

TECHNOLOGY, WISDOM & WELL-BEING:

A new Approach of combining the identity and electronic id (eId@I) and ways to facilitate well-being as a means of developing wisdom and happiness in present day youth

Keyword: identity, well-being, wisdom, technology

Abstract

This paper looks at several directions of thought for educators, social and business entrepreneurs, people and organizations dedicated to creating a web of wisdom for the well-being of humans & earth.

We should look at the development of youth in the 21st century with its challenges and opportunities from a number of different blocks: shaping the eId@I, improving well-being, acquiring new habits.

We try to understand the relationship between the soul and the technology. Each of those blocks takes into account the use of the Web and social networks. We raise the question of how to connect individuals to “real life”, to their community and the environment in healthy ways.

We wish to redefine the well-being of humans based upon a new approach to psychological impact of the digital world on the “I”. By connecting the eId@I and the ways to increase well-being as defined by New Economic Foundation (nef), it will give educators a powerful methodology to develop programs suitable for today's youth while providing a way to develop wisdom & well-being using technology in a humanistic way.

1. Challenges youth face today with the invention of digital life

In February 2009, leading computer scientists, artificial intelligence researchers and roboticists met at Asilomar in Pacific Grove, California. The goal was to discuss the potential impact of the hypothetical possibility that robots could become self-sufficient and able to make their own decisions.

As educators, we should be aware of such debate and be aware of the trends in Technology. This will allow us to understand what the young generation, that we educate today, will face in his adult life.

This leads us to the question: which forces shape and educate the 21st century children?

Diagram 1: The Forces that Shape and Educate 21st-Century Children

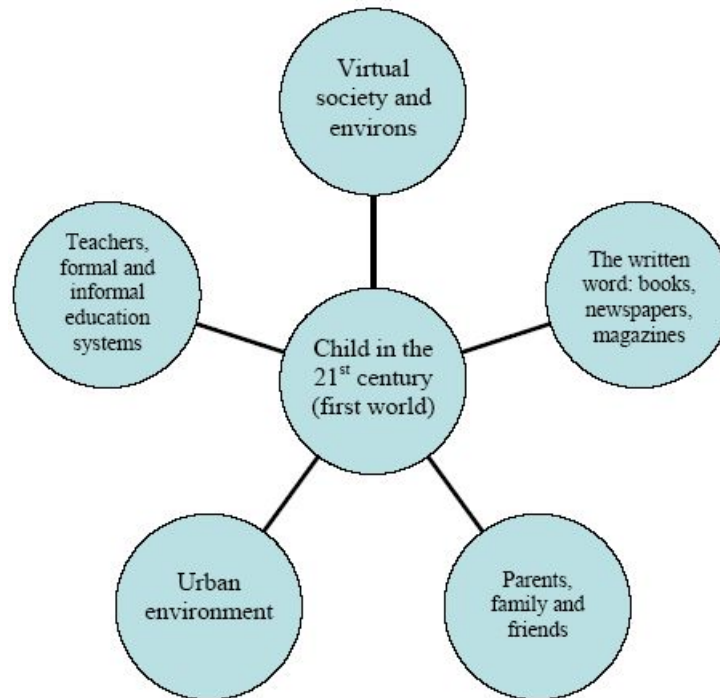


Diagram 1(1) emphasizes a powerful new player influencing the child's well-being. Virtual reality has already entered life in ways that traditional teaching and parenthood are not equipped to deal with. For example: a teenager girl bursts out crying in the middle of a lesson and runs out of the class; later the teacher finds out that her boyfriend had sent her an SMS that he was breaking up with her.[1] This mundane example indicates the complexity and challenge lying ahead of the teachers and parents in particular and society in general. Every few months, a child commits suicide "thanks to a bullying post on Facebook, like the case of death of Rebecca Sedwick, who jumped from the top of an abandoned concrete plant , "Yes IK I bullied REBECC and she killed herself but 'I don't give a fuck' wrote 14-year-old girl who was Rebecca's chief tormenter.

So the meeting between the real and virtual life can easily disconnect us from our feelings and the impact of our deeds and words. This is only one aspect of the relationship between human and technology; there are others.

In this paper we shall explore the possibility a healthy relationship: a relationship that allows the development of well-being and wisdom of people and society.

2. Well-being as a new index to humans and nations

In this part, we'll provide some background definitions about well-being and happiness and why it is important in life. Note that happiness is also referred as Positive Well-Being or PWB.

New Economic Foundation (2) defines the concept of well-being as being comprised of "two main elements: feeling good and functioning well.

- Feelings of happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity and engagement are characteristic of someone who has a positive experience to their life.
- Equally important for well-being is our functioning in the world. Experiencing positive relationships, having some control over one's life and having a sense of purpose are all important attributes of well-being."

Boehm and Lyubomirsky (3) preliminarily define a happy person as someone who frequently experiences positive emotions like joy, satisfaction, contentment, enthusiasm and interest.

Seligman (4) defines three different kinds of lives related to happiness:

- “The first is the pleasant life, which consists of having as many of the positive emotions as you can, and learning the skills that amplify them.”
- “The second one is eudaemonia, the good life, which is what Thomas Jefferson and Aristotle meant by the pursuit of happiness.”
- “There's a third form of happiness that is ineluctably pursued by humans, and that's the pursuit of meaning.[...]That meaning consists in attachment to something bigger than you are.”

Seligman mentions that well-being has five measurable elements (PERMA) that count toward it:

- Positive emotion (Of which happiness and life satisfaction are all aspects)
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning and purpose
- Accomplishment

Lately, Seligman talks about the concept of flourishing (5): the “topic of positive psychology is well-being, that the gold standard for measuring well-being is flourishing, and that the goal of positive psychology is to increase flourishing.”

On this basis, we are looking in this paper at ways to increase flourishing in the framework of technology and education.

UN Happiness index

Happiness is being more and more acceptable in organizations as a metric, since senior consultants and economists in the world are researching, recommending and implementing the principles of happiness index in companies, communities and, indeed, even countries.

In July 2011, based upon the happiness index developed by the Prime Minister of Bhutan, the UN has adopted the concept that the level of happiness in a country is an indicator of the development of this country. The UN has called upon the various country members to include in their development programs and in the public policies the happiness index as part of the holistic approach. Using this index, Denmark ranks first. However, the UN Happiness index has its limitations and does not take into account parameters such as the Ecological Footprint and latest research on well-being. This is the reason why NEF developed the Happy Planet Index as explained below. Note that the UK is very active in the science of happiness.

Happy Planet Index

Standing aside from the UN happiness index, NEF has developed a “Happy Planet Index” that ranks countries on how many long and happy lives they produce per unit of environmental input. According to the website happyplanetindex.org, the “HPI measures what matters: the extent to which countries deliver long, happy, sustainable lives for the people that live in them. The Index uses global data on life expectancy, experienced well-being and Ecological Footprint to calculate this.”

The 2012 HPI report ranks 151 countries and is the third time the index has been published.

With this index, Latin America's Costa Rica ranks first.

Note that Costa Rica has a stable democracy and has abolished its army altogether in 1949. Instead of spending a large portion of its income on defense like the United States does, the Costa Rican government spends money on education and health care. Likewise, there is a good chance that educated, healthy people are more likely to be happy.

Alongside the latest report, NEF is launching the [Happy Planet Charter](http://happyplanetindex.org) (happyplanetindex.org) that is “calling on governments to adopt new measures of human progress that establish the goal of delivering sustainable well-being for all at the heart of our societal and economic decision making process.”

3. eId@I as a basis to the renewal of education

This section provides a new definition to the psychological model of humans as an integration between the digital and the real parts.(6)

eId@I

Traditionally we speak about the I (ego) without taking into account the identity of the I in the virtual world. The e-Id is our virtual I, and yet it shapes and influences the "Normal" I in many different ways. This e-Id influences the daily life with some consequences on personal and interpersonal levels as well as in the education system.

The e-Id is made of two parts:

The conscious e-Id: the first part named conscious e-Id is built by us in the way we choose to create and maintain our profile on the Internet.

The Unconscious e-Id: The second part is the unconscious part that is created by others; entities such as governments, businesses and by other people. The unconscious e-Id consists of all the parts that people are unaware of but may impact us greatly when gathered and used against us. People are not conscious that what they write in some social networks may be visible to everyone and can stay forever even if the information stored is problematic. For more details, see paper published by the authors on eId@I (6)

The way technology shapes and influences our real life and relationships, raises the question of the link between humanity and technology. The challenges are great and already take a heavy toll from us and the environment. The emergence of and understanding of e-Id alongside with future trends of technology will help to better prepare our children for the complexity of the relationship between virtual and real life.

The emergence of a man-machine relationship forces us to rethink our education system and methods.

What can we practice differently? Is there a way to make our children wiser and not only smarter?

Can we find new ways that speak to the souls of the children and enable them to build healthier egos?

Can we develop a consciousness that can work with technology and is not just enchanted by it?

In what ways can we use technology to help us become wiser, make moral decisions and thus build a healthier civil society?

Concept of the e-dialog

We have put those ideas into practice by developing the concept of e-dialog. We tackled the sensitive and mostly untouchable issue of the Holocaust between German and Israeli youth. The e-dialog opens the younger generation to talk openly and frankly about the holocaust. It deals with the way their grandparents were involved and what was the impact of WWII.

It was easier for the youth to share and discuss those dark times first online via the e-dialog system and then have in real life discussions face to face.

The e-dialog was developed in order to fill in a void in today's education systems and it is designed to integrate and develop the I & e-Id concept.

Sustainable e-school: understanding the relationship of the "I & e-Id"

Education is a field of major interest for the new mobile Internet applications as well as a powerful mean for e-inclusion. Sustainable e-School is an initiative based upon the understanding of the relationship of the "I & e-Id" and the impact on the youth and society. This led us to emphasize interdisciplinary learning and multicultural dialogue. It combines English as a foreign language, computer literacy and a chosen subject as a backbone for the program. A dialogue can be established between communities with shared interest, the shared interest can vary from environmental issues, classic literature or a conflict between two communities such as the Israeli and Palestinian conflict.

The Sustainable eSchool projects contribute to shape the future because the e-Id will be a way for the individual to interact with his community and the rest of the world. Deeper understanding of the impact and influence of the e-Id require rethinking and reshaping our educational institutes. If we want to meet today's children we need to rethink what and how to renew the teacher training programs.

4. Five ways to develop well-being

About the 5 ways to well-being

After intensive research, the UK government through NEF came out with 5 ways to increase well-being. Here is a short overview of those five ways and how they relate to educational institutions.

Connect

Engage with your friends, family, make time to be with people you like, don't neglect quality time with people you like aside because you "don't have time".

"Connect" does not mean that you need to be connected on-line all the time. This activity deals with your active role in connecting with your peers and with yourself.

Connecting with yourself deals with the Eastern way of introspection and awareness growth whereas connecting with your peers deals with initiating some communication, finding some common ground, understanding the other...

Some schools have started meditation classes as well as various rituals and methods for youth to connect to themselves.

Be active/Exercise

There is a need to take a break from classes and go for a walk, dance... anything to loosen up and increase blood flow to your muscles and your brain. It is important to initiate and strengthen some physical activities: e.g. yoga, tai-chi, playing basketball with peers during breaks, cycling to school, walking after lunch, etc.

People including youth are spending much time in front of the screen as passive users, procrastinating, surfing endlessly or chatting endlessly.

Note that there are self-help sites providing ways to exercise while sitting in front of your work station.

Take notice

Pay attention to what is going on in the world. Link the knowledge you acquire and make conclusions based on your observations. One way to achieve this is through writing daily journals and being aware of meaningful events that happened today that Prof Teresa Amabile from Harvard calls 'small wins'.(7) Similarly to connecting all the time, taking notice continuously has negative effect such as very low levels of concentration. Checking all the time the status of your friends on FB is the negative aspect of taking notice.

Keep learning

Watch and learn your entire life. The more you know, the better you feel about yourself.

A great way to achieve this is through teaching since that requires continual learning, connecting with others and giving which the next activity is described below.

There are examples from the Democratic school system where the good pupils become the teachers for their peers.

In terms of the Web, there are many different ways to learn ranging from taking online courses from major universities to learning from your peers by sharing knowledge and more.

Give

Give to others, give advice that does not cost, help. Some schools have installed some mentoring systems where older pupils are taking care of younger ones. Volunteering has been shown to increase happiness.

As we can see, each of those ways is connected to technology.

For instance, the first activity of 'connect' would not mean to be constantly connected to the Web, but to connect with oneself as well as with the other in real life. It is of course clear that when connecting

rightfully through the Web by email, chat, video, calls, blogs and more can definitely be a source for increasing your well-being.

The second activity of 'exercise' could involve traditional physical activities as well as times when the school turns off the Web & the cellphones and organizes an exercise.

The third activity of 'take notice' may be that each pupil in the school holds a diary or (private) blog that relates what he/she has been doing and more particularly would trace what was done the previous day similarly to Idonethis.com.

The 4th activity of 'keep learning' would favor some learning together with for instance sharing some new discoveries and notes with system like the social bookmarking service diigo.com

The 5th activity of 'give' would go into the concepts of contributing to the community and that you learn best when you teach someone. It is a way to give and learn.

Acquisition of new habits and set up rituals

The idea is to provide to the youth simple ways to acquire new habits towards an intelligent use of technology and an improvement of their own well-being. Dr BJ Fogg from Stanford has developed a methodology for acquiring tiny habits that is simple and very effective.

Tiny habits are the first step towards the establishment of rituals at the personal level as well as the level of the class, of the school and beyond. (8)

Online class developed by BJ Fogg (tinyhabits.com) provides an illustration on how it is possible to acquire 3 tiny habits within 5 days with the help of technology and semi-automatic email support.

5. Understanding the relationship between technology and people

This section is based on the Master thesis written by one of the authors, Eyal Bloch [The Fifth Kingdom](#). (9)
The fifth kingdom i.e., the man-made sphere was severed from the womb of Mother Nature. Henceforth, man is increasingly making his own independent contribution to the world.

The fig

If a man ate a fig, that was a natural way to use a fig. But if a man took a fig leaf and made it into cloth, this was an interaction that led to a creation of something different from the leaf's natural purpose. In the first case, the fig served one of its natural goals. In the second case, the leaf did not grow with the intention to become cloth, but as a result of a human deed it was transformed into cloth.
Now, according to the definition, the cloth is part of the man-made kingdom.

Mechanical clock

A new phase of the fifth kingdom took place with the invention of the mechanical clock in the fourteenth-century. Once introduced into life, the clock regulated life apart from the sun, moon and nature's rhythm. That was the crucial step in separating humanity almost entirely from the womb of Mother Nature. That moment created the ability to do things according to the time shown on the watch and not by the natural rhythm of sunset and sunrise.

Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, who liberated philosophical thought from the confines of tradition-bound scholasticism, also "liberated" us from nature. What a step for us as human beings this was, from being in the image of God to becoming an image of a clock. As British biologist Rupert Sheldrake warns of the Cartesian model of the world:

Souls were withdrawn from the whole of the natural world. All nature was man inanimate. Soul-less, dead, rather than alive. The soul was also withdrawn from the human body, which became a mechanical automaton, leaving only the rational soul, the conscious mind in a small region of the brain. (10)

All those things which happened in the Greek and Roman culture, and in the Middle Ages, were still a repetition of things which had been brought to the world by the hierarchies in previous periods. After 1500, said Steiner:

For the first time in the development of the earth, for the first time since the Saturn epoch, mankind is also responsible for the development and evolution of the universe. For the first time what happens - after 1500 - is not a repetition: it is new. This new element is the development of the Consciousness soul. (11)

The printing press

The printing press symbolizes in a very pictorial way the direction in which humanity progresses. It shifted humanity from listening to observing, from oral teaching to textbook teaching that focuses on observation. The key points are:

- Observing, Individual, System,
- Wide public, mass production, mass copies, inexpensiveness
- Printed matter, books, textbooks, newspaper, literate,
- Rapid transmission, easily handled, fast.

What happened to the west is well summarized by the scientist Gregory Bateson when he offered us his interpretation of the paradigm of reality from the industrial era:

- It's us against the environment.
- It's us against other (human).
- It's the Individual (or the individual company, or the individual nation) that matters.
- We can have unilateral control over the environment and must strive for that control.
- We live within an infinitely expanding "frontier".
- Economic determinism is common sense

- Technology will do it for us. (12)

These concepts are still widely used today despite endless evidence of the disastrous consequences they have brought upon humanity.

Bacon in his time was able to describe a Utopian government that is a shadow of today's technological and administrative organization.

The Light Age

According to esoteric theories, 1899 was the end of 5,000 years of darkness called the Kali-yuga. The name of the new era is the Light Age, a period when spiritual light could again flow to earth. On the other hand it is a time of extreme darkness.

One thing is clear; the environment we live in has changed at a rapid speed due to a tremendous flood of technological invention into our daily life. From the beginnings of this century everything has seemed to accelerate, from the horse-pace to space-shuttle speed; from the spoken word face-to-face and written letter to a vast arsenal of communication channels. To list a few: radio, phone, email, fax, video conference and remote control brain-wave system.

If Copernicus left us on an insignificant star in the galaxy, at least there was a place to stand on. With Einstein there was not even a place to rest, everything everywhere was equally in motion. Or to put it in A. Zajonc's words:

Humanity now stands alone and alienated in the limitless Universe. Bereft of parents and far from home, each of us has now to become a center unto himself or herself, and find the spiritual strength to hang unsupported in the void, drawing support from within not from without.(13)

The only 'truth' that remained absolute was that we could hang onto the speed of light.

Light and the art of light constitute the trademark of this century; they play the same role as played by the printing press but on much grander scale.

Saradello phrases it:

"The manic urge to create a technological world arises when soul can no longer be felt as creative force in the world. Strengthening the forces of soul, of imagination, can gradually bring about a balance- a balance that does not require abandoning technology but considerably diminishes the fantasies invested in it. When soul creates it does so in terms of qualities, and only as its action is severely impaired are we prone to take speed as a substitute for soul making."(14)

To develop the balance that Saradello points out, we have to penetrate the relationship between soul and technology. As is quite evident, the technological development is "mind and soul blowing," with each passing day old boundaries are falling apart. We have barely started to digest the digital/electrical revolution, and genetic engineering is out of moral control.

If we take a look into the educational sphere it seems to be creeping behind or trying to wipe out the human touch. It resembles the situation of the Swiss watch- maker industry when presented with the quartz watch. Usually the last field to change is the educational realm. Until now changes in the evolution of humanity have taken place gradually. Now we accelerate to the speed of light, the only anchor that Einstein left us. We are still debating about the impact of the electrical revolution while it is more or less over.

6. Connecting well-being and eId@I

In this part we are going to link the various parts of this paper and focus on the first way to well-being, that is connectedness and how we make the connection between technology, wisdom and well-being.

We illustrate our point using our own initiative Technology of Peace - TOP (technologyofpeace.net)

Technology of Peace (TOP) is an alliance of people and organizations dedicated to Creating a Web of Wisdom for the Well being of humans & earth. The alliance allows people to discover, create, share and distribute technological solution enabling the acquirement and sustainability of essential life necessities. The first focus is on the following areas water supply, energy, health and education. The alliance main activity is to create the infrastructure allowing all participants to create and share their wisdom, resources and enthusiasm. We focus on simple and duplicable solutions for people in poor areas that deal with harsh environments with limited outer resources but endless inner resource.



Example of Richard Turere:

It starts with the real challenge that lions were attacking the cattle of Richard's family in Africa. "I grew up hating lions very much," says Richard, 13, who is from Kitengela, just south of the capital Nairobi, Kenya.

"They used to come at night and feed on our cattle when we were sleeping."

At the age of 11, Richard decided it was time to find a solution for protecting the family's cows, goats and sheep from being eaten by lions.

"One day, when I was walking around," he says, "I discovered that the lions were scared of the moving light." He started to work on a system and despite the fact that had never received any training in electronics or engineering, he came up with a simple and low-cost system to scare the predators away. He arranged a series of flashing LED bulbs wired to switches and a car battery powered by a solar panel. It worked, since then his family has not lost any livestock.

Challenge: *how to protect the cattle from lion attacks?*

Solution: *Solar-powered solution invented by 13-year-old Richard Turere*

Richard performed the following ways that indeed helped him increase his own well-being as well as of the others. We can see how the various ways to increase well-being relate to him and his invention :

Connect:

Richard found an original way to connect constructively to his environment including the cattle and the lions.

Be active:

It is clear that Richard had to be active, walk around and exercise in order to solve the problem.

Take notice:

Richard noticed that while the lions attacked the cattle, a solution based upon solar energy and electronics could do the work.

In terms of well-being, the solution brought the following:

- Richard could finally sleep, succeed at school
- Richard's family was able to make a living out of the cattle
- The cattle itself could live
- The tribe made peace with the animals: the lions did not have to be hunted and killed
- The talk given by Richard at TED brought an international exposure to this solution

Keep learning:

Richard had to learn all kinds of topics in order to find a solution to this challenge. Afterwards, he Richard received a scholarship and was thus able to continue learning, go to school. He gave a good example for the other children of what can be done.

TOP provides the relevant framework for people to continue learning from existing solutions made by people for people.

Give:

This solution is simple enough that other farms can install a similar system and thus improve their own well-being. This solution is not in the area of patented solutions and it is given for the well-being of all the communities and people.

In this aspect, TOP inventors and contributors are credited and fairly endorsed.

We believe that TOP illustrates what we are aiming at: integration between technology, people, well-being and wisdom.

What are the characteristics of TOP technology?

- They address basic life necessities
- TOP solutions use simple and available materials, tools and techniques. Thus, making these solutions sustainable for the people using them
- TOP technology aims at creating minimum maintenance costs and improve life quality
- TOP technology is easily duplicated.

Centered - one and together

Connecting does not only relate to connecting with the others but it also relates to connecting with the various parts of you. If a person connects the various parts of itself, then we suggest that he becomes centered and connected with himself. He can then connect in a healthy way to the others and create a whole. It raises questions such as: how to be centered in this digital era when one part becomes public consciously and unconsciously?

The connection with eId@I is a key educational challenge in our period and we wish to raise the awareness of our readers, educators so that we can together find ways to meet this new challenge.

This approach that sees the whole human including its virtual life may be a basis for the future generation, creating a new way to rethink the education system as well as building new work habits that into account the well-being of people.

Multi-level connectedness

Actually, connectedness happens in various levels: at the level of the people, the organizations and the problems and solutions. This is what we can see in the example of Richard and that can be applied to most solutions related to TOP.

7. Conclusion

This article came out from our question:

How can we develop wisdom in humans in general and youth in particular with technology?

This question raised during a meeting between our background in computer science and our work as trainers and educators: we were honored to present and participated to the Global forum which is a think tank where politicians and high tech leaders gather once a year meet to share and discuss the theme DRIVING THE DIGITAL FUTURE, Opportunities for Citizens & Businesses.

On one hand, it was amazing to hear and meet those people and their ideas.

On the other hand, we felt something was missing that is the development of wisdom.

This question should become key for whoever wishes to create a peaceful and sustainable community with healthy relationship to Mother Nature and oneself.

Since technology shapes and influences our real life and relationships, we need to raise the question of the link between humanity and technology. A senior officer from the UN expresses it quite well (15): "I've dealt with many different problems around the world, and I've concluded that there is only one real problem: over the past hundred years, the power that technology has given us has grown beyond anyone's imagination, but our wisdom has not, if the gap between our power and our wisdom is not redressed soon, I don't have much of hope."

The challenges are great and already take a heavy toll on us and the environment.

By connecting the eId@I and the ways to increase well-being as defined by New Economic Foundation (nef), it will give educators a powerful methodology to develop programs suitable for today's youth while providing a way to develop wisdom & well-being using technology in a humanistic way.

Whatever we teach, we should examine it according to the five ways of developing well being. Checking how people connect, take notice, keep learning, give and exercise should be a first verification before implementing any learning programs and thus check if those programs raise well-being and wisdom.

We provide some practical tools and guidelines for youth and educators to take their lives with their own hands, solve the challenges related to our era of Light and become social and economic entrepreneurs.

As a side note, this paper has been co-written thanks to "In Real Life" meetings as well as virtual meetings where we met 'online', wrote and spoke together.

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