

I Get It

Posted on August 28, 2013 by Shawn Wilkins



I never understood Paul Miller’s attempt at breaking away from the Internet for a year, but today, I finally get it. I first thought that he was simply reinforcing what I was doing in the interim between iPhone releases (where I would sell my previous generation iPhone and be forced to use a “dumb phone” before my new phone arrived), but it’s a much bigger concept than that, one that I think many people yearn for but still haven’t discovered a way to completely disconnect.

This week, I managed to break away from my computer. Not for an existential need to find myself, but because I was so preoccupied that I couldn’t allocate the time needed for other activities. I was able to live without being tied to Twitter, AIM, iMessage, anything, and I enjoyed spending that time with physical people and not having to worry about how many tweets had come in, how much stock had changed, or how many followers I’d lost. It was refreshing to have a life that was dependent on things occurring around me instead of actively searching for digital things to consume my time.

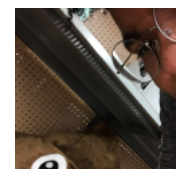
I had the chance to live in a world where the Internet was merely a feature and not a world completely controlled by it. Of course, the people I interacted with have probably been on the Internet long enough to have their lives coincide with mine because of it. However, it finally clicked halfway through that Paul Miller had probably taken a break from the Internet for his own personal needs and not solely for an article that would be big news for a week. When I can sit away from computers and not worry about Twitter, I’m able to see things differently. I’m able to build great relationships with the people I converse with everyday. I’ve always called them friends, but the relationship between us now seems stronger and more tangible.

Undoubtedly, there are people who spend time on the Internet and still manage to do all of the activities that I do with the computer on the back-burner, but I wanted to see how much I could diminish the digital filler. I wanted to break away in order to see if lessening my involvement would do me any good. The break was necessary in my life because my life had become a digital screen.

I also decided to take an indefinite break from Twitter because I began to notice how my follower count, relations, and act that I put on to make sure everyone is happy makes me seem like I’m less of what I am. I’m not being fake, but I’m not acting how I want to act. I want the same type of friends that I have in my Twitter followers in real life... that sort of room where everyone in it is your friend, and in that room, everyone knows your name.

When computer screens and relationships contained within 140 characters become the main focus of my life, something is wrong. I started to realize that I have real people in my life, trying to start conversations and get to know me, and I didn’t like how I was leaving them by the wayside. I realized that if I started to abandon these people, 100% of my life would be that digital screen. That screen would become my life, and figures of these people that I’ve known for years would only exist as a semblance of friendship that I’d never know. I decided that the life I had been living needed to pull an entire 180°.

I’m still living this life right now. My connections with Internet folks exist with those people I honestly enjoy talking to, people that I must talk to, and anyone who I need to be in contact with over email. The Internet now has a 10-15% involvement in my life. I don’t post on Twitter much anymore, but I post tons on Facebook because that’s where my real life friends hang out. I don’t need these followers to make myself feel like I’ve done something great when real life is looking me right in the eye.



About Shawn Wilkins

An enthusiastic writer who values quality over quantity. The abundance of posts shouldn't make the site, but rather, the quality of them. Aiming for perfection is the goal and anything less isn't acceptable. Long walks on the beach are accepted, however.

[View all posts by Shawn Wilkins →](#)

Latest Reviews

Unread — RSS for iOS 7 & Giveaway!
Jared Sinclair is mostly known for his previous offerings in the App Store: Pillboxie is a medication

A Gameboy That Plays 3DS Games
I bought a 2DS. Upon ordering the handheld, I knew exactly what I was signing

Keep Quiet with the Das Keyboard Model S ...with Quiet Key Design. The essential thing to notice in that title is the emphasis

Limelight — Beautiful Movie Tracking
Limelight is a new app from the team at 9:42AM that makes tracking movies simple

SurfacePad for iPhone — Designed for Some
The Twelve South SurfacePad for iPhone is a special accessory made for a specific group

On Mine: Momento App
Looking back, I wish I had done a lot of things differently. Taken out less

Keep It Light with the Power Support Air Jacket
Since the launch of the iPhone 5, the arms race to create the best case

Tough as Glass with the Bodyguardz Pure
There's always a brief period of time wherein I consider applying a screen protector to

Searching for the Perfect iPhone Case
Many people on the hunt for the ultimate in iPhone protection are realizing how elusive

Twitterrific 5 — Changing the Game. Again.
Twitterrific is old; Twitterrific is new. Twitterrific is traditional; Twitterrific is innovative. Remarkably, Twitterrific 5