A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark coat and a grey scarf, is looking down at a tablet computer she is holding with both hands. The background is a blurred city street at night, with warm bokeh lights from street lamps and buildings. The overall mood is focused and modern.

# DIGITAL LIFE

vodafone  

## DIGITAL LIFE

The digital society offers a lot of opportunities to people. It offers them ample opportunities for self-fulfilment, brings people into contact with each other and enables them to exchange ideas fast and conveniently. At the same time, the increasing digitization confronts society with major challenges:

### Skills for everyone

How can we ensure everyone benefits from digital technology and no-one stays behind? How can we ensure everyone has sufficient digital skills to get on in life?

### Balance

Digital media have an increasing impact on our life. On the way we perceive time, our contacts with others, our view of the world and even our health. What can we do to ensure the effects of digital media are mainly positive? How do we maintain a healthy balance in a society that is increasingly digitizing?

VodafoneZiggo wants everyone to be able to take part in the digital society and enable people to do so in a responsible way.

## SKILLS FOR EVERYONE

Inequality in digital skills can lead to social deprivation. Those who cannot keep up with digitization, may lag behind in earnings and prosperity later in life. For us, this is an important argument to pay more attention to the development of digital skills. Not only in children, but in adults too.

### Promising future for children

According to the [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development](#) (OECD) 65% of the children will have jobs that don't even exist yet – jobs in which digital skills are most likely of fundamental importance. In spite of that, research by [Kennisnet](#) shows that only very few schools pay attention to teaching digital skills.

[Kennisnet](#) also observes major differences between teachers with regard to their knowledge of ICT applications and how to use them skilfully. The limited attention schools pay to digital skills also has an impact on the performance of pupils. According to measurements by the [Monitor Youth and Media 2017](#), they are insufficiently digitally skilled. As of 2021, digital literacy will become part of the curriculum of primary and secondary education, but the full implementation of this change is expected to take a couple of years. To prevent unequal opportunities, it is crucial that all children start receiving proper tuition now with regard to digital skills.

### Digital stragglers

A large group of people in our society cannot keep up with digital developments. [The Social State of the Netherlands](#) shows that no fewer than 700,000 Dutch citizens are lacking in basic computer skills – crucial to get on in modern society.

Children up to 12 years of age mainly develop their digital skills at home ([Monitor Youth and Media 2017](#)). Poorly qualified parents, however, can help their children less profoundly when it comes to devices and software, as a result of which they often fall behind with their digital development ([Building Blocks for Digital Inclusion](#)).

A large number of senior citizens indicate they lack the basic skills to make full use of the internet. They find it hard to link up with the digital society, and feel hampered in their daily lives.

One out of ten senior citizens finds surfing more difficult than it used to be ([KBO-PCOB](#)).

## BALANCE BETWEEN DIGITAL AND 'REAL' WORLD

To use digital media in a responsible way it is important to find a proper balance between being online and offline. Because those who are constantly online can experience negative effects as a consequence.

### The seductive power of screens

More and more people feel pressured to be online, whenever and wherever. This is caused by the huge amount of digital media, the fear of missing out and the smart influencing mechanisms of technology, like algorithms.

As a result, smartphones, apps and games can lead to behaviour-dependence. Research shows that this particularly applies to the use of social media, like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter. In 2017, 29% of young adults (aged 18 to 25) said to be addicted to social media ([CBS](#)). In 2015, this percentage was still 19% ([CBS](#)). 93% of teachers is concerned about the use of social media by their pupils ([DUO](#)).



The **Center for Humane Technology** even speaks of an 'attention crisis', since digital devices absorb nearly all our attention. The organization consists of former employees of large tech companies, who combat the consequences of monitor addiction.

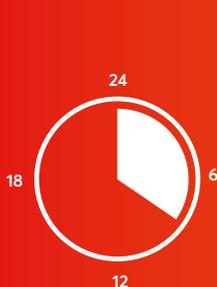
### Consequences for health and well-being

Those who are online for lengthy periods of time, notice that it affects their mental health. 47% of young people indicate that social media have a negative influence on their life. They find it hard, for example, to concentrate and they can't sleep properly. As a result, their learning achievements suffer (**CBS**).

Children who are online unusually often, are less socially adept (Theo Compernelle, Unleash your Brain) and often demonstrate a diminished empathic capacity. Compared to thirty years ago, American students scored 40% lower on empathy, a direct consequence of the excessive use of social media (Sherry Turkle, Reclaiming conversation).

One's physical health also suffers from being online frequently. Children who are looking at monitors too often, can as a result become short-sighted (**Erasmus MC**).

## MORE AND MORE ONLINE



Dutch people spend **8.33 hours** a day on media (**SCP**)



Young people aged between 14 and 20 spend nearly **three hours** a day on social media (**CBS**)



Adults take a look at their phone **264 times** a day



Young people take a look at their phone **387 times** a day

*(Institute of Practitioners in Advertising)*



**94%** of Dutch people actively participates in at least one social network

*What's Happening Online, 2018, RuigRok NetPanel*

## Responsibility technology companies

Technology companies should take responsibility in diminishing the negative effects of their products and services on the health of young people. If they fail to do so, they run a similar risk as tobacco producers, according to the English think tank [Strategic Society Centre](#).

Large shareholders of Apple have already appealed to the technology company to take measures. They want parents to be able to restrict a child's access to the iPhone and are urging Apple to investigate the effects of frequent smartphone use on the brain. In any case, Android and iOS will get new features that monitor the use of the device and help users reducing that.

## THE ROLE OF VODAFONEZIGGO

VodafoneZiggo wants to ensure as many people as possible can keep up with the digital world. To that end we develop programmes that teach the various target groups the digital skills that are necessary in our society. We mainly focus on children, teachers, families and senior citizens.

We want people to understand but also benefit from our products and services. Besides, we are facing a

*Digital media have more and more impact on our life. They influence the following aspects in a positive and negative way.*



shortage of technical employees, in the Netherlands and also in our own organization, at a time when we need ample people with the right technical expertise, not just now, but also in the years to come. To reduce that shortage, we advocate an improved alignment of education and employment.

## Taking responsibility

10 million people in the Netherlands can be online due to our technology wherever and whenever they want – 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With it comes the responsibility for the effect it can have on the lives of our customers. That is why we closely monitor the public debate about the effects of digitization, while assuming an active role in the debate ourselves. We enter into a dialogue with various stakeholders about the impact of the digital world on people and the concerns people have.

We want to actively contribute to solutions. For example, by developing programmes aimed at helping people improve their digital skills. So they can enter the digital world in a skilled, safe and conscious way.

### With our programmes we focus on three target groups:

- Pupils
- Senior citizens
- Families

### Pupils

#### Online Masters

We offer schools a free interactive teaching programme, **Online Masters**. It helps teachers to improve the digital skills of their pupils. They learn to be online in a skilled, safe and conscious way. We developed the programme in cooperation with Mediawijzer.net, ECP/Veiliginternetten.nl. With Online Masters we aim to reach 200,000 pupils each year.

#### Experience Days

Every month, **Experience Days** are organized at several VodafoneZiggo locations. Young people from socioeconomically deprived districts are familiarized with technology in a playful manner and are offered a look behind the scenes at VodafoneZiggo. In 2017, 1,671 pupils attended an Experience Day. We organize these days together with JINC, an organization that helps these children gain a better understanding of the labour market and their own talents.

#### Future Ready

Future Ready is a free programme aimed at improving the digital skills of pupils and teachers at fifty schools in socioeconomically deprived districts. They receive guest lectures Online Masters, attend an Experience Day and teachers participate in a workshop by Delft University of Technology. This programme is a collaboration of **JINC**, VodafoneZiggo and Delft University of Technology.

#### Digital Life Experience

From the end of 2018 onwards, we will be offering schools and other visitors a Digital Life Experience in the Experience Centre in Utrecht.

## *Senior citizens*

We notice that the large group of senior citizens are improving their digital skills. On the other hand, we also see that part of this group is grappling with the increasing digitization of society. In the time to come we will test the needs of senior citizens and how we can help them.

## *Families*

To support parents in their media upbringing, we will be launching a game in 2019 to teach parents and children together how they can be present in the digital world safely and consciously. We also encourage them to enter into a dialogue with each other about the digital opportunities and dangers.

## **Cooperating with other parties**

The digital world has a growing influence on our society and on the people who are part of it. VodafoneZiggo wants to increase awareness of this important topic and pay attention to the concerns people have. In doing so, we focus on establishing a proper balance between the digital and the 'real' world. In this way we can optimize the digital opportunities and minimize the negative effects.

We enter into a dialogue with various stakeholders to discuss solutions and bring about change. On 3 July 2018, we spoke with entrepreneurs, scientists, social organizations and politicians at the Balance the Future gathering. Through our Kids Council we asked young people how we can support families in their digital life. We established the Future Society, a platform for experts to share their vision with a wider audience about how we should deploy digital technology to maximize benefits.

We are a member of **Samen Digiwijzer**, a cooperative body of a number of large parties to support schools and the government in their efforts to teach digital skills to children. We contribute ideas towards the set-up of the new curriculum in which digital literacy will play a part.

We are partner in Technology Pact, focusing on improving the alignment of education and employment in the technology industry. This should help reduce the shortage of technical staff. VodafoneZiggo continues to engage in cooperation with other parties in order to have the greatest possible impact.