

New Study Shows Impact of Technology on Relationships

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It's no surprise that technology can have a negative impact on relationships. But David Schramm, Utah State University assistant professor and Extension family life specialist, is particularly interested in how technology interferes with two of the most important spaces for interaction and connection – in the bed and at the



table.

Schramm, also known as USU relationship specialist “Dr. Dave,” said it is inevitable that technology will creep into nearly every aspect of our lives. Because of this, he is on a mission to safeguard these two important areas that must be consciously protected to help strengthen couple and parent-child relationships. He believes these places should be considered off limits when it comes to technology use.

Schramm decided the best way to understand “technoference,” the way technology use interferes with face-to-face interactions with others, was simply to ask people. He conducted a survey of 631 parents across the United States between the ages of 21 and 60 and asked several questions related to technology use. As part of the survey, he created the initiatives K-TOOB (Kick Technology Out of Beds) and K-TOOT (Kick Technology Off of Tables). The initiatives are meant to strengthen relationships between couples and between parents and children.

“Seventy-five percent of those surveyed said that K-TOOB is a good idea, and 88 percent believe that K-TOOT is a good idea,” he said.

Here are more of his survey findings:

- Eighty-eight percent agree that technoference is a big problem in our society, with 62 percent of those surveyed agreeing that it is a big problem in their family. Seventy percent reported that technology interrupts family time at least occasionally.
- Forty-five percent consider technology a big problem in their marriage.
- More than one-third of the adults use technology in their bed every night or almost every night. Even more, 43 percent, report that their spouse/partner uses technology in bed every night or almost every night. That may be why nearly 25 percent feel like their partner’s use of technology in bed interferes with their sexual relationship.
- Fifty-five percent feel like their spouse/partner spends too much time on their cell phone, and 48 percent wish their significant other would spend less time on their cell phone and more time with their children.
- Fifty-three percent believe they personally are on their cell phone too much, while 59 percent believe their spouse or partner is on it too much.
- Six out of 10 adults are concerned about the influence technology has on their relationship with their children, and nearly one out of four wish they had more information about technology and parenting, but don’t know where to turn.
- Thirty-eight percent of adults admit to using technology at least occasionally while eating at home with family members. This only drops slightly to 35 percent who report using technology while eating at a restaurant with their spouse or partner at least occasionally.

Download "Technoference Strategies"

As seen on [Fox 13](#), Dr. Dave recently appeared to discuss "Technoference" (technological interference). Request our resources below to stay informed and to have a happy holiday season.

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“The overall survey results show that higher levels of technology use and technoference adds up to significantly less time spent together as a couple, less satisfaction and connection, and higher levels of depression and anxiety,” he said.

When asked if he has advice for the upcoming holidays, Schramm said, “Talk more, use your phone less, and be where you are.”

Writer: Julene Reese, 435-757-6418,
Julene.reese@usu.edu

Contact: David Schramm, 435-797-8183,
David.schramm@usu.edu

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