Recent years have seen our use of technology skyrocket. We spend more and more of our waking hours in a staring match with the computer screen and the psychological impact of this can be both good and bad.

Decision making and visuospatial skills are put into practice when one plays a first-person shooter video game, recent research shows. In learning to respond to a given visual stimulus (e.g., a Nazi zombie) with the appropriate action (e.g., tapping the trigger), the player’s ability to rapidly relate stimuli with calculated responses is trained.

Technicolour dreams are a modern invention, secondary to the advent of colour television. Older adults who were exposed to black and white media, principally television, before experiencing colour media consistently report dreaming in a more greyscale palette. Conversely, younger adults first exposed to colour media typically recall dreams in vivid colour.

Cyberchondria is a newly-coined phrase assigned to those whose hypochondria is fuelled by the likes of WebMD and other online diagnostic resources. Intended to reduce the burden weighing on traditional healthcare services, these websites may actually represent a considerable problem for medical professionals, as we approach doctors ever more frequently (and hysterically) with our e-diagnoses.
Sleep loss is a common consequence of late night screen watching. Blue wavelength light emitted by backlit screens disrupts the circadian rhythm, tricking the brain into thinking it is daytime. This effect is associated with a drop in melatonin, a hormone that promotes sleep. Regular night-time computing, and thus chronic melatonin deficiency, is not only a recipe for fatigue, but also a risk factor for some cancers.

Phantom Vibration Syndrome is experienced by 68 per cent of mobile phone users, reports a survey by the British Medical Journal. Aptly named, this term refers to the sensory hallucination of a vibrating phone in one’s pocket. It is believed that the brain misinterprets unrelated tactile stimuli, triggering the familiar perception of a buzzing mobile.

Chronic gaming can have a detrimental effect on how we control impulsive actions. This ‘proactive executive control’ could explain why violent video games are thought to promote aggressive behaviours. However, a recent meta-analysis failed to support this latter point, corroborating instead reports of enhanced visuospatial cognition.

The Google Effect denotes our search engine-trained faculty of knowing where to find information, rather than recalling the information itself. Psychologist Betsy Sparrow of Columbia University sees this cognitive shift as no bad thing; merely an indication that our brains are adapting to new technology.