

READ

Read this article about staying in close connection with other people.

Connected!

Most of us hardly **go** anywhere today without a cell phone, an iPad, or a laptop—or so it **seems**. We're **trying** to communicate with each other 24/7. We **want** to be "connected." How **do** we **accomplish** this? We **access** the Internet to contact friends on Facebook or Twitter. We **send** and **receive** emails, **write** and **read** blogs, **call** others and **text** them on our cell phones. We're "available" most of the time. **Is** this constant communication good? I **think** it's positive overall, though there **are** some downsides to living digitally.

My 17-year-old daughter, Allison, **is** an excellent example. She **has joined** the social networking sites Facebook and Twitter. Facebook **has been** around since 2005 and Twitter since 2006. This evening, Allison **is sitting** in front of her computer. She's **reading** posts from her friends and **writing** responses. At the moment, she's **laughing**, probably at a picture or amusing comment. She's **having** a great time, but she still **hasn't done** her homework, and she probably won't finish it until very late tonight.

Then there's my 15-year-old son, Nick. It **seems** that he just can't do without his cell phone, which he's **had** since his birthday four months ago. Right now, Nick **is texting** friends. He's **been doing** that for the last half hour and **shows** no signs of stopping. I'm afraid that Nick **spends** far too much time on his phone, and that it's **affecting** his powers of concentration. Nick's teachers **say** he **isn't doing** well in the classroom. They've **been having** difficulty getting his attention.

Then there's my wife Elena, who **loves** email. After dinner every night, Elena **gets** out her laptop, **logs** on to the Internet, and **reads** and **answers** her messages. These days, she's **getting** hundreds of email messages a week, and she's **having** trouble staying on top of them. This **makes** her feel stressed out.

And then there's yours truly.¹ I **go** to the office three days a week and **telecommute** the other two. When I'm **working** at home, I **write** a blog. (By the way, **do you know** the origin of the word "blog"? It's a contraction of "web log," which is a type of website.) On my blog, I **write** regular entries and **comment** on what others say. I really **enjoy** doing this, but it **takes** up a lot of my time. In addition, I **start** to feel anxious if I **don't update** it frequently.

Staying in near-constant communication with others often **leads** to stress. It **tends** to prevent us from spending quiet time alone, from reading, from enjoying nature. It can be addictive. It can have undeniably negative effects on our ability to work or study efficiently.

There **are** a few downsides to living digitally. **Does** that **mean** we should limit our exposure to the digital world? As with so many other things in our lives, we **need** to put things in perspective. Most people **realize** that there **are** many advantages associated with frequent communication with others. Through texting and the Internet, my family and I **find out** important news almost immediately, and we **stay** in touch with friends we seldom **see**. So would we give it all up? Not on your life!

¹ yours truly: me, myself

AFTER YOU READ

A VOCABULARY Match the words in **bold** with their meanings.

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| ___ 1. We access the Internet to contact friends. | a. see things clearly |
| ___ 2. Should we limit our exposure to the digital world? | b. disadvantages |
| ___ 3. There are a few downsides to living digitally. | c. live without |
| ___ 4. There are advantages associated with frequent communication. | d. clearly |
| ___ 5. We need to put things in perspective . | e. starting point |
| ___ 6. It can have undeniably negative effects. | f. experience of |
| ___ 7. Do you know the origin of the word "blog"? | g. use |
| ___ 8. It seems that he just can't do without his cell phone. | h. connected to |

B COMPREHENSION Read the statements. Check (✓) True or False.

- | | True | False |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Most people today want to be in frequent communication with others. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. The author thinks digital living is positive overall. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. Facebook and Twitter are computer search engines. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. People have been using Twitter longer than Facebook. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. The author's daughter is not having a good time tonight. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. The author's son has had his cell phone for over a year. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. The author and his wife think that digital living is sometimes stressful. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. The author seems to think it's good to spend quiet time alone. | ☐ | ☐ |