

## Constant Interruptions: The Blame Game

*By Jeff Davidson*

The ever-increasing array of technology available to career professionals today accounts for the brunt of distractions we face. Technology, however, has always been with us in one form or another. *Self-management* capability is the deciding factor as to whether or not technology is intrusive.

Smart phones and other mobile devices that connect us to all corners of the globe represent an unprecedented challenge. Concurrently, we must understand and consistently acknowledge that all technology comes with benefits and detriments, as explained by the late Dr. Neil Postman in his book, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*.



### **The Good *and* the Bad**

Technology manufacturers, advertisers, and dealers are adept at helping you focus on the benefits – especially in case you happen to become one of the world’s expert users of the system they offer. How often, however, do you read about the downside of acquiring new tools and technology? In another of Postman’s books, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, he eloquently observes that at the turn of the twenty-first century, it was understandable and even excusable that people didn’t fully understand the impact that automobiles would have on their lives. It was difficult for people in 1912 to foresee interstate highways, drive-in movie theaters, fast-food drive-throughs, and other business and social developments.

Early cars didn’t contain radios or cassette players or, obviously, CD or DVD players. The impact that the automobile had on society was, and continues to be, enormous. Most of the populace lives and works based on some logistical formula related to transportation and, in most cases, that happens to be their automobile.

Flash forward a hundred years and consider the impact of the smart phone on people in general and on accountants in particular. Today, based on Postman’s earlier observations, it’s *inexcusable* for career professionals, as well as the organizations that employ them or that might employ them, to proceed as if smart phones and other communication devices don’t have a massive impact on how people work and live.

## The Threat of Constant Interruption

The ability to gather news, to call, to text, or to instant message virtually anyone in the industrialized world profoundly impacts our ability to focus, concentrate, and do our best work. As cell phone ringers go off in church, at the opera, in movie theaters, and everywhere in between, we are constantly reminded that people don't inherently understand how to manage even the fundamental aspects of the technologies that they have adopted.

Like Pavlov's dogs, we find it immeasurably rewarding to discover, with a few clicks or a few taps, who's gotten in touch with us lately, who's noticed us, and who's acknowledged our existence. From Facebook, to Twitter, to legions of other social sites and social networks, each of us is potentially exposed to more communiques in the course of a day than our forefathers could have conceived.

It's possible to be addicted to nearly anything, including checking for messages, so it's understandable that we face unprecedented challenges in terms of staying focused, addressing the task at hand, and striving for completion. Each of us needs to be more vigilant than ever before in approaching our tasks. Our professionalism, our productivity, and our personal effectiveness depend on it.

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- [How CPAs Juggle Distractions to Focus on Work](#)
- [Get More Done by Doing Less](#)

### About the author:

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