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TEXTO:

FROM DOOMSCROLLING TO NOMOPHOBIA: NEW DIGITAL-AGE CONDITIONS RESHAPING OUR BRAINS

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Can you not go five minutes without checking your phone? Do you open Instagram "just for a second" and find that half an hour later you are still there? Do you wake up during the night and the first thing you do is check your notifications? Or do you keep scrolling through bad news even though you know perfectly well it is making you anxious? Welcome to the age of **new digital addictions**.

Experts stress that the point is not to demonise smartphones, social networks or video games. The digital world is now part of our lives and can bring huge benefits. The problem begins when use becomes hard to control and starts to crowd out sleep, work, study, relationships or physical activity. And research is starting to put a name to many of these behaviours.

The first real diagnosis: gaming disorder

One distinction is crucial. Not everything that gets called "smartphone addiction" is officially a disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) has, however, recognised in the International Classification of Diseases, ICD-11, **gaming disorder**. That does not mean that playing a lot is automatically an illness. The disorder is about a loss of control over gaming, a growing priority given to play over other activities and continuing the behaviour despite negative consequences. To reach a diagnosis, there has to be a significant impact on personal, family, social, school or work life, generally for at least 12 months. And it affects a minority of players, not everyone who spends a few hours in front of a console.

Social media addicts: when endless scrolling is the problem

Here the picture becomes more blurred. Social media addiction, often referred to in research as problematic social media use or social media use disorder, is not currently an independent ICD-11 diagnosis like gaming disorder. Nevertheless, the phenomenon has now been widely studied.

The signs are fairly intuitive: wanting to stop and being unable to, spending more time online than planned, feeling a strong need to check social media, neglecting other activities, becoming irritable when you cannot access platforms, or continuing to use them despite the problems they cause.

The American Psychological Association (APA) urges people to pay attention to exactly these behaviours, especially among teenagers. And the figures are striking. According to the latest major Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey by the World Health Organization in Europe, carried out among almost 280,000 young people aged 11, 13 and 15 in 44 countries and regions, 11% of adolescents show signs of problematic social media use, compared with 7% in 2018. The share rises to 13% among girls and falls to 9% among boys.

FOMO: the fear of missing out

One of social media's most powerful traps now has an extremely familiar name: FOMO, Fear Of Missing Out. It is that feeling that makes you think: "What if something has happened in the meantime?", so we check WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, the news and chats even when we have no real reason to do so.

FOMO is not a psychiatric diagnosis. It is, however, a psychological phenomenon studied in relation to problematic use of the internet and social media. A study published in 2024 looked precisely at the link between FOMO and problematic social media use and doomscrolling and found that emotion regulation mechanisms play an important role. In other words: the more we feel we need digital tools to manage anxiety, boredom or unpleasant emotions, the more we risk being drawn into a vicious circle.

Doomscrolling: why we keep reading bad news

Doomscrolling is probably one of the most characteristic phenomena of the smartphone era. It is the compulsive consumption of negative news: wars, disasters, crises, accidents, illnesses, scandals. One story leads to another and your finger keeps scrolling. The paradox is obvious: we look for information to feel better prepared and often end up feeling even more anxious.

Doomscrolling is not an independent medical diagnosis either, but it has become a focus of research into problematic online behaviour. Studies have linked it to FOMO and difficulties in regulating emotions. It can turn into another trap: the more worried we are, the more information we seek; the more negative information we consume, the more our worry grows.

Nomophobia: when the phone is gone, the anxiety arrives

Nomophobia is a word coined from “no mobile phone phobia”. It does not simply mean "I am annoyed that I left my phone at home". It is the term used to describe the discomfort or anxiety linked to the absence of a smartphone, loss of connection, or the inability to access information and one’s digital relationships. Again, it is worth being careful with words: it is not an official standalone diagnosis. It is a studied phenomenon, increasingly entangled with other problematic behaviours. A study published in 2026 analysed nomophobia, social media addiction and FOMO together, identifying the fear of missing information as one of the most important bridges between these phenomena and symptoms of anxiety and depression. between these phenomena and symptoms of anxiety and depression.

The phone, in short, can become a kind of "safety object": if we have it, everything is fine. If it disappears, even just for a few minutes, something feels wrong.

And then there is smartphone-induced insomnia

The issue is not only how much time we spend online. It is when we do it. Scrolling in bed seems harmless: "I will just watch two videos and then sleep". The problem is that those two videos can turn into twenty minutes, an hour or much more. The APA notes that using technology close to bedtime, and social media in particular, is linked to sleep disturbances in adolescents. A longitudinal study published in 2025 found an association between problematic social media use and later depressive and anxious symptoms, with sleep problems apparently playing a partial role in the connection. The authors themselves stress, however, that the relationship is complex and should not automatically be read as cause and effect.

The practical takeaway is easy to grasp: if the phone steals our sleep, the problem is no longer just the time spent in front of the screen.

Social media and the body: the physical impact

The digital revolution is not only about the brain. Hours spent in front of a screen can mean less movement, more sedentary behaviour, eye strain and musculoskeletal problems linked to maintaining the same posture for long periods. The so-called tech neck, the "smartphone neck", is now a common expression for the pain and tension associated with the posture of tilting your head towards your device. It is not a new medical diagnosis, but it describes a very concrete problem: we are spending more and more time with our neck bent over a screen. The WHO, when discussing the effects linked to problematic use of technology and gaming, also highlights sedentary behaviour, musculoskeletal problems, sleep disturbances and eyesight issues.

The brain is not "ill": it is the behaviour that becomes problematic

And this is perhaps the most important distinction. We should not turn every digital habit into a diagnosis. Watching TikTok for an hour, playing a video game at the weekend, checking Instagram or reading the news does not necessarily mean being addicted. Quantity alone is not enough.

What really makes the difference is control and the impact on daily life. The question to ask is therefore not just: "How many hours do I spend on my phone?" It is rather: "Can I stop when I want to? And what am I sacrificing to carry on?" If the phone starts eating into sleep, work, study, relationships, sport or real life, then the warning bell becomes much more serious.

The new frontier: a possible "social media addiction"?

Research is pushing further. In 2025, a group of researchers proposed criteria for a possible classification of Social Media Use Disorder, identifying loss of control and a deterioration in everyday functioning as central elements. Among the possible criteria, they also discuss a preference for online interactions and FOMO, but we are still in the realm of research, not facing a new official diagnosis. This is exactly where the future battle lies: understanding when a technology designed to capture our attention stops being a useful tool and starts to turn into a behaviour that is hard to control. The real problem may not be the smartphone itself. It may be the fact that we have built a digital world that is able to tell us, every few seconds: "Hey, look at me. You have missed something".

Source: From doomscrolling to nomophobia: new digital-age conditions reshaping our brains | Euronews

QUESTÃO 01 (1,0)

A partir do texto em inglês, qual o significado correto em português padrão de “new digital age conditions reshaping our brains”? (1,0)

(A) Nova era digital condicionando e remodelando o cérebro.
(B) A era nova digital que recondiciona o nosso cérebro.
(C) Novas condições digitalizadas que modelam o nosso cérebro.
(D) Novas condições da era digital remodelando nossos cérebros.

QUESTÃO 02 (1,0)

Quais são alguns elementos do diagnóstico de transtorno de jogos? Escolha a alternativa incorreta. (1,0)

(A) Continuar a jogar apesar das consequências negativas é um dos elementos que demonstram o transtorno.
(B) Jogar muito e passar várias horas na frente da tela automaticamente demonstra o transtorno.
(C) Para chegar a um diagnóstico é preciso haver um impacto significativo na vida em todos os seus aspectos.
(D) Para diagnosticar o transtorno é preciso no mínimo 12 meses de perda de controle sobre a vida como um todo.

QUESTÃO 03 (1,0)

O que o estudo de 2024 descobriu sobre o FOMO e sua conexão com o uso das redes sociais? Escolha a alternativa **correta**. (1,0)

(A) FOMO é classificado oficialmente como um transtorno psiquiátrico.
(B) O medo de ficar de fora não tem relação com a busca de acalmar a ansiedade digitalmente.
(C) Mecanismos de regulação emocional, de tédio, de ansiedade influenciam FOMO.
(D) Ferramentas digitais são sempre eficazes para reduzir o tédio sem riscos.

QUESTÃO 04 (1,0)

Segundo o texto, qual o significado de *doomscrolling*? (1,0)

(A) Doomscrolling significa o ato de ler notícias constantemente em busca de informação.

(B) Doomscrolling se refere à ansiedade de se manter bem-informado e atualizado.
(C) Doomscrolling é uma descrição física de como usamos a internet nos *smartphones*.
(D) Doomscrolling descreve a tendência de navegar na internet em busca de notícias ruins.

QUESTÃO 05 (1,0)

Quais são alguns sinais de que alguém pode estar sendo excessivamente dependente do seu smartphone? Escolha a opção **incorreta** (1,0)

(A) Quando a pessoa fica chateada por ter esquecido o celular em casa.
(B) Quando o celular se torna um objeto de segurança.
(C) Quando a pessoa sente ansiedade por ter esquecido o celular.
(D) Quando a pessoa necessita acessar, constantemente, os relacionamentos digitais.

QUESTÃO 06 (1,0)

O que significam as palavras “coined”, “in short” (*Nomophobia*) e “practical takeway” (Smartphone insomnia)? Escolha a alternativa **correta** (1,0)

(A) Valorizou, por baixo, entrega prática
(B) Cunhou, em resumo, conclusão prática.
(C) Cunhou, simplesmente, a prática de entregar.
(D) Emprestou, resumindo, concluindo.

QUESTÃO 07 (1,0)

Quais são os efeitos físicos do uso excessivo de redes sociais? Escolha a alternativa **incorreta**. (1,0)

(A) Distúrbios do sono.
(B) Problemas de visão.
(C) Distúrbios depressivos.
(D) Problemas musculoesqueléticos.

QUESTÃO 08 (1,0)

Que pergunta você deve se fazer sobre o seu uso das redes sociais? Escolha a alternativa **correta**. (1,0)

(A) Quantas horas eu passo no celular acessando as redes sociais?
(B) Devo parar de acessar o Instagram e ler as notícias?
(C) O que estou sacrificando para continuar a acessar as redes sociais?
(D) Devo parar de usar o *smartphone* e de ser *gamer*?

QUESTÃO 09 (1,0)

O que significam: “eating into”, “the warning bell”, “a new social addiction”? Escolha a alternativa **correta**. (1,0)

(A) Devorar, o sino de alerta, uma adição social.
(B) Interferir, badalar, uma adição social.
(C) Devorar, o badalo, um novo vício social.
(D) Interferir, o sino de alerta, um novo vício social.

QUESTÃO 10 (1,0)

De acordo com o último parágrafo, quais dois elementos foram identificados como centrais para a possível classificação do Transtorno de Uso de Mídias Sociais? Escolha a alternativa correta. (1,0)

(A) FOMO e uma preferência por interações online.
(B) Perda de controle e deterioração do funcionamento diário.
(C) Tempo excessivo em frente às telas e problemas de sono.
(D) Ansiedade e problemas de saúde física.