Technology and its impact

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each precise term with its definition.

1 attention economy ____	**a** a business model competing to capture and monetise people's limited attention
2 digital detox ____	**b** a deliberate period of abstaining from digital devices
3 filter bubble ____	**c** a personalised online environment that reinforces existing beliefs by limiting exposure to other views
4 doomscrolling ____	**d** the compulsive habit of continuously consuming negative news online
5 techno-optimism ____	**e** an optimistic belief that technology will generally improve society
6 techno-pessimism ____	**f** a pessimistic belief that technology causes more harm than benefit
7 skill atrophy ____	**g** the decline of a previously learned ability due to disuse
8 surveillance capitalism ____	**h** an economic model based on collecting and monetising personal data
9 information overload ____	**i** the state of being overwhelmed by too much available information
10 nomophobia ____	**j** anxiety caused by being without a mobile phone or connectivity

2 Choose the word with the most suitable connotation.

1 For a business model competing for attention: the attention economy / a scarcity of content.

2 For a deliberate break from digital devices: digital detox / constant connectivity.

3 For a personalised environment reinforcing existing beliefs: filter bubble / diverse exposure.

4 For compulsively consuming negative news: doomscrolling / balanced consumption.

5 For an optimistic view that technology improves society: techno-optimism / techno-pessimism.

6 For the decline of an ability due to disuse: skill atrophy / skill mastery.

7 For an economic model based on monetising personal data: surveillance capitalism / anonymous browsing.

8 For anxiety from being without a phone: nomophobia / calm indifference.

Technology and its impact

3 Complete the technology-impact collocations with one word.

1 the _____ economy (= competing for people's attention)

2 take a digital _____ (= a deliberate break from devices)

3 trapped in a _____ bubble (= reinforced by a personalised feed)

4 the habit of _____ (= compulsively consuming negative news)

5 _____ capitalism (= based on monetising personal data)

6 suffer information _____ (= being overwhelmed by too much data)

7 skill _____ (= decline of an ability through disuse)

8 _____ optimism (= belief technology will improve society)

Technology and its impact

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

4 Complete the case notes with words and phrases from the box.

attention economy | digital detox | doomscrolling | filter bubble | information overload | nomophobia | skill atrophy | surveillance capitalism | techno-optimism | techno-pessimism

Case A: Researchers studying the 1 _____ note that platforms are deliberately designed to maximise engagement, often exploiting psychological vulnerabilities.
Case B: A patient described symptoms consistent with 2 _____, reporting anxiety whenever separated from her phone.
Case C: The client admitted to compulsive 3 _____, particularly during stressful news cycles, and struggled with 4 _____ from too many competing sources.
Case D: Critics of 5 _____ argue that business models profiting from personal data raise serious ethical concerns.
Case E: Users trapped in a 6 _____ reported rarely encountering perspectives different from their own.
Case F: A brief 7 _____ helped the client reset unhealthy habits.
Case G: Debates between 8 _____ and 9 _____ continue, with neither camp fully persuading the other.
Case H: Overreliance on navigation apps has been linked to measurable 10 _____ in spatial memory.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

The economics of attention

Media scholars increasingly frame contemporary digital platforms through the lens of the attention economy, arguing that business models built on advertising revenue create structural incentives to maximise engagement regardless of the effect on user wellbeing. Features designed to encourage continued scrolling, such as infinite feeds and unpredictable notification patterns, exploit well-documented psychological mechanisms rather than emerging accidentally from neutral design choices. This framing shifts responsibility away from individual users exercising insufficient willpower and towards platforms whose commercial incentives actively work against users' stated preferences for moderation, complicating simple narratives that treat excessive use as purely a matter of personal discipline.

1 What lens do media scholars increasingly use to frame digital platforms? _____

2 What do advertising-based business models create structural incentives to do? _____

3 Give two examples of features designed to encourage continued scrolling. _____

Technology and its impact

4 What do these features exploit, rather than emerging accidentally? _____

5 Where does this framing shift responsibility away from? _____

6 What does this framing complicate? _____

6 Rewrite each sentence using the word in capitals. Do not change the meaning.

1 The platform competed intensely to capture users' limited attention. ATTENTION ECONOMY

_____

2 She took a deliberate break from her devices. DIGITAL DETOX _____

3 He only saw content that reinforced his existing views. FILTER BUBBLE _____

4 The business model was based on monetising personal data. SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM

_____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 120-150 word account analysing how the attention economy shapes technology design and user behaviour, distinguishing observation from ethical evaluation.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Control connotation carefully. [ ] Avoid unsupported assumptions.

Technology and its impact

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

ANSWER KEY

1 Precise terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Connotation

1 the attention economy 2 digital detox 3 filter bubble 4 doomscrolling 5 techno-optimism 6 skill atrophy 7 surveillance capitalism 8 nomophobia

3 Collocations

1 attention 2 detox 3 filter 4 doomscrolling 5 surveillance 6 overload 7 atrophy 8 techno

4 Case notes

1 attention economy 2 nomophobia 3 doomscrolling 4 information overload 5 surveillance capitalism
6 filter bubble 7 digital detox 8 techno-optimism 9 techno-pessimism 10 skill atrophy

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 The attention economy.
2 Maximise engagement regardless of the effect on user wellbeing.
3 Infinite feeds and unpredictable notification patterns.
4 Well-documented psychological mechanisms.
5 Individual users exercising insufficient willpower.
6 Simple narratives that treat excessive use as purely a matter of personal discipline.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 The platform relied on the attention economy. 2 She took a digital detox.
3 He was in a filter bubble. 4 The model was based on surveillance capitalism.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check lexical precision, appropriate connotation and separation of fact from inference.