

## Balance between technology and real life: How can parents achieve it?

### 1- Executive Director, Dr. Sharifa Noaman AL – Emadi’s Message

Dear Readers,

In the current digital age, adolescents' addiction to technology has become an increasing issue that negatively affects their mental and physical health, as they spend longer hours on the web, leading to decreased social interaction, and increased emotional attachment to devices. In fact the overuse of technology is informally referred to as “digital addiction,” a broad term used to describe excessive obsessive, compulsive technology use.

The Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), in partnership with Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), the World Innovation Summit for Healthcare (WISH), and the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE), conducted a report on “Adolescent Overuse of Digital Technology” in 2023.

The report showed that the time children and adolescents spend on the Internet during weekdays affects their school evaluation, such that children who scored an average school evaluation spent about 10 hours of their time on the Internet during the weekdays, while children with a good school evaluation spent about 7 hours, and as for those who scored below average, they spent about 7 hours of their time on the Internet during the weekdays.

Meanwhile, parents were asked about the extent of their awareness of their children’s activity on the Internet, and 30% of them reported that they rarely monitor their children’s activity online, while 34% reported that they monitor their children’s activity sometimes, and 16% most of the time, while 5% of participants answered that they never follow their children’s online activity.

Moreover, when comparing the results of interviews between parents and children, there appeared to be a clear discrepancy between viewpoints. While parents emphasize their children’s behavior and the need for them to comply with what parents believe is a good use of technology, children blame their parents for being too busy, and not offering an alternative, so parents use simple strategies, such as controlling or taking away devices.

Likewise, adolescents said their parents use authority to restrict their use of technology when they use it excessively. Digital addiction has become in need of quick and urgent solutions. From this standpoint, we recommend that adults must have a comprehensive understanding of the use of digital technology, and understand its risks and opportunities, to guide children and adolescents’ use of the Internet effectively and healthily. This can be achieved by organizing sessions on the use of digital technology in schools, through regular meetings between teachers and parents, additionally, annual school reports can include information about the impact of digital technology on students.

In contrast, strengthening communication between parents and adolescents is an urgent need. Parents should listen to their children, provide them with the moral and emotional support they need, and increase the time allocated to cyber-physical activities that combine technology with physical activity, which may contribute to reducing some of the negative health effects of using technology. Finally, official authorities must include digital addiction in their awareness campaigns targeting families in Qatar, or develop campaigns dedicated to this purpose.

**Dr. Sharifa Noaman Al-Emadi**  
Executive Director  
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### 2- Related Studies

The “Adolescent Overuse of Digital Technology” report, produced in partnership between the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH), and the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE), summarizes the views of parents and adolescents and experts in Qatar based on qualitative and quantitative data collected and analyzed by the research team.

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### 3- International news and studies

#### Effectiveness of digital learning solutions to improve educational outcomes: a review of the evidence

This paper examines the challenges facing low- and lower-middle-income countries in education, proposing innovative solutions to address these challenges by stakeholders.

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### 4- Regional Studies:

#### Digital transformations in the Middle East and North Africa: a review of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates

This paper seeks to loosely apply the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development framework to three Arab countries – Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – in an attempt to not only broaden our understanding of the digital transformations that these three countries are going through, and hence contribute to the existing literature on digital transformations in the Arab world, but to also understand policy challenges these countries encounter and what should be done to address them effectively.

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### 5- Local news and studies:

#### How do we protect our children from screens at home?

A QF expert talks about the negative effects of increased screen time during the pandemic

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### 6- DIFI News:

#### Arab League, DIFI Launch Joint Report Evaluating Marital Relationships in Arab World



The Arab League Secretariat General launched together with the Doha International Family Institute (DIFI), a Qatar Foundation affiliate, a Joint Report on “Evaluating Marital Relationships during the First Five Years of Marriage in the Arab World” in an event that took place in, Cairo, over three days.

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#### DIFI organized a side event in Geneva on the sidelines of the 56th session of the Human Rights Council



DIFI, in partnership with the Qatar Mission to the UN in Geneva, participated in the 56th Session of the Human Rights Council, in commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF+30)

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#### Launching emotional regulation cards for children with Autism: cooperation between DIFI and Renad Academy



DIFI in cooperation with Renad Academy, launched the emotional regulation cards as part of the efforts of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development to raise awareness of autism in the State of Qatar and provide parents with the tools needed.

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### 7- Video

Part of the launch ceremony of the “Emotion Regulation Cards”, with the participation of specialists from DIFI and the academy, who comprehensively explained the ways and methods of using the cards and their purpose.



### 8- Spotlight

DIFI invites you to take part in shaping the discussion on building new frameworks for “Family and Contemporary Megatrends,” in Doha, Qatar from October 29-31, 2024.

Register your interest [here](#)