Phubbing Phenomenon: "So Close, Yet so Far"

11/02/2018



Paradoxes of new Technologies of Information and Communications. To establish a middle ground in its use is imperative today.

"Do your bed, do the dishes after breakfast and go to the supermarket", says the mother to her young son before leaving fast for work. Ramón listened careful, but in the afternoon when she returns from work all is still untouched. He seated at his computer and hooked to his cell phone forgot about the world around him.

New technologies of information and communications (ITC) have been a real "blessing", mainly in professional environments. It would be unthinkable today to carry out certain actions or tasks, because in fact it has been "humanized", the intellectual work, so to speak.

But as any stage of life it has brought its inconveniences. Besides addiction in which many have been "entangled", it has also generated the so-called phubbing (term formed by the words ***phone*** and ***snubbing***), which can be defined as the act of an individual or person to ignore its environment to concentrate on his mobile, either a cell phone, tablet, portable PC, or another smart device.

The phenomenon has spread worldwide, our country is not foreign to that, therefore it’s evident today in public places where, especially, Wi-Fi spots have been enabled. Many youngsters "fall" to the gifts of online communication and put little or no attention at all to what surrounds them.

Unplugged from the Surroundings and Connected to the Net

According to the information reviewed in Internet, phubbing appeared in year 2007 - at the same time smart phones appeared - and among the causes of its "birth" could be mentioned the addictive state new technologies have in a psychological and indirectly physiologic field, causing lack of attention to the surrounding environment and focusing on the virtual world.

Carola Junquera, student of Media and Entertainment Management, in an Argentinean university, explains it in an easy way to understand: "Disconnected from the surrounding environment and connected to Internet, so close, yet so far"

At present - she explains - technological devices occupy a significant space in the life of many individuals, especially adolescents. They don't know their life without internet, without television, without computers, without video games and without cell phones because they were born in the digital era.

"Before going to sleep, in class, in family reunions and/or with friends, in traffic, in times of waiting and at leisure, without caring where, when, neither with whom, youngsters are always facing a screen, in permanent contact with Information Technologies and Communication (ITC) ".

A connoisseur in the topic considers that on one hand ITC are tools that facilitate permanent contact with the other, and at the same time, they hinder the encounter body to body. Likewise, he affirms that its responsible use allows communication in all senses; it widens its reach and keeps the interpersonal encounter.

Does Connection imply Communication?

Object of study and theme of several investigations, phubbing has found a better "accommodation", in fact, in the child-juvenile public, in those born in the era of telecommunications and computer science development.

Some specialists acknowledged that today they are losing values and communication capacity among the youngest, although it’s undeniable that there is a greater access to information.

"(…) face-to-face communication still holds a fundamental weight for social interaction, but communication using ITC is more and more frequent. We find the virtual world simpler, faster, more effective and even almost more natural", stressed psychologist Arturo Clairá.

As Clairá says one of ITC’s main benefits is that it brings closer those who are faraway, but one of its threats is that they drive us away from those we have closest.

Specialists stand out the difference between being "communicated" and being "connected". "At present - he says - we are very connected and not very communicated. ITCs connect us, but they don't communicate us and as consequence we miss the real world, true experiences, close bonds, of looking at each other’s face, we miss our life."

The "abuse" of new technologies, a problem of today

According to consulted data, one out of four people suffers a problem related with the abuse of new technologies. Although it’s recognized that ITCs impact both youth and adults alike, it’s not less true that youths take the lead, for everything explained earlier.

Specialists and doctors see greater danger in the seclusion in which “fall” the limitless consumers of ITC and, in certain way, they establish a near relationship with the so-called Syndrome of Autistic Spectrum. The youngest tread into the world of video games and, sometimes, they are not able to tell the reality of what they see on their screens.

With the question of what to do, some say a review of themselves, since almost always children imitate all they see at home, besides the point of whether they were born with the new technologies. It’s recognized that the personal example is "the best remedy" against this sort of behaviors.

Psychologists, psychiatrists, academic, and teachers from Special Education endowed with great importance - for this and other behavior dysfunctions - to the realization group activities and outdoors, to face-to-face verbal communication, to team work, to collaborate with other people, to practice sports. In short, to socialize and share personal experiences.

Let’s keep in mind that there’s a wonderful and unique world outside mobile screens, computers and other smart devices due to the possibilities its apps provide us. There are tiny details, simple pleasures that change life.

Amilkal Labañino Valdés / Cubasi Translation Staff