THE SCREEN TIME ERA

1 THE PROJECT & OUR VISION

Evolution is slow...

...but our digital behavior transforms fast. As we spend more and more hours in front of our screens, activities crucial for our well-being are often neglected. Internet, computers, smartphones have only existed in the blink of an eye in our evolutionary journey and it comes at the cost of our well being when we spend less time physically active. We want to raise awareness about how much time we spend in front of our screens and how it affects us, in the hope of helping people to become aware of, and change, their behavior.

Our project aims to increase awareness of our digital behavior and work towards SDG 3 - good health and well-being. By increasing awareness about our behavior through information spread and data collection of actual behavior, we believe that people will be able to make a change and find a healthy balance.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

2 THE PROCESS & CHALLENGES

1. Get on the balcony
The initial purpose of the project was to reduce screen time and the plan was to do this through an information campaign in school and through lunch lectures on the subject, as well as starting a challenge among students. However, with the outbreak of Covid-19, this plan changed.

Our project had a clear vision of targeting and lowering the ever increasing screen time. The virus outbreak became a major challenge because now there were conflicting values: digital tools had become the only tool for communication.

We had to revise our vision and mission. Firstly we had to understand what we faced, to be able to counter it.

2. Identify the adaptive challenge
The process of identifying the challenge consisted of two steps. Immediately, we stepped into ourselves and analyzed our own behaviors. Secondly, we conducted a survey to determine others' perception of the situation.

We distributed a survey on social media, asking about screen habits, as well as physical activity habits before and after the pandemic outbreak. About 90 answers were collected and we could identify changes in behavior that we felt the need to raise awareness of.

3. Regulate distress
It is quite natural for individuals to be more comfortable when things are predictable, since we all have a need for consistency. But the situation with Covid-19 created a need for change and the process of change are often related to uncertainty and distress. This was something that we wanted to help out with through our project.

The intended information campaign also had to change its format, why we started an Instagram account, @screentimeera. This account became the core of the project as we switched to digital platforms. We have, since the start, posted small prompts to think about keeping balance between physical activity and screen time, as well as using the benefits of screens, like for social interaction.

Digitalization deprives us of protective factors against mental illness, such as sleep and physical activity and therefore we are feeling worse than we should be.

- Anders Hansen

50% of the respondents said they had increased their screen time in the last couple of weeks and the average increase was 40%.

When asked if they thought they had healthy screen time habits almost half of them disagreed.

4. Maintain disciplined attention
People do not naturally want to confront change. We therefore needed to encourage people to maintain focus despite the tough work associated with changing their behavior. In order to do so we did a collaboration with Anders Hansen, psychiatrist, doctor and author on this particular subject, to spread accessible information about the importance of a balance between screen time and physical activity.

5. Give the work back to the people
In this stressing and ambiguous situation in society, we wanted to empower people to decide what to do in circumstances where they felt uncertain and stressed. Research has shown that people want direction and structure to their work as well as actively participate in problem solving (Northouse 2019).

We therefore started a collaboration with SCRIIN, an organisation trying to raise awareness to the importance of having a balance between screen time and physical activity. Through their app we invited people to become a part of the solution. By becoming aware of our habits and behaviors we are able to make a change of our own.

6. Protect leadership voices from below
After introducing the collaboration with SCRIIN, we got feedback from followers that they did not understand the application and it's features. It's important to listen and be open to the ideas of people who may be at the fringe when performing adaptive work.

We gathered the feedback and got the opportunity to further develop the app together with SCRIIN, and created new features and functions. Many believe that it's only the big actors that can solve the adaptive challenges, and it has therefore been of utterly importance for us to show that every voice matters.

3 THE RESULTS

What have the participants experienced since they started following our project?
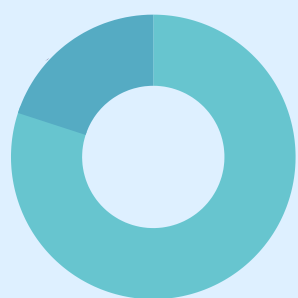
80% of our attendees report they have reflected about their balance between screen time and physical activity.
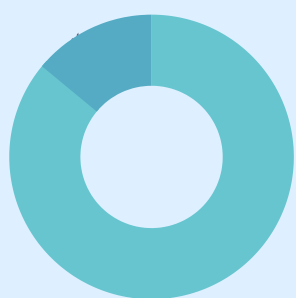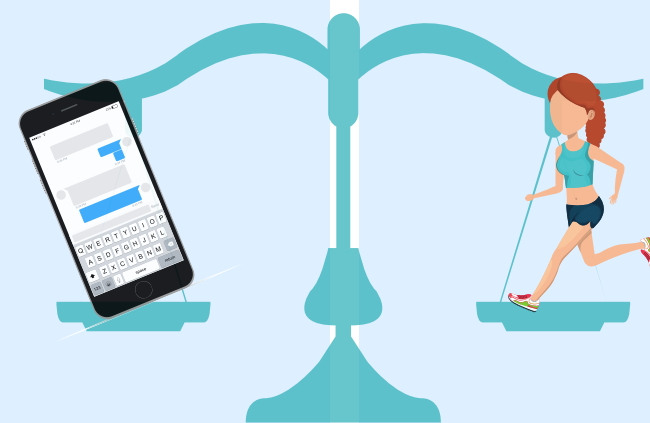
86% feel that they have improved their balance between screen time and physical activity.

100% of the participants found our information campaign to be insightful.

Source: survey at @screentimeera

The insight of my daily amount of screen time was alarming.

- The Screen Time Era Attendee

Despite the challenges and changes, we have throughout the project, aimed to raise awareness of the excessive time we spend in front of our screens and what problems this could cause us.

The main impact of the project has been to make the participants aware of their distribution between screen time and physical activity. In our qualitative interviews with attendees, several reported they were shocked by their amount of screen time. 80% of our attendees reported they had reflected about their balance between screen time and physical activity since they joined the initiative, and 86% felt that they had created a healthier balance.

4 THE FUTURE

The large extent of interest and response the project has attracted so far, tells us that this is a substantial topic and an issue important to adress. Many people are becoming aware and concerned about their screen time, which means that there is potential to truly make an impact in this matter.

In order to scale up the project we will continue to improve the SCRIIN app to make it more user-friendly. We see great potential in the application and we will provide them with the insights that we've got from the project, both from trying it out by ourselves as well as feedback from other users.

From our Instagram account, we could see that interactive stories and informational videos works, and those learnings will be handed to SCRIIN to provide them with guidance of what they could do on their own social media.

We also feel that our initial idea of gamification may have a high potential of getting large traction. We've seen that people tend to commit more when one is held accountable in social settings of friends or colleagues for example, in our own groups, making it a favorable direction if we were to scale up.

Our well-being is at stake. We need to find a balance between screen time and physical activity and reclaim control of our digital behavior.
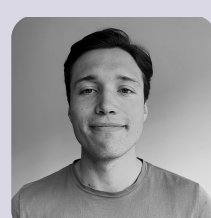
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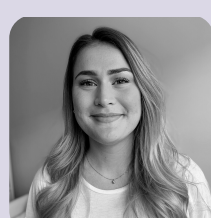
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Thanks to our partner

SCRIIN.