# lightningtalks

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Informal, fast-paced presentations by Campbell faculty

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# lightningtalks

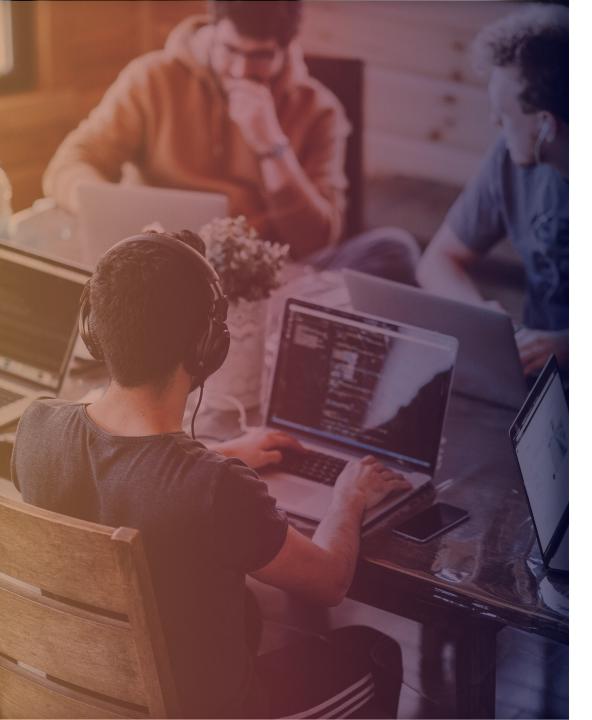
#### WIGGINS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Dr. Justin Nelson Sociology

## UNDERSTANDING TECHNOLOGICAL DEVICE ADDICTION IN AMERICA

Dr. Justin Nelson Sociology

Wiggins Memorial Library Lightning Talks Fall 2022

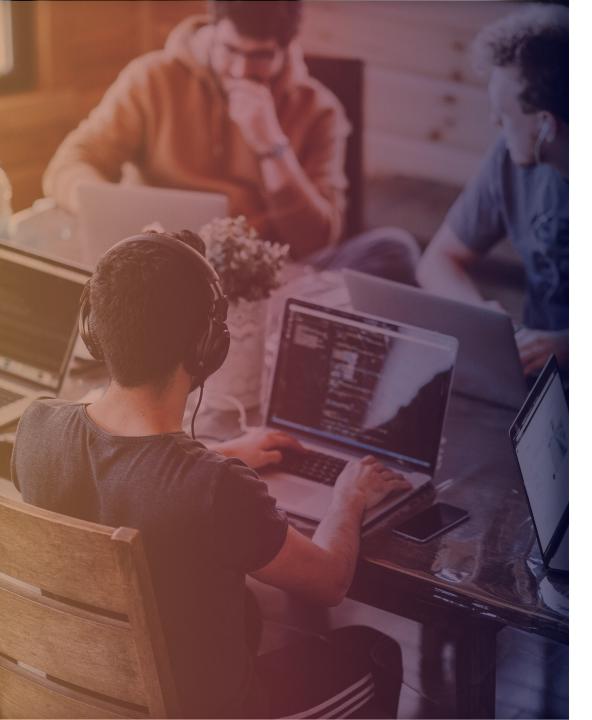


#### WHAT DO I STUDY?

• How prevalent is technological device addiction in the broader adult population in the U.S.?

• What social and demographic variables are related to technological device addiction?

- What is the relationship between meaning-seeking and technological device addiction?
- What is the relationship between technological device addiction and social integration? How do the tech-addicted feel about their social relationships?

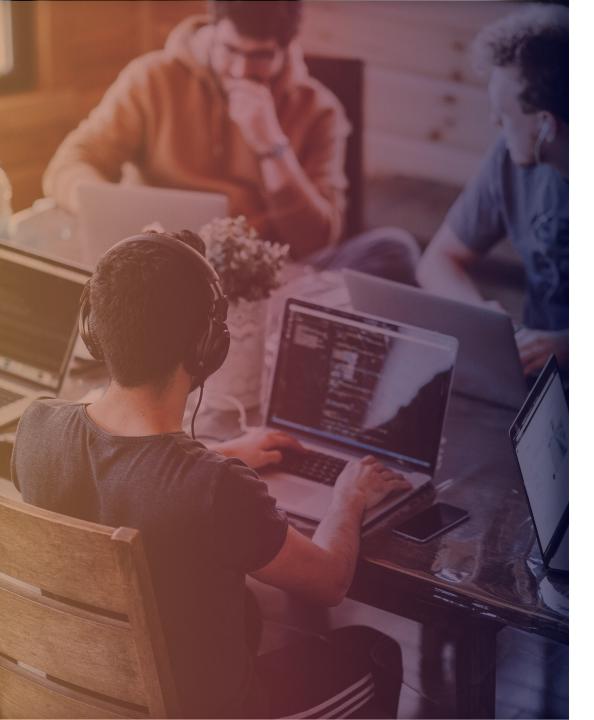


#### HOW DO I STUDY IT?

- Secondary Data Analysis / Survey Research
  - Baylor Religion Survey
- Key Questions / Variables:
  - <u>Tech Addiction</u>
    - I feel addicted to the technological devices I have.
    - I would panic if my phone suddenly stopped working.
  - Social and Demographic Variables
    - Education, Work Status, Gender, Social Media Use, etc.
  - Meaning in Life Questions (Steger, 2006)
    - I am seeking something meaningful in my life.
    - I have found a satisfying life purpose.

#### • Social and Felt Integration

- Family Closeness
- Friends Closeness
- People Dislike Me
- Missed Out on Fun
- Feel Important to Others
- Feel Helpless



#### WHAT HAVE I FOUND?

"Who's an iAddict?: A Sociodemographic Exploration of Device Addiction Among American Adults." *Social Science Quarterly.* 

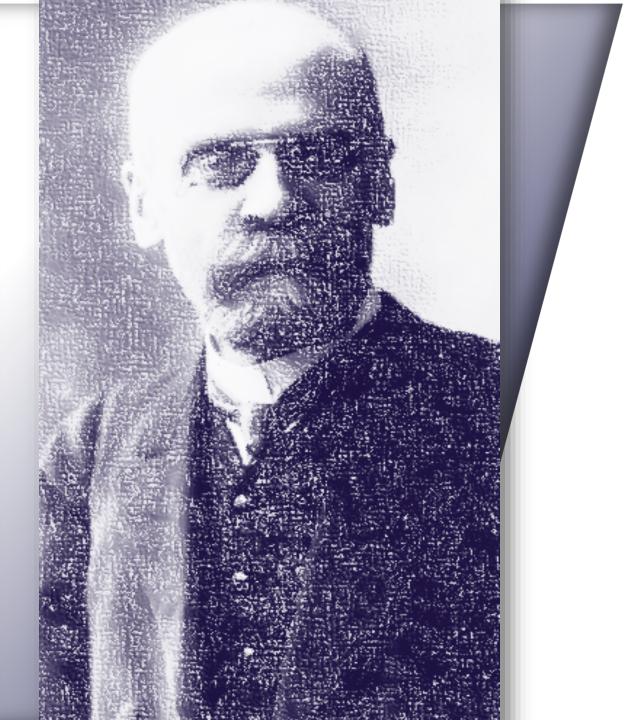
 Roughly one-fourth of American adults self-report tech addiction, which is correlated with increased education, employment, and social media use (Nelson and Pieper, 2020).

"'Maladies of Infinite Aspiration': Smartphones, Meaning-Seeking, and Anomigenesis." Sociological Perspectives.

• Seeking meaning in one's life is positively correlated with reports of smartphone attachment (Nelson and Pieper, 2022).

### "Integration or 'Instagration': A Closer Look at Connection in the Digital Age." In progress.

 Tech-addicted people feel less close to their friends and are more likely to report fear of missing out and feeling like people dislike them (Nelson and Pieper, in progress).



## DIGITAL DURKHEIM

New media

Old problems



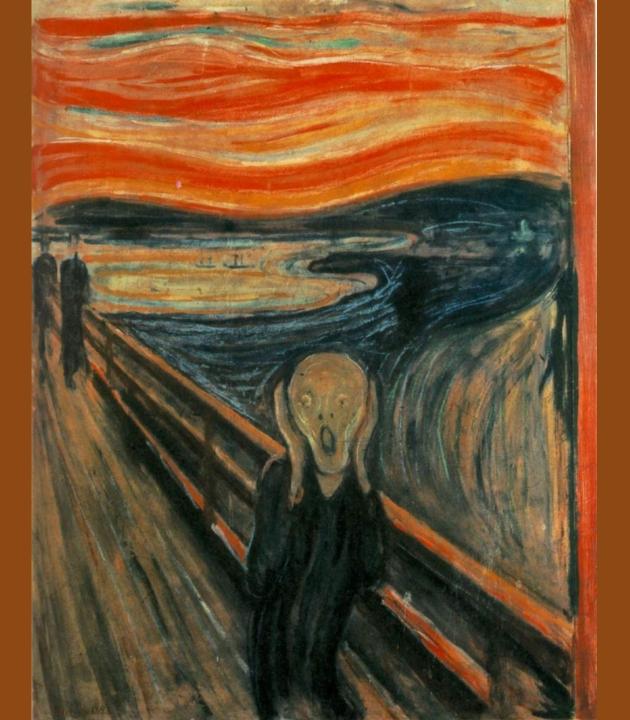
# DIGITAL DURKHEIM

Tech addiction as a "malady of infinite aspiration" (Durkheim, 1925)

Moderns are "powerless to fulfill themselves because they have been emancipated from all limitations" (Durkheim, 1925)

With **no boundaries** to guide online behavior, seeking may lead to **addiction** precisely because smartphones provide **everything**.

## "INSTAGRATION" & ANOMIE



### "INSTAGRATION" & ANOMIE

- Tech as telos
  - Postman (1995) on "god of technology"
- For some users, tech promises to relieve anomie, but actually ends up worsening it
- Tech offers feeling of connection, but produces greater feelings of isolation

"Instagration" is not social integration!

# THANK YOU



Dr. Justin Nelson, Sociology



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