

Emerging Technology Committee

Harness Technology:
Technology is a neutral tool that can be used for good or evil. When it can be practically used in a God-honoring way, we will adopt it.

Key Team Members – Mark Streitmatter (Strategic Owner), John Wiegand, Isaac Funk, Jon Moser, Jonathan Sauder, Lucas Frank

Our Focus

- Monitor emerging technologies
- Ongoing presentations to Elder Body
- Provide information to equip the church
- Speak into the cultural and spiritual impacts coming out of technology space
- Resources
- Create content to teach and teach the teachers in communicating the impact these technologies can have in our lives
- Speak into the differences between Technologies and Worldviews, and their ties
- Take the lead to be more “out in front” of some of these topics vs reacting



Cryptocurrency, Social Media,
Mobile Phones, Gaming, Quantum
Computing, Digital Security, Data
Privacy, AI ..Other





Technology in Our Lives: Opportunities and Cautions



Philippians 4:7, which states:

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."



What are some positive uses of a Smart Phone?

- Video, Audio, and text Communications
- GPS and Navigation
- Emergency Situations
- Education and Learning
- Health and Fitness Tracking
- Banking and Financial Services
- Photo's and Video's Memories
- Business and Productivity
- Bible and Spiritual Content

Video, Audio, and Text Communications

Smartphones revolutionize how we connect with others, enabling seamless communication across distances.

- **Instant Connectivity:** Video calls, voice chats, and texting keep us close to family, friends, and colleagues.
- **Global Reach:** Apps like WhatsApp, Zoom, and FaceTime allow communication worldwide.
- **Accessibility:** Features like voice-to-text and translation support diverse communication needs.
- **Collaboration:** Group chats and video conferencing enhance teamwork and social interaction.

GPS and Navigation

Smartphones provide powerful navigation tools, making travel and exploration easier and safer.

- **Real-Time Directions:** Apps like Google Maps and Waze offer turn-by-turn guidance.
- **Location Sharing:** Share your location with friends or family for safety and coordination.
- **Explore New Places:** Discover nearby restaurants, attractions, and services with geolocation.
- **Public Transit:** Access schedules and routes for buses, trains, and rideshares.

Emergency Situations

Smartphones are critical tools in emergencies, providing quick access to help and information.

- **Emergency Calls:** Instant access to 911 or local emergency services.
- **Location Services:** GPS helps first responders locate you quickly.
- **Safety Apps:** Apps like Life360 or emergency alerts provide real-time updates.
- **Medical Information:** Store health data or access first-aid guides in critical moments.

Education and Learning

Smartphones empower lifelong learning with access to vast educational resources.

- **Online Courses:** Platforms like Coursera and Khan Academy offer courses on-demand.
- **E-Books and Audiobooks:** Access textbooks, research papers, or literature instantly.
- **Language Learning:** Apps like Duolingo make learning new languages fun and accessible.
- **Study Tools:** Flashcards, note-taking apps, and calculators enhance productivity.

Banking and Financial Services

Smartphones simplify financial management with secure, convenient tools.

- **Mobile Banking:** Check balances, transfer funds, or pay bills from anywhere.
- **Digital Payments:** Use apps like PayPal, Venmo, or Apple Pay for quick transactions.
- **Budgeting Tools:** Apps like Mint help track spending and savings goals.
- **Investment Access:** Manage stocks or cryptocurrencies with apps like Robinhood or Coinbase.

Photos and Video Memories

Smartphones capture and preserve life's moments with high-quality cameras and storage.

- **High-Quality Cameras:** Take professional-grade photos and videos with ease.
- **Cloud Storage:** Back up memories securely on Google Photos or iCloud.
- **Creative Editing:** Use apps like Adobe Lightroom or Canva to enhance images.
- **Sharing Memories:** Instantly share moments with friends or on social media.

Business and Productivity

Smartphones boost efficiency and organization for work and daily tasks.

- **Email and Calendars:** Manage schedules and communications on the go.
- **Task Management:** Apps like Trello or Asana streamline project planning.
- **Remote Work:** Access documents and collaborate via Slack, Microsoft Teams, or Google Drive.
- **Time Management:** Use timers and productivity apps to stay focused.

Bible and Spiritual Content

Smartphones provide easy access to spiritual resources for personal growth and reflection.

- **Digital Bibles:** Apps like YouVersion offer multiple translations and reading plans.
- **Devotionals:** Daily meditations and prayers from apps like Our Daily Bread.
- **Community Connection:** Join virtual prayer groups or live-streamed services.
- **Inspiration on Demand:** Access sermons, podcasts, or spiritual music anytime.

What are dangers of overuse on your mobile Phone?

- Mental Health Issues
- Sleep Disturbances
- Addictions
- Physical Health Issues
- Reduced Attention Span and Productivity
- Privacy Issues
- Impact on Social Skills
- Isolation to Loneliness
- Information Overload and Misinformation

Mental Health Issues

Excessive smartphone use can negatively impact mental well-being, contributing to stress and emotional challenges.

- **Anxiety and Depression:** Constant notifications and social media comparisons increase stress and lower self-esteem.
- **Fear of Missing Out (FOMO):** Pressure to stay connected can lead to anxiety.
- **Mental Fatigue:** Overuse of apps or scrolling can cause cognitive overload.
- **Impact on Youth:** Teens are particularly vulnerable to mental health decline from excessive screen time.

Data Source: American Psychological Association (2020). "Digital Guidelines: Promoting Healthy Technology Use for Children."

Sleep Disturbances

Smartphone overuse, especially before bed, disrupts sleep patterns and quality.

- **Blue Light Exposure:** Screens emit blue light, suppressing melatonin and delaying sleep.
- **Late-Night Use:** Notifications and scrolling keep users awake, reducing sleep duration.
- **Poor Sleep Quality:** Fragmented sleep from device use affects restfulness and health.
- **Health Impacts:** Lack of sleep linked to mood swings and weakened immunity.

Data Source: National Sleep Foundation (2021). "The Impact of Screen Time on Sleep."

Addictions

Smartphones can foster addictive behaviors, impacting daily life and responsibilities.

- **Compulsive Use:** Constant checking of apps or notifications becomes habitual.
- **Social Media Addiction:** Dopamine-driven feedback loops from likes and comments.
- **Gaming Addiction:** Mobile games designed to keep users engaged for hours.
- **Consequences:** Neglect of work, relationships, and personal goals.

Data Source: Journal of Behavioral Addictions (2019). "Smartphone Addiction and Its Impact on Daily Functioning."

Physical Health Issues

Prolonged smartphone use can lead to physical health problems from poor posture and repetitive strain.

- **Text Neck:** Forward head posture from looking down causes neck and back pain.
- **Eye Strain:** Prolonged screen time leads to digital eye strain and discomfort.
- **Sedentary Behavior:** Excessive use reduces physical activity, increasing obesity risk.
- **Repetitive Stress Injuries:** Thumb and wrist strain from typing or swiping.

Data Source: Harvard Medical School (2022). "The Health Risks of Smartphone Overuse."

Reduced Attention Span and Productivity

Overuse of smartphones can impair focus and hinder efficient task completion.

- **Constant Distractions:** Notifications and apps interrupt work and study.
- **Multitasking Myth:** Switching between apps reduces cognitive performance.
- **Shortened Attention Span:** Quick content consumption trains brains for shorter focus.
- **Workplace Impact:** Decreased productivity due to frequent phone checks.

Data Source: University of California, Irvine (2016). "The Cost of Interrupted Work: Smartphone Notifications."

Impact on Social Skills

Excessive smartphone use can hinder face-to-face communication and relationship-building.

- **Reduced Empathy:** Over-reliance on digital communication weakens emotional cues.
- **Impaired Conversations:** Phone distractions during interactions harm connection.
- **Social Anxiety:** Dependence on texting over in-person talks can reduce confidence.
- **Impact on Youth:** Teens may struggle to develop strong interpersonal skills.

Data Source: MIT Press (2018). "Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age."

Privacy Issues

Smartphone overuse increases risks to personal data and security.

- **Data Tracking:** Apps collect and share user data, often without clear consent.
- **Cybersecurity Threats:** Overuse increases exposure to phishing and hacking.
- **Location Risks:** Constant use of GPS or location-based apps can compromise privacy.
- **Social Media Oversharing:** Posting personal details can lead to identity theft.

Data Source: Pew Research Center (2021). "Mobile Privacy in the Digital Age."

Isolation to Loneliness

Smartphone overuse can lead to social withdrawal and feelings of loneliness.

- **Virtual Over Real Connections:** Prioritizing online interactions reduces real-world bonds.
- **Social Isolation:** Spending excessive time on devices limits community engagement.
- **Loneliness Epidemic:** Studies link heavy smartphone use to increased loneliness.
- **Mental Health Link:** Isolation exacerbates depression and anxiety.

Data Source: Cigna (2020). "Loneliness and the Workplace: 2020 U.S. Report."

Information Overload and Misinformation

Smartphones expose users to overwhelming information, often mixed with false content.

- **Cognitive Overload:** Endless notifications and content strain mental capacity.
- **Misinformation Spread:** False information on social media spreads rapidly.
- **Decision Fatigue:** Too much information hinders clear thinking and choices.
- **Critical Thinking Impact:** Overuse may reduce ability to discern credible sources.

Data Source: Stanford University (2019). "The Spread of Misinformation on Social Media Platforms."

General Guidelines for Parent & Teen Smartphone Use

A conservative approach minimizes smartphone use to prioritize real-world engagement and safety.

- **Total Screen Time Limit:** Restrict recreational phone use to 1 hour daily or less.
- **Strict Parental Controls:** Use tools like Apple Screen Time to set App limits or Google family link to enforce rules and monitor activity.
- **Encourage Analog Alternatives:** Promote books, board games, or outdoor activities over screens.
- **Weekly Tech-Free Day:** Mandate one full day without devices to reset habits.

Data Source: American Academy of Pediatrics (2023). "Conservative Media Guidelines for Families."



Does your phone
control you or do you
control your phone?

Ephesians 5:15-16:
"See then that ye walk
circumspectly, not as fools,
but as wise, Redeeming
the time, because the days
are evil."

Instruction: This verse
instructs believers to live their
lives with careful thought and
precision, making the most of
every opportunity because we
live in challenging times.

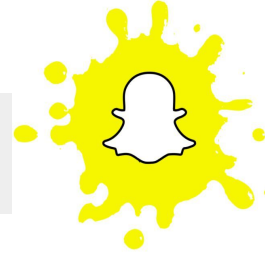
What are we
doing with our
time?

T I M E



Dangers of Social Media for and Parental Navigation Strategies



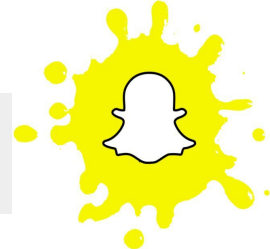


Snapchat - Dangers and Teen + Parental Guidance

Snapchat's ephemeral content encourages constant engagement, posing risks to teen mental health, but it can foster private connections. *The Anxious Generation* highlights its role in driving anxiety through social comparison.

- **Dangers:**

- **Anxiety and FOMO:** Disappearing messages create pressure to stay online constantly, increasing anxiety (74% of teens check social media more than desired).
- **Cyberbullying:** 31% of cyberbullying occurs on Snapchat due to its private, fleeting nature.
- **Body Image Issues:** Filters alter appearances, fostering unrealistic beauty standards and low self-esteem, especially in girls.
- **Addiction Risk:** Half of teens report feeling addicted to their phones, with Snapchat's streaks driving compulsive use.



Snapchat - Dangers and Teen + Parental Guidance

- **Helpful Aspects:**
 - Private communication with close friends strengthens bonds.
 - Creative expression through filters and stories.
- **Teen and Parental Strategies:**
 - **Limit Usage:** Use Apple Screen Time or Google Family Link to cap Snapchat at 30 min/day.
 - **Disable Streaks:** Guide teens to turn off streak notifications to reduce compulsive checking.
 - **Sharing:** Turn off App sharing.
 - **Discuss Filters:** Educate teens on unrealistic beauty standards; ban filter-heavy apps during emotional distress.

Data Source: Amnesty International (2023). "Young People's Concerns About Social Media's Impact."; Haidt, J. (2024). *The Anxious Generation*.

Instagram - Dangers and Teen + Parental Guidance



Instagram's visual focus amplifies social comparison, severely impacting teen girls' mental health, as noted in *The Anxious Generation*. It offers creative outlets but requires strict oversight.

- **Dangers:**

- **Depression and Anxiety:** Girls spending 5+ hours/day on Instagram are 3x more likely to be depressed.
- **Body Dissatisfaction:** 46% of teens say Instagram worsens body image due to curated posts.
- **Cyberbullying:** 42% of cyberbullying incidents occur on Instagram, targeting appearance.
- **Time Drain:** 66% of teen girls use Instagram, with 50% checking daily, reducing real-world activity.

Instagram - Dangers and Teen + Parental Guidance



- **Helpful Aspects:**
 - Creative platforms for sharing art, photography, or hobbies.
 - Access to inspirational content like quotes or educational pages.

- **Teen and Parental Strategies:**
 - **Time Restrictions:** Set 30 min/day limit via Screen Time (iOS) or Family Link (Android).
 - **Content Filters:** Use Instagram's Restricted Mode to block harmful content.
 - **No Public Accounts:** Require private profiles to limit exposure to strangers or cyberbullying.
 - **Body Positivity Talks:** Discuss curated images' artificiality; encourage following positive role models.

Data Source: Haidt, J. (2024). *The Anxious Generation.*; HHS (2025). "Social Media and Youth Mental Health."



TikTok - Dangers and Teen + Parental Guidance

TikTok's addictive algorithm and viral challenges pose significant risks, as *The Anxious Generation* links it to anxiety spikes. It can inspire creativity but demands tight controls.

- **Dangers:**

- **Mental Health Risks:** Teens using TikTok 3+ hours/day face 2x risk of depression and anxiety.
- **Harmful Trends:** TikTok challenges can lead to physical harm (e.g., tics from stress) or risky behavior.
- **Addiction:** 16% of teens use TikTok "almost constantly," driven by dopamine-driven algorithms.
- **Misinformation:** Rapid spread of unverified content confuses teens' critical thinking.



TikTok - Dangers and Teen + Parental Guidance

- **Helpful Aspects:**
 - Platform for creative expression through short videos or music.
 - Educational content from creators like Dr. Julie Smith on mental health.
- **Teen and Parental Strategies:**
 - **Cap Usage:** Limit TikTok to 15 min/day using Screen Time or Family Link; ban during school hours.
 - **Block Challenges:** Use Kids360 to filter harmful content or trends; monitor followed accounts.
 - **Teach Media Literacy:** Require teens to verify content with trusted sources before sharing.
 - **Parental Oversight:** Regularly review watch history to ensure positive engagement.

Data Source: Haidt, J. (2024). *The Anxious Generation.*; Pew Research Center (2023). "Teens and Social Media."



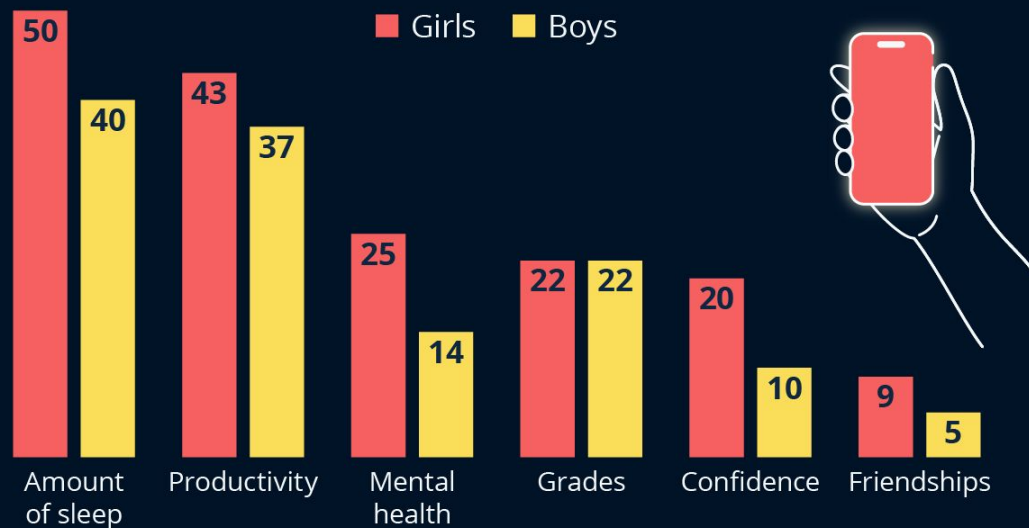


New York State -Attorney
General James' office
explains how Meta exploits
the youth for profit:

- Algorithms that are designed to recommend content to keep users on the platform longer and encourage compulsive use;
- "Likes" and social comparison features known by Meta to harm young users;
- Incessant alerts meant to induce young users to return to Meta's platforms constantly, even while at school and throughout the night;
- Visual filter features known to promote young users' body dysmorphia; and
- Content-presentation formats, such as "infinite scroll," designed to discourage young users' attempts to self-regulate and disengage with Meta's products.

Social Media Especially Harms Girls' Sleep and Mental Health

Share of U.S. 13- to 17-year-olds who say using social media has hurt them in the following ways (in percent)



No answer/other not shown
1,391 U.S. teens (13-17 y/o) surveyed Sep. 18-Oct. 9 2024
Source: Pew Research Center



BeReal - Dangers and Teen and Parental Guidance

BeReal encourages authentic sharing but still poses risks, as *The Anxious Generation* notes pressure to perform for peers. Its minimal design is less harmful but requires oversight.

- **Dangers:**

- **Social Pressure:** Daily prompts create anxiety to post “authentic” moments, impacting self-esteem (74% of teens feel compelled to check social media).
- **Privacy Risks:** 13% of teens use BeReal, often sharing unfiltered locations or moments.
- **Time Distraction:** Notifications disrupt focus, reducing productivity during study or family time.
- **Limited Research:** Less studied, but peer validation cycles mirror Instagram’s risks.

BeReal - Dangers and Teen and Parental Guidance

- **Helpful Aspects:**
 - Promotes unfiltered, authentic sharing over curated perfection.
 - Less algorithm-driven, reducing compulsive scrolling.
- **Teen and Parental Strategies:**
 - **Limit Notifications:** Disable BeReal prompts via Screen Time or Family Link to reduce pressure.
 - **Private Sharing Only:** Ensure teens share only with close friends, not public accounts.
 - **Monitor Usage:** Check in on BeReal activity and ensure safe content.
 - **Discuss Authenticity:** Teach teens to value real-life moments over online validation.

Data Source: Amnesty International (2023). "Young People's Concerns About Social Media."; Haidt, J. (2024). *The Anxious Generation*.

Other Platforms (YouTube, Facebook, etc.) - Dangers and Teens + Parental Guidance

Other platforms like YouTube and Facebook vary in impact, with *The Anxious Generation* warning of overuse risks. They offer benefits but require strict controls.

- **Dangers:**

- **YouTube Overuse:** 19% of teens use YouTube “almost constantly,” linked to sleep issues and reduced activity.
- **Facebook Cyberbullying:** 37% of cyberbullying occurs on Facebook, harming mental health.
- **Content Exposure:** Unfiltered videos or posts can expose teens to harmful content or misinformation.
- **Depression Link:** Heavy use correlates with a 134% rise in teen depression (2010s data).

Other Platforms (YouTube, Facebook, etc.) - Dangers and Teens + Parental Guidance

- **Helpful Aspects:**
 - i. YouTube offers educational content (e.g., tutorials, documentaries).
 - ii. Facebook connects teens with family or community groups.
- **Conservative Teen and Parental Strategies:**
 - i. **Time Limits:** Cap YouTube/Facebook at 30 min/day using Screen Time or Family Link.
 - ii. **Content Restrictions:** Enable YouTube's Restricted Mode; block unverified Facebook pages via Qustodio.
 - iii. **Safe Channels:** Curate educational YouTube playlists; limit Facebook to family groups.
 - iv. **Weekly Reviews:** Check watch/post history to ensure safe, positive engagement.

Data Source: Haidt, J. (2024). *The Anxious Generation.*; Pew Research Center (2023). "Teens and Social Media."

General Teen + Parental Navigation Strategies

The Anxious Generation urges parents to protect teens online, advocating strict controls to mitigate social media's mental health crisis. These guidelines prioritize minimal use and real-world engagement.

- **Enforce Strict Limits:** Cap total social media use at 1 hour/day across all platforms using Screen Time (iOS), Family Link (Android),
- **Create Tech-Free Zones:** Ban devices during meals, homework, and after 7 PM to protect sleep and focus.
- **Delay Social Media Access:** Follow Haidt's advice to delay accounts until age 16, bypassing the default age 13 minimum.
- **Promote Real-World Activities:** Require 90 min/day of physical activity or in-person socializing; enforce one tech-free day weekly.
- **Open Communication:** Weekly discussions on social media's emotional impact; model healthy device use.
- **Monitor Actively:** Use stay connected and engage with phone usage.
- **Educate on Risks:** Teach teens about cyberbullying, FOMO, and misinformation; encourage body positivity and critical thinking.

Data Source: Haidt, J. (2024). *The Anxious Generation.*; American Academy of Pediatrics (2023). "Conservative Media Guidelines for Families."

Colossians 4:5: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time."

Instruction: Believers are encouraged to interact wisely with those outside the faith, using their time well to reflect God's wisdom in their behavior and conversations.





Peaceful - Go outside

Data Privacy and Technology



Galatians 6:10 "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Instruction: This verse encourages believers to seize every opportunity to do good to others, particularly fellow believers, as a way of living out the faith in practical terms.



Resources

- [Social Media Dangers](#)
- [Privacy & Safety for Families](#)
- [Social Media Tips](#)
- [Data Collection and Privacy Concerns](#)

AI and the Church: Tools for the Future, Rooted in God's Love

Wisdom, Spirit, and Technology in the
Next Decade

Where AI is Today

- AI exceeds human capacity in memory, speed, and pattern recognition.
- Works 24/7 without fatigue.
- Can answer questions, generate ideas, and process massive data.
- Churches are use AI for translation, research, administration, outreach.

Where AI is Going (5–10 Years)

- More natural, human-like conversations.
- Integration into education, medicine, and decision-making.
- Personal assistants guiding study, work, and devotion.
- Quantum computing will bring exponential problem-solving power.

AI vs. Human Knowledge

- AI Strengths: IQ-like processing, instant recall, always available.
- Human Strengths: emotional connection, forgiveness, worship, relationship with God.
- AI IQ-equivalent projected to reach 180–200 in the next 5 years (genius level).
- Average human IQ ~100; highly gifted humans ~140–160.

Three Realms of Guidance

- Knowledge (AI excels): facts, research, analysis.
- Wisdom (humans discern): applying truth in love and justice.
- Spirit (God leads): beyond human logic.

Proverbs 2:6 – For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

The Missing Ingredient: Love of God

- AI can speak of God, but cannot know Him.
- Love, worship, and prayer cannot be automated.
- Relationship with God requires stillness, humility, faith.

Psalm 46:10 – Be still, and know that I am God.

Dangers & Cautions

- Over-reliance: mistaking AI's voice for God's.
- Distraction: replacing meditation with quick answers.
- Misinformation: AI reflects human biases.
- Ethical concerns: privacy, dependence, trust.

1 John 4:1 – Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.

A Toolbox for Congregants

- Use AI for: Bible learning, ministry organization, answering questions.
- Balance with: prayer, meditation, Scripture, Spirit, and community discernment.
- Companions can be trained on closed models that can be 95%+ accurate to biblical truths.
- James 1:5 – If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God...

Closing:

- AI is a tool, not a master.
- Amplifies the Church's mission, but cannot replace the Spirit.
- Pathway forward: Knowledge from AI, Wisdom from community, Love from God.
- Let technology serve the Gospel, not replace relationship.

John 15:5 – Without me ye can do nothing.