

Electronic invasion already happening

EDITORIAL

By **HUNTER COLE, LIAM MARTIN and BEN WOODLAND**

TWENTY years ago, when the internet was gaining use by the public, it was intended to be a way the world could become more connected.

It opened numerous opportunities for people to form relations, learn and overall create a more connected, informal world.

Just a few decades ago no one had access to the amount of technology available today. Even basic computers were out of most children's reach, but now they fit into the palms of our hands.

According to a marketing study done by Alloy Media, the average tertiary student in 2009 spent about 12 hours a day engaged in some sort of device and media (computers, iPod, TV, Xbox, phone etc). Those hours have increased to 15 hours a day in 2014.

This constant stimulation will surely have an effect on our bodies. For example, now that texting has become the most popular way to communicate, our thumbs and fingers might become longer.

Today, it's not uncommon to see almost every child or teenager hooked to their smartphones and other devices.

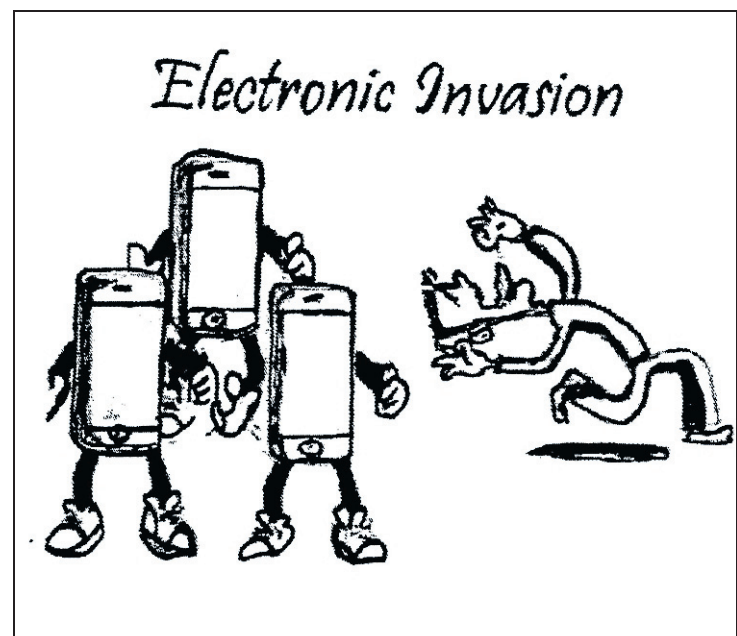
At Thornton Public School over 72 per cent of children in year 5 and 6 own an electronic device. Of these students, 69 per cent own a laptop and 55 per cent own a desktop computer. Fifty-five per cent own a digital camera and 52 per cent own an MP3 player.

Students use technology for gaming: 63 per cent of surveyed students play adventure and action games; 55 per cent play fighting, shooting and strategy games; and 50 per cent play arcade games. These games are played over 10 hours every week.

It's time to ask if too much technology is bad for us.

People use phones and other devices to get work done quicker, any time and anywhere – from the gym, to the shops, the bus stop, or at traffic lights. Many see it as a way to make even the smallest window of time productive – or entertaining.

Although electronics can have good and bad effects on us, they are catching family memories and special moments in time – for example, when you have your birthday or attend a wedding your family members might take pictures or videos.



Cartoon: Hunter Cole and Liam Martin



HARD WORK: Finding employment is difficult when there are limited jobs around.
Picture: Sophie Sorensen

Jobless rates on the way up

By **SARAH INGRAM, SOPHIE SORESENSEN, LEWIS BELL and BRODIE MULLEE**

EVERY day, more and more people are losing their jobs in the Hunter Valley due to the local labour market weakening.

Over the past 12 months, 19,000 full-time jobs have been lost. An average of 1.56 million teenagers were classified as unemployed. This is the main reason for local unemployment rates to remain above the state average.

Because of this, many families are starting to feel the loss of financial stability.

Warwick, an unemployed resident of Thornton, was "very frustrated" because he felt that he was not being given a fair go.

"I don't feel good about not working, I want to work," he said. "There are not enough jobs to apply for."

Many surveys show during 2014 we are more likely to see the unemployment rates increase further.

The national unemployment rate was at 5.8 per cent as of December 2012. In a month the rate went up to above 6 per cent.

If our unemployment rates continue to advance at this rate, by 2024 more than half of the residents of Australia will be unemployed.

Risk is rising of phones ruining our future

By **MACKENZIE NEWBY, RYLEY KINDLER, JAYDEN MATOS and KAITLIN GEAR**

MORE often these days, people are seen walking around with their phones, consistently playing, texting or networking on social sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

It seems that the younger generation spend most of their social life on their phone.

A recent survey conducted at Thornton Public School, which included students between the ages

of 8 and 12, indicated that 26 per cent of students owned a phone.

Jayden Matos, a year 6 student, said: "It is one of the first things you take out of your pocket, the moment you get to your house and sit down."

The smartphone has great power, but we just need to learn how to exercise more self-control and show more responsibility with them.

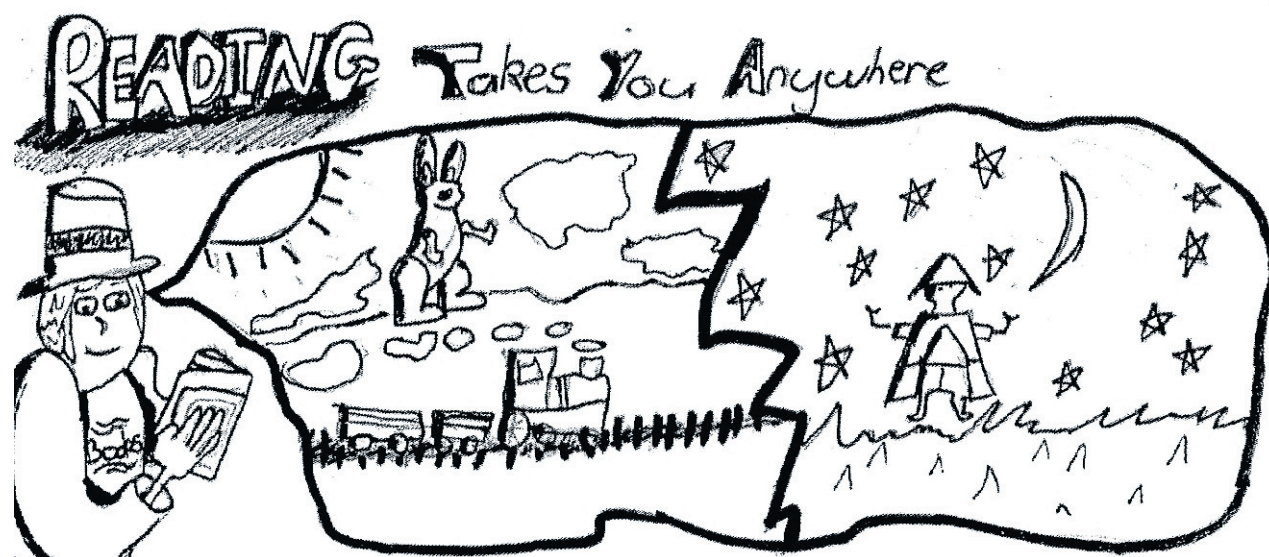


HANG UP: Phones are starting to take the place of real relationships.
Picture: Ryley Kindler

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