

ECA - BWG 1

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1.3 Disconnection & Reconnection - Output



Context

This output, as the other outputs proposed by BWG1, fit within the general aim of the WED movement to support the growth of children able to exploit technology at best rather than being driven by it.

One of the main initial aims of the BWG was to prepare new generations for the fifth industrial revolution. In this process, children must acquire competences that help them use technologies and tech solutions in a meaningful way. A competency is commonly described as a combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable an individual to perform a task or an activity successfully within a given context. Whereas knowledge and skills can be acquired through learning and practice, the attitude is more difficult to be addressed. And these events focus exactly on the attitude of children and adults towards technology, and on gradually changing it so that a positive relationship between humans and technology is created.

Vision and Objectives

The main objective of this output is to actively engage families in a reflection on the impact of technology use in their life and on how to exploit it to reinforce connection within the family and at community level.

BWG1 proposes to celebrate the Disconnection Day (a day when families are invited to switch off their technological devices, do outdoor or “offline” activities and reflect on the impact that being without technology has on their lives) the Friday prior to March 15, the Emirati Children’s Day, and the Reconnection Day on the following Saturday. The Reconnection Day would propose activities that enhance family connection and community building through a meaningful use of technology.

This date is proposed to encourage Disconnection on a day associated with the concepts of family, religion, introspection, and reflection, when the concept of Digital Fasting could be easily accepted. The following day could be dedicated to Reconnection, still in a family environment and in a day that is usually dedicated already to family activities. Organizing these events around March 15 could add further value to the Children day.

Audience

The events are aimed at Abu Dhabi families (kids aged 0-8, their siblings, their parents, relatives and caregivers) of any income and social status or nationality. Particular effort should be put on involving the least interested families in the impact of technology on children.

Solution

A two-day event on the Friday and Saturday closest to Children's Day. For Disconnection Day, all of the family's audiovisual technology is switched off and families dedicate time to in-person activities: making art, telling stories, playing games, exploring nature and connecting with community.

This is an opportunity to experience and reflect on what they are missing out on doing, and those with whom they are not connecting, when they are on screens. During Reconnection Day, families will mindfully reconnect with technologies that allow them to continue, extend and enrich the activities and relationships they remembered on Disconnection Day. The aim is to sensitize parents and children on the positive opportunities emerging from thoughtful and meaningful use of technology.

This 2-day weekend event is to be repeated yearly.

The suggested activities for the Disconnection and Reconnection Day can be implemented directly by families, with no need for mediation or facilitation.

The idea is to provide some practical suggestions and examples to families on activities that could be implemented during the Disconnection and Reconnection Day, with the possibility for families to choose their own way to spend these two days.

A list of possible activities is proposed, articulated across five main fields: Art, Storytelling, Play, Health/Being in Nature and Community.

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Thank you

