

August 2020

Interview conducted in August 2020. The participant received a participant information sheet before the interview and provided written consent. The purpose of the interview was explained prior to asking any questions and recording the interview. The participant had then the opportunity to ask any additional questions for clarification. It was explained that when the interview questions asked for digital devices or ICT devices this implied smartphones, tablets, computers and TVs. Depending on the situation of the participant the relevant device could be referred to. The recording was transcribed non verbatim.

The interview was conducted in English.

**Speaker 1: Could you please state your name and what your current occupation is?**

Speaker 2: My name is [anonymised] and I am a freelancer in the design and animation industry.

**Speaker 1: And what is your age?**

Speaker 2: I am 31.

**Speaker 1: And where do you currently live?**

Speaker 2: I live in [anonymised].

**Speaker 1: Do you live alone?**

Speaker 2: No, I live with 22 other people.

**Speaker 1: How long have you been living there?**

Speaker 2: It has been 3 months.

**Speaker 1: So, the next questions are the main meals, so breakfast, lunch and dinner. On an average day during the week, when would you normally get up?**

Speaker 2: I normally get up around 7am.

**Speaker 1: And is that kind of the same during the weekend?**

Speaker 2: Yes. Being a freelancer, my weekdays and weekends are pretty much the same.

**Speaker 1: And once you get up, would you normally eat breakfast?**

Speaker 2: Yes.

**Speaker 1: And that breakfast, would you make it yourself or do you buy it? Or do other people make it?**

Speaker 2: I usually make it myself. Quite often it is a smoothy or something light. Quite often, I do it after workout or after morning routine.

**Speaker 1: And that is kind of the same on the weekdays and the weekend?**

Speaker 2: Yeah.

**Speaker 1: And the breakfast, would you normally eat it alone or do you eat it with others?**

Speaker 2: I usually eat it alone, yes.

**Speaker 1: And when you eat your breakfast, where would you normally eat it?**

Speaker 2: The breakfast I quite often just eat it in the kitchen.

**Speaker 1: Sitting down or while you prepare it?**

Speaker 2: Just sitting down, yeah.

**Speaker 1: And while you eat your breakfast, would you use an ICT device? And when I say ICT device it can be whatever is relevant in your context, so that can be a smartphone, can be a tablet a computer or the TV running in the background.**

Speaker 2: Sometimes I would take my phone but not really often actually [inaudible]. Quite often I am just with myself and my breakfast.

**Speaker 1: So, you really try to concentrate on your breakfast?**

Speaker 2: Yes, I think so. I think I try to plan my day and just think about what my next steps are going to be.

**Speaker 1: And on those occasions when you check your phone. What kind of apps would you use?**

Speaker 2: Facebook, messenger... can be a [inaudible] with friends.

**Speaker 1: So normally the social messenger kind of apps?**

Speaker 2: Yes, social apps.

**Speaker 1: And would you just read the messages that you got, or would you respond to them as well?**

Speaker 2: If there is something urgent and someone is just waiting for a reply, I will reply, yeah. Sometimes I just get stuck in the news feed and mindlessly scroll through it.... Bad habits that I have.

**Speaker 1: And do you feel that when you use your phone while eating your breakfast, that it influences your perception of the food?**

Speaker 2: I ... Yes, definitely. Every time I am distracted by the phone, I feel like I am not enjoying my food as much. I am not even noticing that I am eating or...I mean if I am really distracted, I can even feel a bit sick.

**Speaker 1: How does that happen? Is it because you eat too much?**

Speaker 2: Uhm... maybe because I am eating too fast.

**Speaker 1: And is that something that you are aware of while eating or is that something that you realise afterwards?**

Speaker 2: I realize it afterwards and I regret using my phone while eating.

**Speaker 1: And this regret, does it have any influence on your motivation to use the device while eating breakfast?**

Speaker 2: Definitely. I try to use it less and less.

**Speaker 1: So, you really pay attention and try not to use it?**

Speaker 2: Yeah.

**Speaker 1: So, you if you look back at the lockdown that you had. Do you feel that your breakfast eating habits were adjusted?**

Speaker 2: Uhm.... I don't think that the lockdown affected my routine so much because it did not affect my work schedule so my routine remained the same. Me moving to this house was something that affected my routine more than anything else. But yeah, I don't think my breakfast changed or the way I use my phone while eating changed.

**Speaker 1: And you moved to that house just before the lockdown?**

Speaker 2: Pretty much. Just a few weeks before.

**Speaker 1: And how you feel has the move to that house affected your eating schedule?**

Speaker 2: Just because some of the meals are prepared by my flatmates. That affected my cooking routine or things that I have for breakfast because we have shared food. The taste and the ingredients were different to what I was used to, so I just learned to eat and cook differently.

**Speaker 1: And was that for breakfast as well, or did it concern more the other main meals?**

Speaker 2: I think I started making more smoothies and eating healthier in general just because I try to be healthier and doing more fitness and doing a more active lifestyle and trying to have a better breakfast.

**Speaker 1: So, and the use of the smartphone while having breakfast, is that something that you used to do before moving to that house?**

Speaker 2: I think that is unrelated to that house. In that past year or so I am just trying to pay attention to it more and more and reduce as much as I can.

**Speaker 1: Then the next question, when would normally eat lunch?**

Speaker 2: About... between 12 and 1pm.

**Speaker 1: And would that be the same on the weekend as well?**

Speaker 2: Yeah.

**Speaker 1: On an average day, what kind of lunch would you normally eat?**

Speaker 2: Uhm... average day... I recently tend to have quite a lot of work, so it will be quite rushed and I will run down, make something quick, bring it back up and eat it in front of my computer while I am still doing work or watching Netflix for entertainment.

**Speaker 1: And what kind of like rushed meal would that be?**

Speaker 2: Rushed in the sense that I am trying not to spend any time cooking. So sometimes it can be another smoothie with an additional something. Or it can be heated up left-overs from yesterday's dinner.... Just quick and efficient as much as possible.

**Speaker 1: And do you feel that when you then sit in front of the computer and you are working that it influences the way you perceive your food and the way you eat?**

Speaker 2: Yes definitely, definitely.... It is not my default to not eat in front of gadgets or computer screen but on the occasions that I do, do that, I do enjoy my food much more and I am mindful of the food that I am eating. And I am eating mindfully. And I am enjoying everything about it while when I am distracting and looking at the screen, I am just... it is automatic. All of the aspects of it, the taste, the texture, it is just going in there and disappearing. And I think... sorry I have more things to add, but...

**Speaker 1: Feel free to add anything!**

Speaker 2: Okay... I feel like that if I do it not in front of the computer and I am mindful of the action of eating, I can feel much more relaxed after it. While I tend to feel stressed when I am multitasking and eating and not paying attention to what I am eating. I tend to feel quite anxious and a bit sick as part of it.

**Speaker 1: And do feel bit sick again as you mentioned with the breakfast because you are not aware of what you are eating?**

Speaker 2: I think so. I assume that I am probably eating faster and not processing the food in my mouth properly and just eating too fast. I get stressed through the whole multi-tasking and mind racing through things while eating. I think it just brings out some anxiety around just mind racing too fast and doing too many things.

**Speaker 1: So, and when you are working while eating your lunch. What would that be? Is that something you read or looking up or is that really actively like using the mouse and keyboard?**

Speaker 2: Yes, it probably would just be... I can't do too much design work while eating because it is uncomfortable but it would probably be like checking emails or replying on slack to my boss or the people that I am working with so sort of just doing little tasks... but still not... so just thinking about work or

planning about what I am going to do when I finish the food.

**Speaker 1: And you mentioned that you watch Netflix as well.**

Speaker 2: Yes.

**Speaker 1: What kind of shows would you watch? Is there something specific that you would always watch?**

Speaker 2: When watching alone, I tend to watch something that is as relaxing and as entertaining as possible so that my mind can have a distraction and rest and laugh. So not something that is intellectually challenging. The last one would be 'Friends'.

**Speaker 1: So something funny?**

Speaker 2: Yes!

**Speaker 1: And is that something that you pay attention to? That you actively watch while eating? Or is that something that just runs in the background?**

Speaker 2: Yeah, yeah, I watch it while eating. Not something just for the background.

**Speaker 1: Working on your computer while watching Netflix: Do you feel they have a different kind of influence on the way you eat your lunch?**

Speaker 2: Probably yes. I have probably less anxiety when I am watching friends because I think it is easier to just relax and sit back and even though my mind is not so much focused on the food, I am still more comfortable and I am paying more attention to myself and to how I feel. And since I want to be comfortable and I want to take a break from work, I probably eat slower, but that is just an assumption. But I probably eat slower when I am in this more calm state of mind because I am having fun and... yeah... it is still not as good as just focusing on the food but it is still better than working.

**Speaker 1: And would the computer be the only device that you use in this context, or do you sometimes even use your phone while you are using the laptop and eating?**

Speaker 2: No, I usually don't touch the phone when I don't have to.

**Speaker 1: So, looking back at the Corona peak. Do you feel like your lunch was influenced in any way?**

Speaker 2: Only because I started working a lot so I had more of those situations where lunch would be rushed.

**Speaker 1: And when you are not working so much, would this still be the same kind of lunch habit that you just described? So, would it be similar or would you eat lunch in a different way?**

Speaker 2: I would... if I am having a really calm day and I feel like it, I will sometimes go and eat outside if the weather is nice... yeah, it is not very often. It is still... this big habit of eating and watching Netflix even on a free day so I just have something entertaining... yeah, that happens quite often.

**Speaker 1: So even if you are not in a rush you enjoy watching Netflix while you eat?**

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think so. I think partially because... Partially because I tend to really value my time and I feel like I want to be very efficient with my time by like combining ... just to justify watching Netflix, I have to be eating sometimes because otherwise I am just wasting time because I could just be productive. That might be one of the things on my mind.

**Speaker 1: And you mentioned that you live in a house with a lot of people. Why do you choose to eat your lunch alone even though you would have time to eat it with others?**

Speaker 2: Oh yeah... actually we eat... when I am not busy working late nights, we do have dinner together quite often but lunch everyone has separately because of different schedules.

**Speaker 1: Okay so last main meal: Dinner. On an average day, when would you normally eat dinner?**

Speaker 2: On an average day when I am not working late, dinner is served anyway between 6 and 7.30pm normally. And we normally sit down around a big table and eat together.

**Speaker 1: Okay and that is on the weekend kind of the same or do you have a different schedule?**

Speaker 2: On the weekend there are usually less people around but it is pretty much the same.

**Speaker 1: So, on an average day, what would you all eat for dinner?**

Speaker 2: Uhm different things all the time. You can hear the gong in the background. That means dinner is ready and someone is going around.

**Speaker 1: Ah nice. Okay and if you could name like the top three dishes, what would that be?**

Speaker 2: The top three dishes...

**Speaker 1: Or the ones that you enjoyed the most as part of the dinner experience.**

Speaker 2: Everyday it is a team of different three people so it is really different every day, so yeah, I don't know. But yeah, the top three dishes just things that come more often some sort of... so we all eat vegetarian, so it would be like Indian curries or pastas or things like that...

**Speaker 1: And where would you all normally eat dinner?**

Speaker 2: At the dinner table by the kitchen.

**Speaker 1: And you all sit down together and eat as a group?**

Speaker 2: Yeah.

**Speaker 1: So, dinner is something that you would normally eat with others?**

Speaker 2: Normally. Unless there is work or I am not feeling social then I don't.

**Speaker 1: When you have a lot of work to do, you would still eat in front of your computer or skip dinner completely?**

Speaker 2: I tend... I tend to still eat in front of my computer.

**Speaker 1: So you would just grab your dinner, go back to your desk and keep on working.**

Speaker 2: Yeah... I am usually. If it is a long day, I am usually too tired to keep going so that would be the break that I take. But quite often my break will be a distraction slash entertainment so that [inaudible] don't get on a very busy day and I watch friends or something.

**Speaker 1: So, you are more prone to watch Netflix in the evening compared to lunch when you eat alone?**

Speaker 2: Uhm... sorry can you repeat that?

**Speaker 1: So, you are more likely to watch Netflix when you are tired and you can't concentrate or like working while eating?**

Speaker 2: I suppose so, yeah.

**Speaker 1: But when you eat as part of the group, would you bring like any kind of ICT device? So, would you bring your smartphone and use it?**

Speaker 2: No. When we sit around the table normally there is no reason to have a phone [inaudible].

**Speaker 1: So, is that something that you really pay attention to, that you don't bring it or does it not even come to mind that you would want to bring it?**

Speaker 2: No, it doesn't come to mind. When I am with people, I don't have the urge to check the phone.

**Speaker 1: So, and looking back at Corona, do you feel your eating habit was affected in any way or was it kind of the same?**

Speaker 2: During lockdown?

**Speaker 1: Yes, and just in terms of dinner.**

Speaker 2: Uhm not really... just me coming to this house. The routine changed but not because of Corona.

**Speaker 1: When you eat alone, how do you feel?**

Speaker 2: When I eat alone... does it matter if I am watching Netflix or just focusing on my food?

**Speaker 1: Maybe eating alone in general maybe first without ICT devices and then...**

Speaker 2: Okay. How do I feel when I eat alone? I feel good! Yeah... I am comfortable being alone. Take the time and think and reflect.

**Speaker 1: And when you eat alone and use an ICT device, how do you feel in that context?**

Speaker 2: Uhm... when I use an ICT device it will normally take me to Facebook. The first minute will be productive because I will check some important things. And if I get stuck in it, I will feel guilty once I realise that I have been mindlessly scrolling and wasting my time. So, I generally get uncomfortably disappointed being suck into it.

**Speaker 1: And is this feeling of guilt, does it influence the way you use the device in any way? So, for**

**example, if you have realised on a Monday that you wasted some time on the device, on the Tuesday would you then not use it anymore or do you simply realise it and it does not have any kind of effect?**

Speaker 2: Yeah, I generally always just have that attitude that I want and try to reduce it as much as I can and some days, I will be better, sometimes I will be worse. Sometimes it will get too bad. Like I have this extension in my Chrome that will completely block Facebook and like completely physically deprived from it. And I... I find tools that will help me if I can't do it myself.

**Speaker 1: So, you have an active blocker for Facebook, because you have realised that you have used it quite a bit?**

Speaker 2: Yes.

**Speaker 1: And on how many minutes have you set your Facebook blocker?**

Speaker 2: So right now, I have one that switches off the timeline so you can see everything but the timeline unless you click give me one minute or give me three minutes and then it blocks it again.

**Speaker 1: Because you feel that this scrolling through the timeline is the thing that you want to reduce?**

Speaker 2: Yes.

**Speaker 1: Okay next questions. Are there any specific places where you tend to use the digital device while eating alone?**

Speaker 2: Uhm... Any specific places.... I don't use it normally when I am with my computer because then there is no room for it. I use my phone when I am in the kitchen sometimes and I feel like I can get distracted sometimes. I do use my Facebook to be in touch with some important things and some [inaudible]. But that would be the main reason to take it out but then I will get back into the scrolling.

**Speaker 1: But for example, if you go out and have a meal outside like for dinner or lunch. Would you take the phone with you?**

Speaker 2: I do always bring my phone with me, yes. But if I am meeting... if I am in a restaurant and I am meeting friends and I am with people; I tend either turn my phone upside down or put it aside so that it is not distracting me. Does that answer your question?

**Speaker 1: Yes! Do you ever go out and have dinner or lunch in a restaurant by**

**yourself? So just you?**

Speaker 2: Yes, sometimes! When I don't have time to cook or I really need a break from the house, I will go and get food outside and I will have my phone with me usually. But I do consciously try and not use it for anything but music or important updates that I need to know; just to absorb the environment of being outside and taking a break from the house. And I try to be more focused on the food because usually those breaks are the ones where I really intentionally want to relax my mind and be more mindful and yeah...

**Speaker 1: So, when you really go into a restaurant and eat by yourself you would really try not to use it at all?**

Speaker 2: Yeah.

**Speaker 1: So now looking at the time as a kind of timeline. Do you feel there are certain times during the day, or the week or the year when you are more likely to use an ICT device while eating alone?**

Speaker 2: I don't think that there is anything in the environment that affects it much for me. It is more like general states, like emotional state or how tired I am so things like that.

**Speaker 1: So, do you feel there are certain emotional states that you are sometimes in, that make you more prone to using an ICT device?**

Speaker 2: Yeah! Perhaps when I am not feeling very good emotionally, I feel like I have less energy to resist and I will be like "ah whatever" ...

**Speaker 1: So, do you feel that when you are like happy and relaxed, you are not as motivated to use the device?**

Speaker 2: I think so. When I am happy and full of energy, I will just be more aware and I will have better control of my habits.

**Speaker 1: And when you think not about people who eat in a public space for example a restaurant by themselves and use an ICT device so say a smartphone or an iPad. What is your opinion about those people?**

Speaker 2: I tend to feel disheartened when I see at a train station and I look around and I see 90 percent of the people looking at their phones. Especially when I see a group of people when they are related or who have friends and they pay no attention to each other. I feel disappointed.

**Speaker 1: How is that? Why do you feel disappointed?**

Speaker 2: Because I feel like people should learn to connect and... just learn to socialise. But it is a skill that people seem to be getting worse at.

**Speaker 1: So, is that your perception about the general use of the ICT device or is it specifically when they eat? So, when you see a person in a restaurant sitting by him or herself, do you still have that kind of perception that they should just socialise with other people in the restaurant?**

Speaker 2: Oh, if it is someone by himself or herself. I guess that would make me not upset or trigger any strong emotions I suppose. I mean if he doesn't know anyone around it would be strange if he starts bothering other people in the restaurant.

**Speaker 1: So, do you feel that is kind of okay then?**

Speaker 2: I mean it really depends. I think... I think I will have a certain judgement that is uncontrollable judgement to someone who is looking at his phone for what seems like forever and he does not take his eyes off... then you know... just be. I will probably cannot be able to help myself but think less of him. Life is more than that you know.

**Speaker 1: And when you think of people who eat alone in their private space so at home and they use an ICT device. How do you feel about those people?**

Speaker 2: In general, I feel like everyone should try and use it as much as it is necessary as long as they use it mindfully for a purpose but not... you know not use it as a replacement for physical life around them. It will be the same opinion as the guy just described in the restaurant. As long as it is used in doses, it makes sense.

**Speaker 1: Do you feel that the use of the devices so smartphone, iPad, computer or TV can make the eating experience more enjoyable? So actually, enhancing the eating experience?**

Speaker 2: I struggle to imagine that. I think it can spark more joy but it will not be the joy that comes from the food. It will be from the device. And it will be distraction from the food. Unless it is some sort of... I mean it is possible... that would be something to research... some sort of a complimentary sensation that enhances the experience of food but the focus needs to be on the food. Maybe it is music, maybe it is some sort of frequency of sound that puts you in the state when you are more focused on the food. I mean that makes you more mindful. Like mediation [inaudible].

**Speaker 1: And now the opposite, do you feel that there are certain situations in which the device impacts on the eating experience?**

Speaker 2: Sorry I am losing my focus. Could you repeat?

**Speaker 1: Do you feel there are certain situations in which the use of the devices will make the eating experience worse?**

Speaker 2: Absolutely. I feel it myself all the time. Do you want me to elaborate?

**Speaker 1: Yes, please.**

Speaker 2: There are some examples I could [inaudible] give for. The less... I feel with me that the less I am focused on the food, the less I enjoy the food. I tend to feel anxious and sick afterwards because I think I don't process the food properly. And yeah... And if I am really distracted, I don't even know what I ate. I am not enjoying the taste... I am not enjoying any of it. It is just nutrition without the pleasure eating the food.

**Speaker 1: And do feel that there are certain activities that you do on the computer and the smartphone that increases the feeling that you are not really aware of the food? So, for example the more you concentrate the less you enjoy your food?**

Speaker 2: Yeah, I think the more... the more the stimulation for the mind that comes from the device, the less you will be noticing your food. But then again perhaps there is a difference between if I am doing something that is engaging in a stressful way or if it is engaging in a relaxing, entertaining way. While in the entertaining space, I feel calmer and the effects are not as bad.

**Speaker 1: So, you mentioned that potentially music could help to focus more on the food. Do you feel this visual concentration on something that is on the screen in front of you, makes it more challenging to use the devices while eating alone?**

Speaker 2: Sorry can you repeat that again?

**Speaker 1: Do you feel that the visual concentration on the phone or the computer impacts on your eating experience?**

Speaker 2: Yeah. I definitely think that something visual is more distracting and more engaging. Visuals quite often have sound as well if it is watching Netflix over communicating with someone and perhaps if it is only something audible it [inaudible] you can still be looking at your food and you can still be that

mindful... as long as the sound is not too distracting. That could be something to look at as complimentary but yeah... hard to say.

**Speaker 1: So now in a future scenario, imagine you don't have any limitations in terms of technology or money. Do you think that digital devices could be used to make you eat healthier?**

Speaker 2: I think they could be. Definitely. It just needs to be very precise and I mean... it is hard to imagine it but there is a way because technology can do so much. We just need to know how to apply the devices in the right way or how to apply those... stimulations in the right way that would not be distracting or replacing the experience of food. I think the problem is that we replace our focus on the food with something else. But as long as we are not replacing the experience but adding to the experience while the food experience is still the centre, that would be a way to make it more pleasant and healthier perhaps. Perhaps there will be a way where you process it in a healthy way just like... right now the distraction makes me eat faster and makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious so my food doesn't settle... It is potentially less healthy. Maybe if there is something that makes me process it better and eat slower and eat healthier and be more mindful of what I eat and not. Just more pleasant but healthier in that way.

**Speaker 1: So last question. From your perspective, what do you think are the current issues when it comes to using a digital device while eating alone?**

Speaker 2: What are the current issues... Hmm... well there is just... If we are thinking about. I just think there are no apps or tools that were built to enhance the eating experience and most apps and most things that we use are built to be super engaging and super beautiful and distracting. And they grab your attention and not let you leave like the Facebook timeline. It is designed for users to use it as long as possible and replace your whatever other experience by being super engaging and the best experience that you can get. And it is just not designed to complement anything. It is designed to be your everything and that is the problem and it is so addictive because it is designed to be that way. It grabs all of your attention and it replaces all of your sensations and you stop paying attention to yourself; to how you feel; to what you eat; to how you eat it; to the people around you. And a lot of people don't know how to, or they don't have the awareness that... how it affects their lives or how it affects their friends so they don't even try to resist and that is the main problem.

**Speaker 1: Okay this was the last questions. Do you have any questions for me?**

Speaker 2: No.

**Speaker 1: Thanks a lot for your time!**

