't create the desired effect** or were unsure it had any effect



61% say people's usage and reliance on devices are the problems, not devices themselves



47% say taking away devices doesn't work due to business needs or FOMO

Adapting Technology to Fit Our Lives

Consumers seem to recognize that subtraction isn't an effective solution, and that they're only becoming caught in a vicious cycle of tech addiction and detox. Our reliance on technology is a constant barrier when we try to remove tech from our lives. In fact, most respondents not only acknowledge their reliance on technology, but also know that it will continue to grow. But the good news is that many believe that it's possible to develop technology in such a way that it becomes less intrusive and distracting and eliminates the need for periodic subtraction.

And many believe that tech companies need to do more to address the problem of distracting screens and devices. To date, many tech companies have made some attempts, including recently introduced mobile OS features to help track, manage and control screen time. But some consumers think they need to find a solution that gets to the heart of our distraction.

The Growing Reliance on Technology

36% of people don't think there is a solution to tech distraction problems because our reliance will just continue to grow

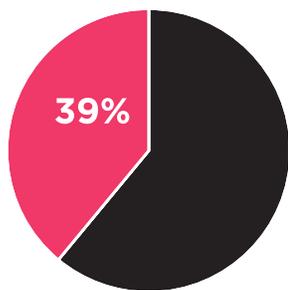
65% of people think we will continue to rely on technology more and more

Change Will Come Through Innovation

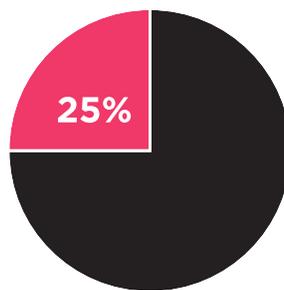
50% of people predict that technology devices will evolve to fit our lives better, rather than people having to adapt their behavior to minimize technology's distractions

Nearly half of respondents (49 percent) think that technology has the ability to improve our lives more than we can imagine

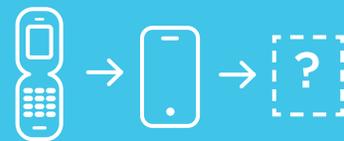
The Pressure on Tech Companies



39% of respondents feel the only solution to device distraction is to rely on them less



25% believe the onus is on technology companies to make devices less distracting



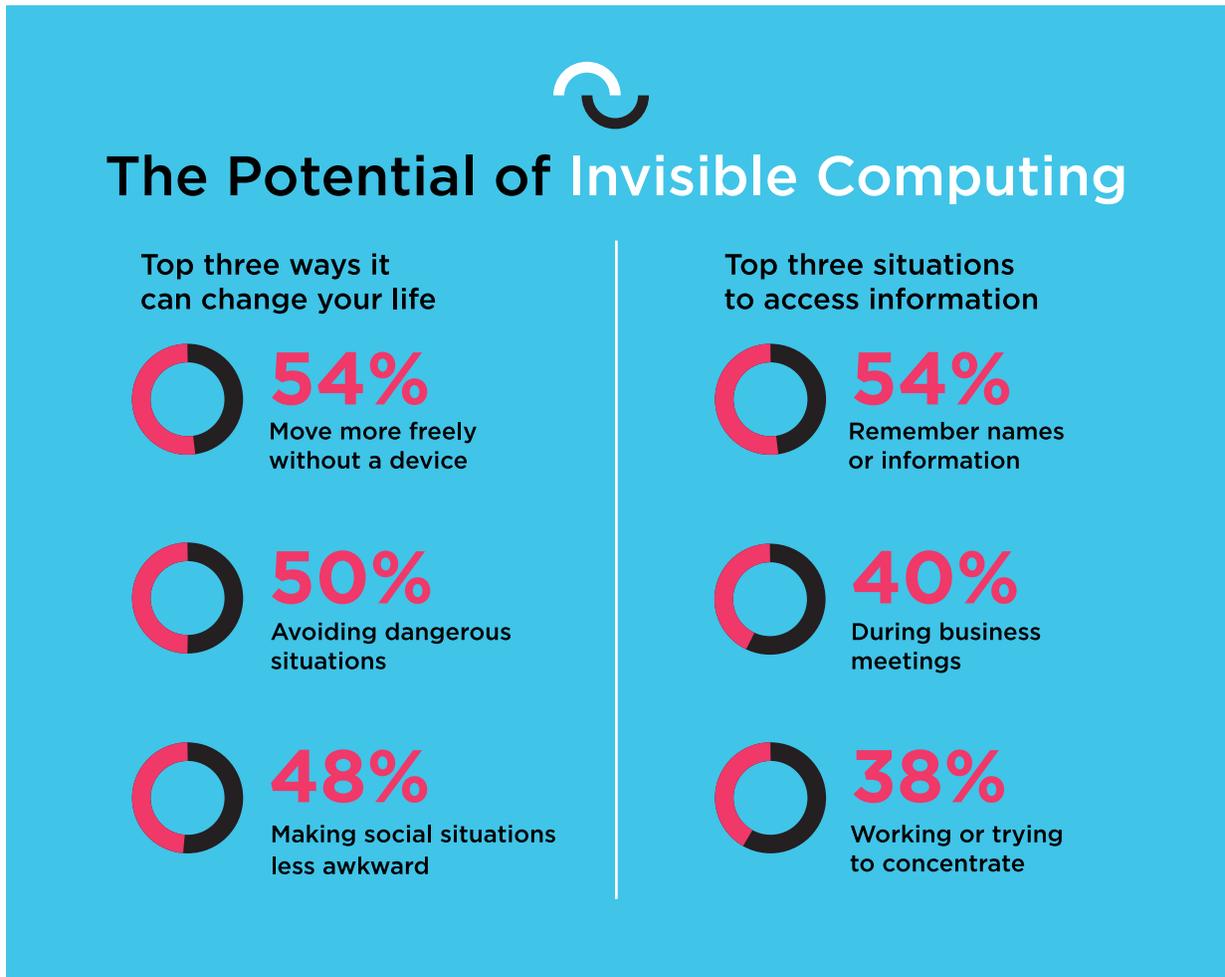
50% believe tech will evolve to fit our lives better and reduce distractions

The Possibilities of Invisible Computing

One of the more interesting areas of exploration in the Mojo study was around how the future form factors of computing devices will influence users' relationship with information. Respondents were asked to consider a future in which technology becomes so small or discreet that it is practically invisible, and to consider scenarios where they could access information that was visible only to them and invisible to everyone else. This future form factor effectively enables people to focus on what or who is around them without losing access to important information they may want or need.

Mojo has termed this concept **Invisible Computing**.

The idea is to rethink the relationship between information access and the devices that provide it. Instead of adapting behavior to fit technology shortcomings, Invisible Computing adapts the technology to best suit how, when, and why we need information. And many feel that it could bring real benefits to personal and professional situations, and ultimately reduce the distraction caused by technology.



Where We Go from Here

Technology has provided immeasurable benefits to our personal and working lives. It enables near-instant access to information, connects people across geographies, and can manage an increasing amount of our personal and professional lives.

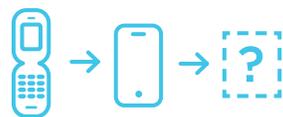
Still, there's no denying that personal devices have become more distracting and obtrusive. And in an increasingly heads-down world, these devices have paradoxically both revolutionized our communication and diminished the quality of communication at the same time.

But even in the face of this paradox, trying to reverse the march of innovation by restricting it, even marginally, is not a realistic approach. It leaves people caught in a cycle of elimination and adoption.

Yet every time we solve by taking away, every time we turn something off or delete or get rid of altogether, we are, perhaps unintentionally, adapting our lives to fit the technology we have.

What if we flipped that approach on its head? The solution is not ironically technology we can see today, but instead may be a technology we won't be able to see in the future.

If we learn anything from the survey responses, we see a growing frustration with a perceived progress that seems to move further from where we want to be. The collective sentiment in the survey is that the respondents are looking for boldness. If that translates into a reimagining of how people fundamentally engage with information, which it just might, then the responses around Invisible Computing become very telling. Now more than ever, consumers are expressing a desire to engage with their friends and coworkers more authentically and safely without sacrificing the access to information they need and expect throughout the day. To achieve this balance between connection and distraction, we will need a new form factor and user experience that goes beyond subtraction.



When the vision of Invisible Computing becomes a reality, it will be a radical departure from the devices we know and a welcome return to the world right in front of us, [eyes up](#).

Methodology

Mojo Vision surveyed over 1,000 consumers in September 2018. This survey was completed online and responses were random, voluntary and anonymous.

About Mojo Vision

Mojo Vision is the Invisible Computing Company, dedicated to developing products and platforms that re-imagine the intersection of ideas, information and people. Instead of being tethered to devices that are increasingly a distraction in many aspects of our lives, Mojo envisions delivering information and knowledge that is immediate, but without the disruption of traditional devices. Mojo is inventing the future of computing—Invisible Computing—which imagines a world where information is there when you need it, technology fades away, and you can freely connect with others in a more meaningful and confident way. Founded by technology experts with decades of experience developing pioneering products and platforms and backed by some of the world's leading technology investors, Mojo believes the future is invisible. Mojo Vision is based in Saratoga, CA.