

Digital Wellbeing

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Abstract— In the previous decade, technological developments increased tremendously in the area of mobile technology. Although smartphones have changed our lifestyle by bringing convenience and some positive alterations, its negative impact adversely affects most of the users in many ways. The harsh effect of too much internet and smartphone usage has been in talks for years now. And with the smart phones commanding more and more of your attention as many years keeps passing and recent studies have showed that using the smart phone could harm your mental health especially of teenagers such as depression. As a solution of such problems, Google introduced Digital Wellbeing, an initiative to help people disconnect and reduce their smartphone usage. Google has provided a stand-alone application for Digital Wellbeing as well as many other features and tools on most of its applications to support the idea.

Key words: Digital, Wellbeing, Smartphone, Google, Tools, Feature, Application, Notifications

I. INTRODUCTION

[1] At Google I/O 2018, Google announced Digital Wellbeing. It's a brand new approach to OS and application development that'll equip users with tools to help them find a better balance between their digital and real worlds. [1] Digital Wellbeing is Google's initiative to help you understand your tech usage and help take back control of your life if that's something you feel you need. It's a combination of many things, including data and insight, tools, applications, content, and more, all of which are designed to help you put the living part of life back into perspective. It's not just one application or one feature. It's an entire idea. It's a lifestyle change. It's identifying and accepting the problem that mobile technology can and does command a ton of our attention in ways that can be unhealthy. Digital Wellbeing, then, is just one part of a bigger home remedy to help treat that root issue. You may think it's silly but look around yourself everyone is so engrossed in their phone that they don't even have time to interact with each other. [3] Google surveys suggest that there are over 70% smartphone users looking for help in disconnecting or reducing their smartphone usage. Digital Wellbeing rolled out with Android Pie's arrival. Although the features weren't 100% ready, Google got people to sign-up for beta test. But now the Digital Wellbeing application is available at Google Play Store. Google said that they're working to ensure that all of their products support Digital Wellbeing. This initiative helps users to get the most out of technology by being more focused when user uses it. It also helps ensure that technology doesn't take away from what matters to users by minimizing distractions caused by smartphone. Digital Wellbeing initiative allows the users to monitor the amount of time they have spent on their phone as well as on individual apps such as YouTube, Twitter and many more applications. The most important point is that Google just provides the tools and

features but the users will ultimately make their own decision whether to use these tools or not.

II. TOOLS AND FEATURES

A. The Daily Dashboard

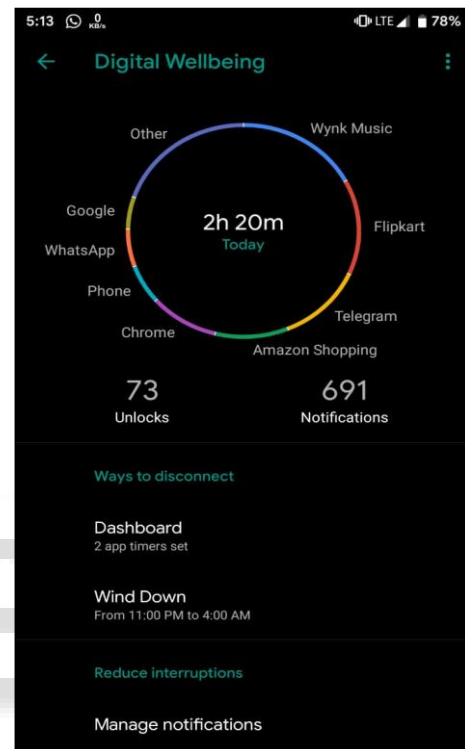


Fig. 1: The Dashboard of Digital Wellbeing

[2] The Dashboard of Digital Wellbeing helps the user to take a peek on the daily usage of the phone and helps the user to understand and track it in an efficient manner. It displays the screen-on time of the phone and how much the basic applications of Google have been used on the particular day. The basic usage list of applications on the Dashboard includes YouTube, Chrome, Gmail, Messages, Drive, Calendar and Others. It also displays the number of times the phone has been Unlocked and the number of Notifications received on the particular day. When the user clicks on the Usage Circle then the proper register of the usage is shown. It not only displays the usage of that particular day, but the previous days too so that the user can track as well as compare his daily usage.

B. The Application Timer

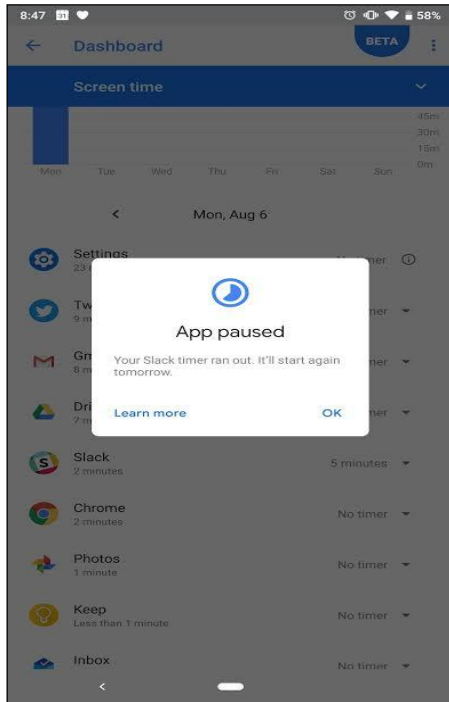


Fig. 2: Paused application after time-out

[2] The most prominent feature of Digital Wellbeing is the App Timer. This feature helps the user to control the usage of different applications. The Application Timer enables the user to set a time limit on different applications as per the requirement to limit the daily usage of the user on those applications. When the Timer on an application runs out, the application becomes unavailable for rest of the particular day. However, the user can remove the Timer after the application goes unavailable as per the requirement. But, this Timer cannot be set on the System Settings and Google Play Store applications because the user might need those applications anytime.

C. Wind Down Mode

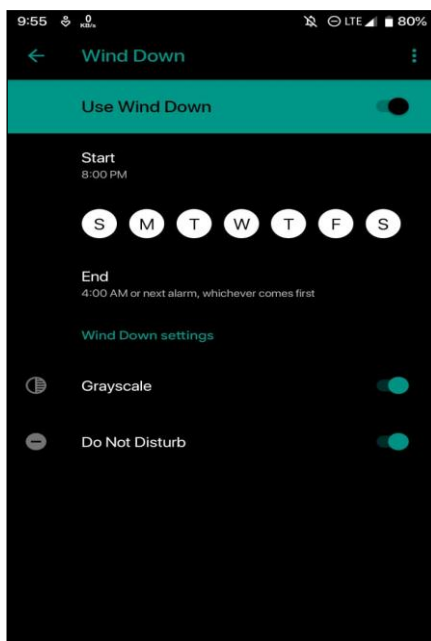


Fig. 3: Wind Down Mode

[2] The Wind Down feature is used during night time. When this feature is enabled all the screen colors gets converted to black and white or gray scale. This feature helps reduce the eye strain caused by the phone and even helps the user to get a better sleep. The feature contains a scheduler where the user can set the start and end time for it as per the requirement to make the user aware that it's too late now and time to go to bed. The feature can also adjust the Do Not Disturb, which is another feature of Digital Wellbeing.

D. Manage Notifications

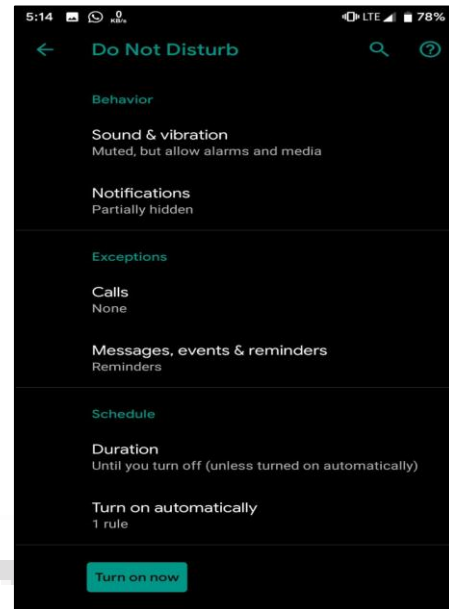


Fig. 4: Do Not Disturb Mode

[2] The user can customize Notifications on the phone. This feature enables the user to snooze or hide unimportant Notifications from different applications as per the requirement. The Do Not Disturb feature allows the user to hide all the Notifications with One Tap. The Switch off work feature turns all the work profiles off, pause the work applications and hide their Notifications. The Scheduled digest feature enables to get all YouTube push Notifications bundled as just one Notification every day. The High-priority Notifications feature in Gmail helps the user to limit mail alerts received and get Notifications only for essential mails.

E. Family Link

[2] This feature of Digital Wellbeing is specially made for parents concerned about their kid's usage of the phone. This application helps parent to set certain digital ground rules for their children. The feature enables parent to manage different applications on their kid's phone. Parent can also have a track of their kid's location and can also control the content their kids see on their phone. Parent are also asked for permission when kid's try to download any application on their phone. It allows parent to track their kid's application usage on phone and set daily screen time limits on those applications. The feature enables parent to remotely lock their kid's phone when the usage exceeds or when it's time to take a break.

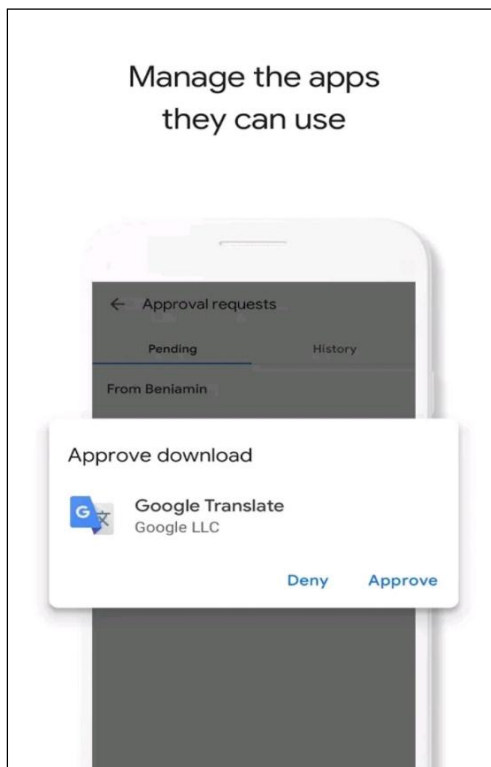


Fig. 5: Family Link application

F. Other Features

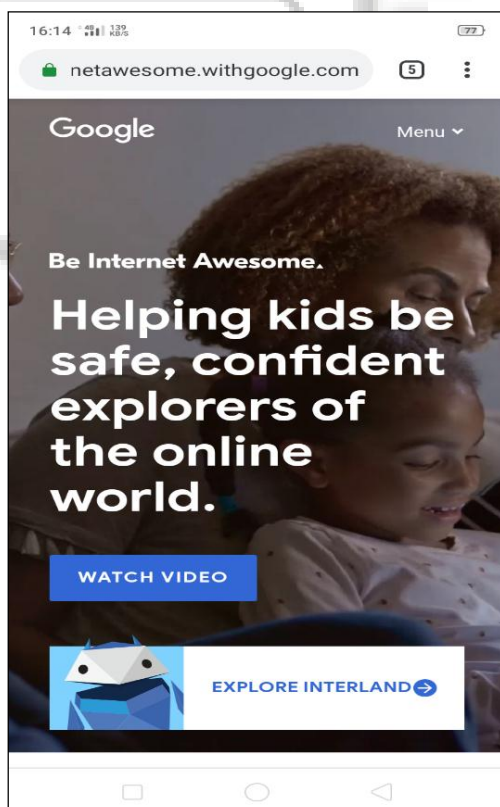


Fig. 6: Be Internet Awesome website

[2] The Time Watched Profile in YouTube gives a closer look about the time the user spends on the YouTube applications. The Take a Break feature of YouTube helps to set a break reminder after spending specific amount of time as per the requirement. The Improve Your Bedtime routine of Google

Assistant enables to activate customizable Bedtime routine – set an alarm, lower the lights and music so that the user gets the feeling that it's too late and time to go to bed. The Be Internet Awesome feature helps kids become smart, confident and safe explorers on the internet. This feature helps them learn the pros and cons of the internet and many more through video demonstration and is now available in 16 countries.

III. FUTURE OF DIGITAL WELLBEING

Google has released many tools and features for Digital Wellbeing since the initiative was announced in 2018. At Google I/O 2019 many new features to be released were announced by Google. [3] The Prioritized notification feature to be released with Android Q will enable users to prioritize their notifications. It will help user set all the notifications as either Priority or Gentle so that only the Priority notifications will make sound or produce vibration. With the Wind Down feature that helps reduce the unnecessary usage of smartphones at night, Google announced the Focus Mode feature that will help users to pause distracting applications that are not necessary at that moment so there will be no notifications by that application and the user can focus on the work at working hours. [3] After the Application Timer the most prominent feature of Digital Wellbeing, Google announced a new feature for Android Q that the user will be able to set timers for not just the applications but the websites as well so as to help reduce the surfing of different websites that can cause distraction. In addition to these new features, Google is also making a number of improvements to the existing features to make sure that they are completely effective and help users achieve what they want to achieve such as, Google is making it easier to track the progress done with the help of the Application Timer, introducing a daily schedule for the Wind Down feature, adding more features to the Family Link application such as time limits on the applications kids use to help parents set digital ground rules and find a right balance of technology for their kids. Google also introduced a feature to Family Link so that the kids can request the parents for more screen-time in case of any important project or homework left to do.

IV. RESULTS

When talked about their smartphones, users all around the globe describe how important it is for communication, navigation, camera, alarm, a payment mode and many more. So, Google doesn't say not to use smartphones but rather be sure when and why to use them. Digital Wellbeing has helped many people disconnect and reduce their smartphone usage since its launch at Google I/O 2018. [3] As a result, in the last twelve months, 1 in 3 people have taken steps to find a balance with their personal technology usage through Digital Wellbeing and about 80 percent of them have reported a positive impact to their overall wellbeing. The initiative is helping smartphone users to be aware of Digital Wellbeing, track their smartphone usage; take actions on excess usage of their smartphones and lets them to control the technology they use. The High-priority notifications of Gmail have eliminated 97 percent of unnecessary notifications on an average. In one study, it was seen that the Application Timer helped users stick to their goal 96 percent of the time. [3]

Wind Down reduced nightly usage of smartphones by 27 percent. Not only these features but many of them are helping the users to walk on the path of Digital Wellbeing and live a tech-healthy life.

V. CONCLUSION

The use of mobile technology comforts the lives of its users, but also has many bad effects such as eye strain, insomnia, headache and many effects due to excess use of smartphones. Digital well initiative allows the users to monitor the amount of time they have spent on their phone as well as on individual apps such as YouTube, Twitter and many more applications. If a user uses the digital wellbeing application, they could set a custom timer for the different apps so that the user can stop using that app down. The user can also see that which app has been use frequently; it also shows the weekly usage of phone. In the dashboard we can see which apps are unlocked and which app has a timer. Digital Wellbeing provides all the tools and features from the Application Timer to managing all the notifications that the user might require reducing its smartphone usage. The idea of Digital Wellbeing is spreading to more and more people across the globe. The research shows that people are getting aware of the usage of their smartphones and this helps them take control of their life and maintain a healthy balance between technology and their lives. Google will be providing more such tools and features over time so that the user controls their smartphones and not get any kind of health issues or disturbance because of technology.

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