

Reasons Email on Your Smartphone Might Not Be So Smart

by **Steuart Snooks**

— CEO —

Solutions For Success

☎ 0413 830 772 | ✉ steuart@solutions4success.com.au

Might Not Be So Smart

Who is **smarter**? You or your smartphone?

Smartphones are so empowering. They put a world of information at our fingertips. They make it possible for us to send and receive e-mail everywhere we go and at all times of the day. They allow us to keep doing business long after business hours have closed.

But for most people, this hyper-connectivity means that the servant has become the master. Smartphones can be addictive. Otherwise-sane people check their smartphones obsessively, sending and receiving e-mails first thing in the morning, all day long and last thing at night.

So how can we outsmart our smartphones? How can we reap the benefits of connectivity without becoming its slaves?

Happy reading!



Stewart

Might Not Be So Smart

1 It causes **hyper**-connectivity

With email available via our smartphones, we are **never disconnected**, constantly interrupted and always checking email.



Clay Johnson in his book [The Information Diet](#) writes about the similarity between indigestion and infogestion. He compares the poor eating habits so many of us have acquired where we are either snacking all the time or starving ourselves and then bingeing on food. It seems we tend to do the same sort of thing with incoming information and email.

Unfortunately, what happens is that these repeated and rapid downloads of information and data are taking the place of thinking and reflection. Just look at any form of public transport and you'll see the majority of passengers looking at their smartphones rather than using that time for reflection or musing.

All this skipping from one email to another or to social media or an app or a website tends to overdose us with the inconsequential and trivial while we may miss or overlook the essential and important!

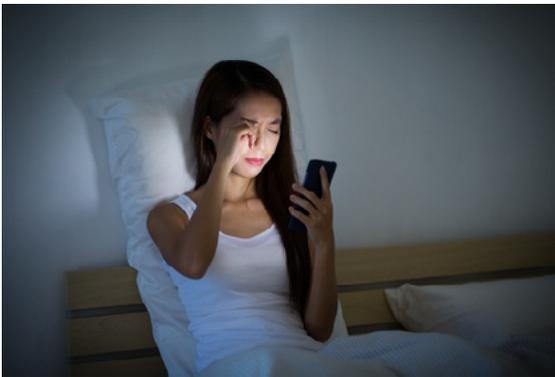
These days the problem is that being so highly connected we risk a serious 'disconnect' – from each other, from what's important, from reality.

Reasons Email on Your Smartphone

Might Not Be So Smart

2 Wrong place, wrong time!

It's difficult to do email well on a smartphone.



The environment is just **too small** ... attachments and documents are hard to access, to manage and to view. Accessing information that might be needed for an adequate reply is more difficult or even impossible.

As well as that, it's very hard to use folders and so a lot of filing that should be done the first time an email is processed is left undone. And probably doesn't get done back at the desk either.

And when we are mobile, we often just don't have the time or mental space to do the thinking required for a complete email response.

The exception, of course, is with short, sharp messages. In such cases, a text message is probably a better option anyway.

7 Might Not Be So Smart

3 A smartphone is the **wrong tool** for email

Email was designed as an asynchronous form of communication but smartphones tend to be used as a synchronous tool.

As a written, digital medium, email is often slower to fully and effectively communicate a message compared with a verbal conversation (phone or face-to-face). Therefore, email shouldn't be used for time-sensitive or urgent messages.

By their nature, these sort of 'urgent' messages also need great clarity – something that is very hard to achieve with email and especially via a smartphone where the message is received 'on the go', often as an interruption and with little time for clarity of thinking.

If the message is relatively simple, short and/or time sensitive, a text or SMS message is a better option for a smartphone than an email.

That's why one of the findings from the Royal Commission into the tragic bushfires in Victoria in 2009 was that bushfire alerts are to be sent out by SMS rather than email – we are much more likely to have a mobile phone with us at such times than to be in front of a computer looking at email!



Might Not Be So Smart

4 Addictive behaviours and short-term thinking

Email on smartphones is another source of interruption and reinforces the addiction of checking new messages.

Each time we check a new text or email message or click like on Facebook we get a small dopamine hit – it feels exciting, it feels good. We get some short term gratification.

We soon become addicted to this (see *The Rise of the Humans* by Dave Coplin for more).

Smartphones also make it easier for managers to change their minds at the last moment: for example, to e-mail a minion at 11pm to tell him he must fly to headquarters for a meeting tomorrow. When managers makes decisions or change their minds at the last minute like this, it is hard to plan effectively for the future (and takes away the motivation to do so).



7 Might Not Be So Smart

5 Mental clutter and **overload**

Getting email on a smartphone only alerts you to issues at a place and time when there is little or nothing you can do about them.

And then the **Ziegarnik Effect** kicks in – we remember unfinished, incomplete tasks much more readily than finished or completed ones. Having lots of emails arrive to the smartphone and not being able to deal with them effectively adds to our mental clutter, making it hard to fully focus on the issues in front of you.

Enough of that leads to feeling overwhelmed, out of control and suffering from stress. And several studies have shown what ought to be common sense: that people think more deeply and retain greater focus and achieve better results if they are not constantly distracted.



7 Might Not Be So Smart

6 It can send the **wrong signals**

Smartphones allows us to now send email from any where, at any time.

However, just because it suits to write and send a message at 10pm at night or on the weekend, what expectations are you communicating to colleagues or staff when the message arrives at their end 'out of hours'?

A growing complaint coming from subordinates who receive email at assorts of odd hours and they simply don't know whether they are expected to respond and take action immediately or if the issue can wait till normal working hours.

Being a subordinate, they assume the worst and action the email sooner rather than later – it might be a bad career move to keep the boss waiting.

In fact, from 1 January 2017, French companies will be required to guarantee employees a "right to disconnect" from technology as the country seeks to tackle to modern day scourge of compulsive out-of-hours email checking. ([See more details here](#))



7 Reasons Email on Your Smartphone

Might Not Be So Smart

7 Work life balance

Having email delivered to your smartphone means you're highly likely to be interrupted after hours and on weekends by work-related email, exactly when you are NOT in a good place to deal with them.



For example, VW in Germany stopped their Blackberry servers sending our email 30 mins before and after work shifts as a result of union's concerns about the pressure on workers to respond to email at any time of the day and their feeling that their work and home lives were becoming blurred.

As mentions on the previous page, some trade unions in some industries in France have successfully pushed for legislation to restrict employees from contacting their employers for a period of 11 hours each day (from 7pm to 6am).

It can be a smart move by employers too - a police sergeant in Chicago sued for overtime pay for having to use his BlackBerry while off-duty!



Reasons Email on Your Smartphone

Might Not Be So Smart

Will Hutton, chair of the Big Innovation Centre at The Work Foundation says “It’s bad for the individual worker’s performance to be online and available 24-7. You do need downtime, you do need periods in which you can actually reflect on something without needing instantaneously to give a reaction.”

Our ubiquitous smartphones also make it easier for managers in one time zone to spoil the evenings of managers in another. Employees find it ever harder to distinguish between “on-time” and “off-time”.

Nowadays, Executives are burdened with two overlapping workdays: a formal one full of meetings and an informal one spent trying to keep up with the torrent of e-mails and messages.

None of this is good for business people’s marriages or mental health. Ultimately, it may be bad for business, too.

Might Not Be So Smart

Find out [More](#)

Why not check out ideas at emaitiger.com.au to get your e-mail folders organised so you can keep your inbox empty and get e-mail under control?

- Is email is central to most of your work?
- Do you feel that email is the biggest time waster & source of frustration in your day?
- Would you like to save an enormous amount of the time & effort you currently spend 'doing email'?

That's where connecting with me might help. I'd like to show you how to master your email & make a real difference to your work and personal life. In fact, more & more clients tell me that what I show them is 'life changing'!

Hi, I'm Steuart Snooks. I work with busy professionals who are struggling to get control of their inbox and master their email. After 10 years as a specialist in this area, I've learnt that email overload is not so much about volume as it is about a lack of a 'process' or a system for managing this critical aspect of everyday workload.

You see, most of us have never been taught how to master the productivity tools we use with our own hands every day. And as our technology delivers ever increasing volumes at faster & faster speeds, it's so important that we learn, right now, how to keep up.

I've found there are **3 key strategies** for mastering email;

- WHEN you check the inbox
- WHAT you do with each message
- WHERE to quickly file and retrieve messages



Reasons Email on Your Smartphone Might Not Be So Smart

If you like, I'd be happy to have quick chat with you about this in more detail. That way, I can get to know you, understand your biggest email challenge(s), give you some advice and discuss options to work together in the future if we are a good fit.

Let's connect

If you're interested, the easiest way to arrange this is for us to jump on the phone for 10-15 minutes. Simply use my on-line calendar to schedule a convenient time for us to hook up.

 [Click to Schedule](#)

I look forward to speaking with you sometime soon!

All the best!



Steuart Snooks

Email Strategist & Productivity Expert

 0413 830 772

 www.emailtiger.com.au

 steuart@solutions4success.com.au

