Barclays Research Highlights: Sustainable & Thematic Investing

Smartphone Addiction: the need for digital detox

The smartphone is increasingly becoming our go-to medium for everyday life, changing the way we interact, work and learn in contemporary society. However, for all the advances smartphones have made in boosting productivity and convenience, smartphone addiction is on the rise. We define this as excessive dependency or obsession that interferes with daily activities and promotes distress and anxiety upon withdrawal.
Smartphone Addiction: the need for digital detox

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Symptomatology of problematic smartphone use...

- **Dangerous use**: Conscious use of phones in prohibited contexts (e.g. whilst driving)
- **Interpersonal problems**: Social and family conflicts and confrontations, as well as loss of interest in other activities
- **Abandonment**: Continuing the behaviour despite the negative effects and/or personal malaise
- **Harm**: Physical, mental, social, work or family disturbances (e.g. eye strain, stress)
- **Lack of control**: Frequent and constant checking of phone in very brief periods of time, leading to insomnia and sleep disturbances
- **Tolerance**: Increase in use to achieve satisfaction or relaxation to counteract a dysphonic mood
- **Excessive use**: Need to respond immediately to messages, preferring the phone to personal contact
- **Abstinence, dependence, craving**: Anxiety, irritability if smartphone is not accessible, feelings of unease when unable to use it

Source: Cell-Phone Addiction: A Review — Front Psychiatry (2016), Barclays Research
Nomophobia

The irrational fear of being without your mobile phone

"We limit how much technology our kids use at home."
— Steve Jobs

Young children owning smartphones is the new normal
Average age for a child getting their first smartphone

10 in 2016 vs. 12 in 2012

Smartphone Zombies
74% of younger consumers aged 16–24 in the UK use their smartphones while walking

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)
No. of times teenagers check their phones per day

Parents

90

Parents

33

Grandparents

12

When people check their phone...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teenagers</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Grandparents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within 5 minutes of waking</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 5 minutes of going to sleep</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the night</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ways to combat smartphone addiction...

Collective responsibility

Government

- Regulation
- Digital literacy
- Product labelling
- Digital detox clinics
- Mandatory phone registrations

Tech Industry

- Address underage use
- Mandatory parental control
- Interactive digital health apps
- Usage prompts: time limits, ‘take a break’ reminders, automatic grayscale
- Less persuasive technology, embrace ethical design

Parents

- Lead by example
- Monitoring usage
- Education

Over usage is causing...

- Sleep deprivation
- Social anxiety
- Depression
- Impulsive behaviour
- Loneliness
- Obesity
- Sedentary behaviour
- Brain imbalance
- Negative impact on cognitive capacity

Dopamine Loop

 source: Barclays Research
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