

## The Digitally distracted, the Informationally overloaded & the self-seeking Nay-sayer

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In an HBR article titled, “Conquering Digital Distraction”, I saw a link that read, “Download these exercises for fighting distraction”. Out of curiosity, I clicked on it and Voila!!! There it was.... like a DIY kit for improving ‘YOUR ATTENTION, PRODUCTIVITY, ENERGY AND HAPPINESS’. Looked and sounded like a sneak peek from a publisher trying to sell his latest recipe collection. But hold your breath, it was HBR and not a Harper Collins or a Wiley or a Rupa publishing co..... The article cites a few researches conducted by folks from Information Overload Research Group (Ah! How creatively coined!!!), there are more research studies cited in there, by techies and psychologists from well-known universities.

All of them say how our abilities to focus, memorize, retain information, work productively etc. have come down due to this perpetually connected mode that we operate in today. How we are constantly bombarded with information and how that is leading to a reduction in our ability to analyze and synthesize information. They have even put a number to this ‘DECREASE IN EFFICIENCY’, \$997 billion annually in the United States alone..... after all substantiating a claim with some number adds to its credibility..... and the claimant’s bank balance as a result of consulting opportunities to rectify the supposed ‘DROP IN THE CORPORATE WORKER’S EFFICIENCY’.

My view is that people are hyper-ventilating about the ill effects of information overload & the connected world. I'm sure the nay-sayers said the same about the Printing Press in the 16th & 17th centuries & about Telephony in the 19th century. Knowledge from around the world in books..... at home????? What an unnecessary INFORMATION OVERLOAD???? Telephones at home????? What an INTRUSION OF PRIVACY?????..... Get it?????

It's a part of human progress, the nay-sayers always try to puncture holes in the wheels of progress..... for so-called intellectual recognition..... But fortunately, they are proven wrong. History bears ample testimony to that.

The so-called knowledgeable oldies say “Today’s youth cannot recollect even a phone number told to them a minute back. I could rattle off the telephone numbers of my uncles, aunts, cousins, the whales and the donkeys..... when I was their age” .... That’s megalomania at its peak. Who cares? Today’s youth has a memory retrieval facility in all the devices that they carry (at least one of them is with them at all times), so why bother occupying your brain’s valuable real estate with information that could be stored outside, might as well use that precious human resource for something more productive and meaningful. Technology is helping free up the power of the human brain, so don’t curse it, use it, release yours too. Accept change and move on.....