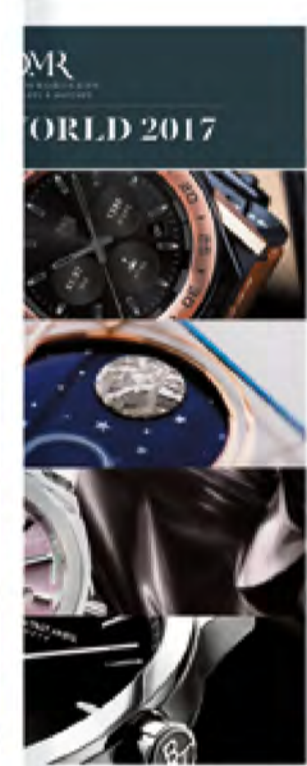




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# The Smart Phone Detox

words by Davey BRETT  
illustrations by Thomas WHITE



*Last month, to their outright dismay, we challenged members of our team to swap their beloved smartphones for a selection of high-end 'dumb' alternatives. Did our human guinea pigs survive their office-enforced tech lent? Did they feel enlightened? Did they find themselves air-scrolling before bed? Read on to find out...*

**S** Shock and fear is the best way to describe the face our designer, Jen pulled when I suggested everyone in the office give up their smartphones for a month. The idea echoed around the room like the stomp of a T-rex in Jurassic Park. 'Don't respond, pretend he hasn't said it' said everyone, with their eyes. Little did Jen and other members of our team know, I had already organised the whole thing.

It wasn't Cambridge Analytica's Facebook assault on democracy, nor was it constantly bumping into people on the street engrossed in their phones that inspired the idea, more just an interest in experimenting with a now 'vital' component in our daily lives. The plan was simple: go without a smartphone for a month and delete social media. The ultimate double threat that would affect every aspect of the average person's life.

The results, as you'll read in this article, were very interesting. Our new phones were always a talking point, we noticed things we previously wouldn't have, we read more, we filled our time with other things, some parts we missed, some parts we didn't. Of course, the experience was different for each person, but in general I think everyone would describe it as largely positive. (Even Jen, who by the time this article goes to print, will have been reunited with her beloved iPhone.)

*continued*



◀ To see more of Thomas' illustrations visit [thomashiteillustration.com](http://thomashiteillustration.com)

## Introducing: The Dumb Phones

### PUNKT MP 01



Akin to a luxury version of the Nokia 3310 of your youth, the MP 01 is a stylish 'dumb phone' from Swiss-based luxury electronics brand, Punkt.

Made in small production runs using top-grade components, the MP 01 prioritises talking to people, with text as a backup, hence its emphasis on call quality and a robust keypad for T9 texting. The design, like the price tag (roughly £250) is a good conversation starter. [punkt.ch](http://punkt.ch)

### THE LIGHT PHONE



A slim, credit card-sized 2G phone that connects to your smartphone. Solely used for making and receiving calls, the

phone has a meagre nine speed-dial spaces and is essentially a phone away from phone. Going for a walk or want some time away? Take The Light Phone with you. [lightphone.com](http://lightphone.com)

### Davey BRETT

Editor, Social Media & Smartphone Naysayer

First and foremost, I can confirm that it's impossible to organise a 5-aside football team without social media and a smartphone. Organising any group activity for that matter is extremely difficult. Being the tinfoil hat-clad office social media naysayer that I am, I had already deleted all personal social media so didn't mind that side of things, but I did miss Whatsapp and the many group chats. It did open my eyes to the group chat though.

Despite always being in contact with my close mates in the group, when I made more of an effort to meet up with people in person, I realised how much personal stuff doesn't get said. When you say 'how we all doing?', what comes back is often a face value catch all response, whereas under the surface there's often more going on. Maybe the group chat made me a lazy friend. Despite briefing everyone about my upcoming blackout, nobody took more of an effort to get in touch with me, which I think was telling. My Punkt phone was a refreshing change and always a talking point. The price tag was controversial, but in my opinion, justifiable.

I was very nervous about this experiment. I like my smartphone and my social media. I like to communicate, I like to send memes, I like my routine of bedtime (and morning) scrolling and I wasn't looking forward to swapping this for a Punkt MP 01 and its minimal selection of calls, texts and calendar.

At first, it all felt a bit like going on holiday. The soothing bird noise ringtone, the difficulty in contacting people and the free time to read more books. Then, I got stressed at work and without even thinking about it, I transferred my sim back into my iPhone to be able to properly communicate beyond the T9 keypad.

I missed having everything in one place too: Connectivity with my car, music, podcasts and camera, but not social media so much. I even made a little checklist of social media apps I would get rid of and contacts I would delete when I got my iPhone back. The big eye opener was using 'scrolling time' for something else and as a result, the experiment inspired me to sign up for a crash course in Italian, albeit with a little help from Duolingo...

### Jen SWABY

Designer, Serial Bed-time Scroller & Punkt Soft-spotter

### Will HALBERT

Staff Writer, Sausage Dog Owner & Instagram Enthusiast

With my smartphone offering me an odd collation of over 3,000 contacts spread across (what seems like) as many apps, cutting down to just nine essential phone numbers (thanks to the Light Phone) was an oddly cathartic descent into digital solitude.

In truth it was an easy break: The book replaced the handset; quick texts to my partner became lengthy lunchtime calls; and evenings without my feeds made for sounder sleep. On the flipside: I got lost more; awkward silences were even more awkward without the phone to help break up lingering eye contact; and the calibre of conversation was as hit-and-miss as the company in which I found myself.

Will I be using my phone less and looking up more from now on? I hope so. There's something to be said for engaging in your surroundings a little more, hanging onto conversations a little longer, and generally relying on your apps a little less. Will I return to Instagram once I switch back to the smartphone? Of course. How else will I send people unsolicited humble brags about how much I work out, how much coffee I drink, and how cute my dog is?

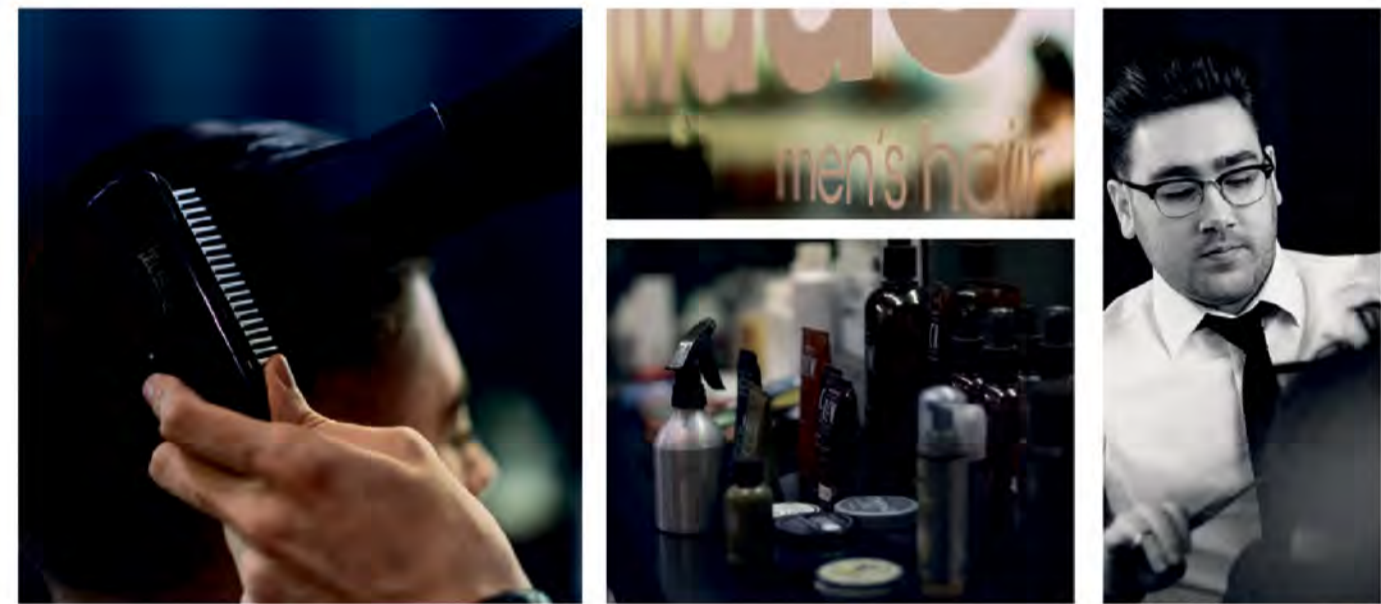
Truth of the matter is, I didn't last very long. But not for the reasons I thought. The thought of being offline for two weeks filled me with a bit of excitement but mainly worry (concerning being out of the social loop). Using the Light Phone meant I couldn't even text, which filled me with even more dread as I am not a phone call person at all and I even started to overthink my phone voice.

Due to the Light Phone's nine contact capacity, initially I thought I was going to have to make some really tough decisions, but embarrassingly, I realised I only had five people in my life that I really spoke to on a regular basis or would be slightly worried about me if they didn't hear from me in three plus days. This was a refreshing and eye opening realisation.

It was far easier than I thought, although I did realise my body had automated reactions to scroll through Instagram whenever I was waiting for something. I definitely felt more engaged on a daily basis, especially when talking to my boyfriend. Unfortunately, my job became practically impossible without a smartphone and it was an eye-opener to see how much my work revolves around having a one.

### Lara POYNOR

Account Manager, Instapreneur & FOMO Sufferer



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