

Objective measures of screen time are not significantly related to psychological well-being.

iPhone Screen Time and Well-Being

👤 Lisa Walsh, Annie Regan, Karynna Okabe-Miyamoto, Andrew Villamil, & Sonja Lyubomirsky
🏛️ University of California, Riverside (UCR)

INTRO

- Some researchers have found that self-reported screen time has a meaningful negative impact on well-being (Twenge et al., 2018). Others argue the effect is small and unnoteworthy (Orben & Przybylski, 2019).
- The present study seeks to determine whether objective measures of screen time are related to well-being.

METHODS

- $N = 135$ UCR undergraduates ages 18-26 ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.33$, $SD = 1.39$; almost all iGen).
- All owned an iPhone (using iOS 12) and used social media at least 4-6 times a week.
- Participants visited the lab and completed self-reported measures of well-being:
 - Affect Adjective Scale (to assess positive affect [PA] and negative affect [NA])
 - Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)
- RAs then helped participants capture screenshots of the “Screen Time” section on their iPhones (last 7 days), which were transcribed and appended to survey data.

RESULTS

- We created a standardized overall well-being composite (PA + NA – SWLS) and ran a series of correlations to test whether objective measures of time spent on one’s iPhone (as recorded by Apple Screen Time) are related to well-being.
- Results are shown in Table 1. Objective measures of iPhone screen time were not significantly related to well-being.
- Some correlations trended negatively (e.g., Social Networking apps, Instagram), others positively (e.g., Game apps).

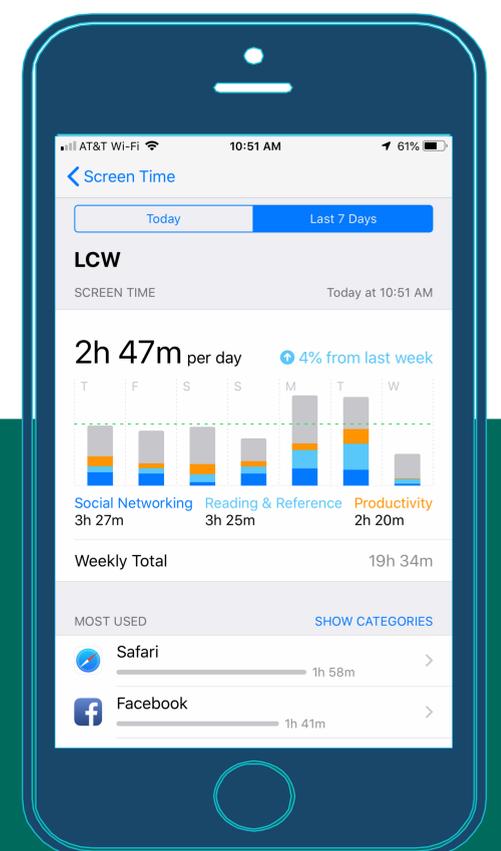
DISCUSSION

- Both lay people and scientists alike are concerned about how smartphones and social media are affecting young people’s well-being.
- Yet our results imply the effect is less impactful than previously posited.
- However, our sample size may not have been large enough to detect small effect sizes.

Table 1. Selected correlations between well-being and iPhone screen time

Variable	<i>r</i>
Screen Time Per Day	-0.07
Creativity apps	-0.15
Entertainment apps	0.10
Game apps	0.27
Other apps	-0.24
Productivity apps	-0.07
Reading & Reference apps	0.20
Social Networking apps	-0.16
Weekly Total	-0.07
Facebook	0.07
Instagram	-0.21
Snapchat	0.01
Twitter	-0.10
Tinder	-0.15
Pickups Per Day	-0.03
Total Pickups	-0.02
Notifications Per Day	0.04
Total Notifications	0.04

All $ps > .05$ (adjusted for multiple tests)



Take a picture to download the poster

