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Sarah Quagliareillo
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**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

*How your smartphone may be ruining your life*

**Story by Sarah Quagliarello**
There is a constant stimulation that comes with the countless social media outlets and communication devices that are with students everywhere they go on college campuses. The University of Richmond is no exception. From the televisions in the Tyler Haynes Commons with a continuous stream of ads and promotions, to the laptops carried to and from the library and class, even students’ modes of relaxation and procrastination can be found on screens. From “Netflix and chill,” to video games, right down to the cellphones that are always cupped in our hands, there is no escaping the influence of technology.

Students frequently use their phones throughout the day, even when they are with other people. Such a paradigm shift is bound to have social repercussions, and cellphones clearly have an effect on face-to-face relationships.

Of course, people are bound to feel differently about the prominence of technology’s impact. While some people find it hard to observe the positive outcomes of this social shift, others think the benefits outnumber the costs.

Thomas Mullen, director and professor of public affairs journalism at Richmond, illustrated these apparent pros and cons when he said, “I think that cellphone usage can be a mixed bag.”

“The obvious negatives are the disconnection we have with each other and the world around us,” said senior Amelia Mitrotz, an anthropology and leadership studies double major. “We freak out when we don’t have our phones on us, because we essentially don’t know how to exist without them anymore. They distract us; they are a detriment to our social functioning. It’s a huge problem.”

Mullen furthered this point. “Our students — my students — apparently cannot live without their phones,” he said. “I would not just limit that to students; it appears that a lot of people can’t live without their phones. I think the average time it takes a student to get on a phone after class is about 1.2 seconds. Most people check their phones before they get up.”

Some students do not even wait until the end of their classes to check their phones, sneaking glances during discussions or a quiet moment. It is common for teachers to discourage these interruptions, because it takes the student out of the intellectual mindset and can be not only distracting, but disrespectful.

Kevin Pelletier, an English professor, said, “I have also had several students check their cellphones during class, and I cannot emphasize enough how volcanically angry this made me.”

These three are not alone in their observations. Another Richmond student, Marin Kobb, shared her insight into the irritation that can come with having to take a backseat to a phone conversation. “Ultimately, I don’t think the benefits are worth the costs... Not in the slightest.”

— Amelia Mitrotz

“Ultimately, I don’t think the benefits are worth the costs... Not in the slightest.”