Digital Well-being in a Sea of Choices

Interacting with technology as we do every day, it's no surprise that among the many types of well-being we can enhance is digital wellness, as discussed in an FCCS Forward Thinking podcast featuring Scott and Annette Klososky, who are co-founders of Future Point of View, a technology-strategy firm and member of FCCS' Consulting Network.

They point out that while technology allows people to stay connected and conduct their businesses efficiently, it can also be both distracting and draining. Many adults face constant interruptions from devices, and they're expected to be available 24/7 to bosses and colleagues. It's become increasingly difficult to set firm boundaries to distinguish between work and personal time.

Digital well-being is the optimal state of balance and health for people who use technology. It requires being aware of how and when we use technology, and when technology is interrupting our direct experiences and relationships with others. Balancing business efficiency with building relationships is an ongoing challenge in the digital age.

"Interacting with machines for an inordinate amount of time is probably not good for us, whether that's kids with gaming screens or a factory worker with a welding machine," says Scott. "Even on Zoom, when we're ostensibly interacting with another human being, we're interacting with a machine, it's synthetic, and as humans we're not wired for this. We're wired to build trust and relationships person-to-person."

Annette agrees, saying, "When we switch focus from human interaction to our technology, it brings us out of the present and interrupts the intimacy of the interaction."

Especially since the pandemic, professionals at every level are looking for more work/life balance. Achieving that means identifying the reasonable limits of what you can and should accomplish within a work day, and that other work can wait for the next day. Setting boundaries, whether about turning off your phone or reducing video calls, is important for digital wellness. Also important is trading digital interactions for face-to-face meetings, which are more emotionally rewarding and less draining than digital encounters.

Digital well-being is a subset of overall employee well-being [**see related article**], and leaders have a role to play in helping their employees achieve a digital balance in their lives. They should model what they consider to be appropriate digital use, including using the appropriate technology, in the manner and within the hours they expect their team to use. Leaders are responsible for building the digital culture, with feedback from employees, including decisions about how meetings are conducted, what processes are in place, and expectations of availability and responsiveness.

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> — **JEAN CANTEY SEGAL**
> CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER, FCCS

"The concept of digital wellness isn't well understood, but it's going to become increasingly important as the pace of technological change and its impacts keep getting faster," says Jean Cantey Segal, Chief Learning Officer for FCCS who moderated the podcast. "Employers are increasingly taking a broader view of their employees' well-being, and digital well-being should be a part of these considerations, given how much and how often we all interact with technology every day."

Hear more from Scott and Annette on their episode of the **The Forward Thinking Podcast**, and learn more about FPOV at **fpov.com**.