

Is Technology Keeping You Too Connected?



3 Tips for Reducing Communication Technology Overload

For most Canadians, there is no escaping technology, and, in particular, technology that connects us to work. Between smartphones and tablets and myriad gadgets designed to entertain us, keep us connected, and make our lives easier, Canadians are increasingly faced with technology overload. One component of technology overload is the constant struggle to manage high volumes of communications. Learning how to cut back on constant communication is one way of diminishing technology overload.

Small Steps to Manage A High Volume Of Communication

For many people, using technology for communication and to access email, voice mail, text or social networking is a necessary and useful advantage of technology.

Sometimes, however, the need to stay connected has an emotional base tied to fear, boredom and feeling important. Objectively, if you step back and consider your desire for constant connection you will realize that you do not need to be as frequently connected as you are.

Before you let being tethered to work overwhelm you and interfere with your life consider these 3 simple tips for reducing communication overload.

1) Establish “No Fly Zones”:

- Identify times, places and events where you will NOT check, respond to, or think about work related communications. Learn to be fully present in the moment and offer your attention and contribution.
- Create rules for checking your “Inbox”. During work set aside regular times each day when you will read and respond to messages. Consider no more than 1 time per hour. You may think that this is not frequent enough but for most people very little is so critical that it cannot wait 60 minutes. In doing this you can also increase your efficiency.

2) Divide and Conquer

- Separate messages by creating distinct personal, work, ‘professional’ and ‘other’ emails, directories and social media profiles. Learn the filters available for your different communication tools, and enable them so you can push your messages to different locations and better manage your priorities.

3) **Review, Reduce and Remove**

- Identify frequent senders and ask them to cut back on messages that are not critical and/or wait and batch read and offer one response to their many communications. Suggest they wait until they have several things to share at once.
- When considering all of those great stories, news items and videos you stumble upon or are sent, if the information does not meet your immediate needs do not 'save' them to read/watch later. You can hold them for the day, but by the end of the day just delete them.
- Unsubscribe to subscriptions you do not read. Find a good streamlining tool such as unroll.me that will gather many messages to one location and send you a summary document once per day. Also consider an aggregator such as [Hootsuite](https://hootsuite.com) for your many social media channels.
- Take the time to understand your reasons for needing to be frequently connected. If your reasons are emotionally based re-think them. Easy access to technology can be a boon to creating flexibility and efficiency, but if your needs are emotionally based they will continue to grow and can begin to interfere with your enjoyment of the benefits technology can offer.

Sources:

[2013 Canada Digital Future In Focus](https://www.digitalfuture.ca/2013-digital-focus)