

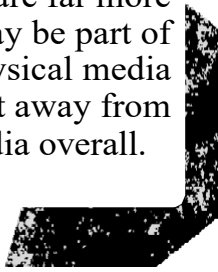






## OUT WITH THE NEW AND IN WITH THE OLD: A CASE FOR ANALOG ITEMS AND PROGRAMMING

In the age of technology, it is no wonder that people are craving some good ol' analog content. Call it a hipster thing, sure, but recent observations indicate that moving back towards physical media is trendier than expected. It is undeniable that technology has provided great opportunities for the world, however it has also been suggested that it is the source of a surge of health challenges (Twenge & Campbell, 2018). There have been several studies that have observed links between social media and screen time with negative impacts on teens' and young adults' well-being (Mayo Clinic, 2022). High levels of social media use can impact self-esteem and increase the risk of cyberbullying. As well, too much screen time is linked to a decrease in physical activity, attention span, and quality of sleep.

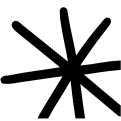
Considering these impacts, it's no wonder that more often teens are choosing to log-off. A group of teens in Brooklyn are reinventing what it means to be a teen without technology, which is stereotyped as a staple in teenage culture. The group calls themselves the Luddite Club, named after an 18th-century textile radical who destroyed textile machinery. Members of the group preach a lifestyle free from social media and technology where flip-phones, sketchbooks, notepads, watercolour sets, and books written by authors who condemn technology are far more common (Vadukul, 2022). Although this group may be part of an extreme resolution, new purchasing trends of physical media indicate a more moderate adoption of the movement away from technology and digital media overall.





There are many reasons why all age-groups, not just teens, have discovered a newfound appreciation for physical media. Most recently, people have expressed annoyance with streaming platforms due to their rising costs as well as uncontrolled access to films and tv shows. Many consumers have been frustrated by the unpredictability of digital media and opted to purchase physical DVDs instead. Many people feel that ownership of physical media grants them more consistency and comfort when accessing content in what Richard Lachman, an associate professor at Toronto Metropolitan University, calls a “much more chaotic” streaming marketplace (Stechyson, 2023). As well, vinyl popularity has been off the charts in the past few years with over one billion in sales last year (Sharp, 2022). Demand for vinyl records has been supported by a mix of nostalgic boomers and new generations' fascination with retro devices. Artists like Adele, Ariana Grande, and Harry Styles have also moved towards releasing vinyl albums making them influential in the growth of vinyl popularity. Similar, to vinyl, film cameras have also become more commonly used by newer generations. Allen Sutherland, general manager of Atlantic Photo Supply, notes that curiosity for old technology is a driver for new generations (Khan, 2022). Sutherland highlights that young customers bring cameras they've found in thrift stores or ones passed down to them and often ask for help finding the right film and guidance on how to properly use the camera.

It's important for library staff members to recognize the movement towards physical media and provide teens, a demographic labelled as perpetually online, with new and exciting programming and events that will pique their interest. Many teens are facing tech fatigue, and offering creative outlets that support the new fascination with 'retro' devices, while supporting time away from digital media, can support newfound passions for younger audiences while supporting their well-being. Ultimately, the library can help these teens become real trend setters in the new age with older items.



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