

Students become consumed in world of modern technology

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Today, social media and artificial intelligence have consumed countless hours and days with endless doomscrolling and mindless watching. Pius X students often use social media and AI.

In an anonymous poll of over 350 Pius X students, over 42% had an average screen time of three to four hours. 23% were between 5 and 6 hours and almost 10% said they were in the 9–10 hour range.

“Social media is a waste of time because you get no benefit out of it other than dopamine for your brain which is a bad source of dopamine because it only lasts a couple seconds before you scroll to the next reel,” sophomore Luke Reinke said. “I feel like once you get rid of social media in your life, you’ll have a lot more clarity in what you’re trying to do.”

When people post on social

media, it allows their followers to only see the good parts of their life that are worth posting, therefore missing their imperfections.

“It’s pretty addictive and it’s pretty easy to say, ‘okay I am gonna go live in some else’s world,’ rather than allowing myself to live in the silence of my own heart,” counselor Sara Gubbels said. “I think that’s potentially a cause of a lot of heartache.”

In the poll, students were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1-5 on how anxious they are when away from their phones. 31% rated a one (not anxious), 43% rated a two and the remaining 26% filled the 3-5 range (anxious to very anxious).

According to sophomore Huyen Tran, social media roots insecurity which can lead to thoughts of constant comparison. She says it affects the mental health of teens because it leads

young people to become lazy, to doomscroll and it lessens their attention spans.

Social media plays a big role in the time students spend on their phones. Another problem that arises is the use of AI, especially in the classroom and how it affects students and teachers.

According to freshman Richard Garneau, the use of AI on schoolwork is not good in any way. He says it can be used for good and for the right reasons, but AI is particularly bad when used on homework.

As reported from the poll, 37% of students said they use AI daily or weekly while 63% use AI monthly or never.

“As a teacher, when I see things that are AI, it’s like ‘okay that’s not you,’” speech teacher Stephen Kurt said. “I want to know you because I care about you and I love you as a student. If I don’t know who you are, I can’t build that connection with you in the

classroom. Then our student-teacher relationship starts to suffer because of that.”

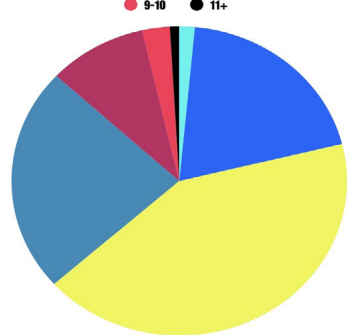
The use of AI not only diminishes a student’s academic integrity and ability to critically think, but adds another job for teachers to do.

“If I have this question that’s asking me to think about my morals, my values and my beliefs and if I just put that in ChatGPT, ChatGPT has no morals, values or beliefs,” Kurt said. “It’s a computer, it doesn’t have a soul. I want to know what’s on your heart, I want to know what you’re thinking.”

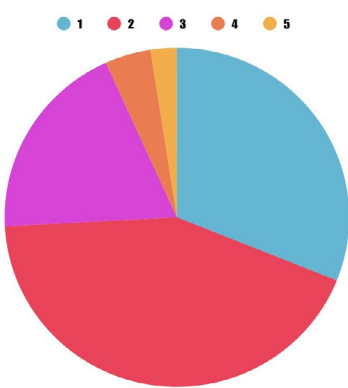
Phones can be used for good in moderation, but without moderation it becomes an idol before anything else.

“If you don’t know who you are first as a beloved son or daughter and are super steeped in that, then it’s really easy to be swayed in the wind and the tumultuous things that happen,” Gubbels said.

Average screen time (hours) of all grades



Anxiousness when away from a phone



Graphics by G. Brodersen

Binge-watching TV affects student health

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Staff Writer

Binge-watching is the new normal for Americans—but also for Pius X students who enjoy watching a variety of TV shows.

Saying “just one more episode” is what usually is the root cause of staying up all night and watching a TV show.

While binge-watching may be ideal for many people like freshman Noel Watson, many may not recognize the harm and effects on health.

“I don’t really spend time with anyone, and I don’t end up doing anything because I’m locked in on the show and not anybody else,” Watson said.

According to Northwestern Medicine, binge-watching is like a drug. The brain craves more and more and produces

dopamine as a person continues to binge. Some students notice the physical effects too.

“I feel like the effect of binge-watching a series is that it makes me kind of sluggish and tired,” freshman Keisha Suminski said. “Binge-watching definitely affects my health in a sense that I can get really crabby if that’s all I’ve done that day or it makes me tired.”

According to a survey from the United Kingdom, heavy binge-watching can cause mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and loneliness after finishing a TV series.

And though binge-watching may seem like a bad habit, a study from the University of Georgia suggests there may be some benefits to not turning a series off.

“Binge-watching may help viewers build mental worlds where stories continue even after finishing the series,” a study from the University of Georgia said. “And these tales may help them cope in times of stress. It also makes stories more memorable by helping viewers connect plot threads and come away with a bigger picture of the story. This is especially true for longer series, with lots of different plotlines and characters to follow.”

Freshman Caroline Schwartz agreed that the storytelling aspect is part of the appeal.

“It’s good to experience a lot of things, like different plots,” Schwartz said.

Tips for managing binge-watching include limiting yourself to a certain, small number of episodes, setting a time limit by deciding the amount of time TV watched per night, balancing TV viewing with other activities, such as physical exercise, and making it a social thing and inviting friends or family to watch TV.



Graphic by A. Vu

Nails become a popular form of self expression

SARAH VOLKMER
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For many girls at Pius X, getting their nails done has become more than just something for special occasions; it has become part of their routines.

Students like senior Gabby Major have routinely gotten their nails done for many years.

“I think I’ve been getting my nails done since eighth grade, and I get them every two weeks so it’ll line up with my paycheck,” Major said.

For Major, having her nails done is a source of confidence.

“I like getting my nails done because it helps me to feel put together,” Major said. “Whenever I don’t have my nails done, I just feel like a part of me is missing.”

Although Major enjoys the feeling of a new set of nails, she knows that the costs can add up quickly. “Every time I’d say I spend an average of \$55,” Major said.

After doing the math, Major commented that she has spent about \$7,150 on her nails since eighth grade with about \$1,430 spent per year.

Students including junior Gianna Oldenburg and sophomore Ashley Rodriguez have learned to do their own nails to avoid the cost of nail appointments. Both

students have spent about \$150-\$200 on supplies.

“I didn’t like paying a lot of money to get my nails done, so I just thought I would learn to do them myself,” Oldenburg said.

Oldenburg has been doing her nails about every two weeks for a little over a year, while Rodriguez has been doing her nails once a month for about six months.

“I was introduced to it by my older sister,”

Rodriguez said. “She started doing it, and then I bought a kit for my birthday.”

Oldenburg enjoys doing nails because it helps relax her.

“I feel like it’s a fun thing to do,” Oldenburg said. “It helps me relieve my stress. If I need something to do or just something to distract me, I do my nails.”

Doing nails is not a simple process. Oldenburg mentioned that it takes her about two and a half to three hours to do her nails. Rodriguez said it can take her anywhere from two hours to an entire day.

“I think my favorite part is getting to do different designs, and I like to express myself through that,” Rodriguez said. “I like using my favorite colors and patterns.”

Nails are more than just a beauty routine. They’re a way to show self-expression through something small.



Junior Gianna Oldenburg shows off her freshly-painted nails. Oldenburg takes two and a half hours to do her nails. “It helps me relieve my stress,” Oldenburg said. Photos by G. Oldenburg



Drinks transition from treats to addiction for some

MELLISSA NGUYEN
Staff Writer



Junior Breanna Conroy walks into school with her daily drink in hand. Many students can’t go a day without a drink. “I drink a Red Bull almost every day,” Conroy said. Photo by M. Nguyen

What started as an occasional treat, has turned into an everyday habit for many students.

Throughout the day many students rely on their coffee and energy drinks to get through the long day.

“It’s nice to have a good pick-me-up for the morning,” sophomore An Vu said.

Some popular choices for students are normally 7 Brew, Scooters, Alani, Red Bull and The Mill.

Some even admit that their caffeine fixation has become a daily necessity.

“I go to 7 Brew about eight times a week,” junior Paul Nguyen said.

Students’ reliance on energy drinks is a constant, but it comes with a price tag.

“I used to drink Alanis every day and this year I’m trying not to drink as much caffeine, so I’m drinking more like Red Bulls,” junior Breanna Conroy said. “I spent probably around \$500 on energy drinks last year.”

The endless flavors these drinks offer make them hard to resist.

“I like how you can customize each drink,” Nguyen said.

The appeal of these drinks goes beyond flavor, with caffeine

Students benefit from staying active

GABBY AUGUSTINE
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Throughout the Pius X community, many students often include physical fitness in their daily routines.

Senior Erica Horne started her fitness journey in sixth grade with a personal trainer, but now she is involved in softball as well as track and field for Pius X.

“I have always been in sports, my dad coached many sports, and in my house we have always been big sports fans,” Horne said.

Senior Oliver Steffen played football for three years for Pius X, but now he enjoys going to the gym throughout the week alone.

“I like to work out alone more because when I’m working out with people I tend to get distracted and don’t work out as much, but when I’m by myself I can really focus on my lifting,” Steffen said.

Having dedicated teammates to push Horne on busy days reminds her what a great community she has at Pius X.

“Having teammates or a friend or two to work out at the same time on the same sports team to get you up in the early mornings or into the gym after school on a long day helps with motivation,” Horne said. “A lot of it is motivating each other and pursuing goals.”

Strength and performance coach Ryan Kearney advises students to always include fitness in their daily lives to stay healthy.

“Doing varied activities is very good, not only to train different parts of your overall fitness but also to keep you engaged in physical activity,” Kearney said. “Always make sure you have a component of strength training so that you’re building or maintaining muscle mass.”

Horne loves working out as much as possible because it sharpens her ability to constantly improve within herself.

“I’ve always wanted to be good at something that wasn’t

being a major draw for students.

“It’s so sugary, I like the flavor and the caffeine,” Conroy said. “I’m basically addicted.”

Students opt for these drinks because it’s easy and fast to grab before or after school.

“It’s so convenient to just stop by because there’s so many places you could go,” Vu said.

Many individuals like to switch things up and get something different each time. This keeps them coming back for more drinks.

“From The Mill, I like getting an iced caramel latte,” Vu said. “And from Scooters, I like the blended caramelicious.”

Starting this year, administration added a rule that students couldn’t bring in drinks during the school day, but that didn’t stop students from having their go-to drink each morning.

“I walk in the door like every day with a drink and put it in my locker,” Conroy said.

Many students consume drinks so often that they cannot go a day without one.

“I get caffeine headaches if I don’t have one for the day,” Conroy said.

Others may even consider having up to three drinks per day, not realizing how excessive this habit can become.

just books and school, I wanted to be able to have some sort of fitness where I felt good about myself and what I can do,” Horne said. “So I train to help me push myself to the limit of what I can do physically and how good I can be.”

Kearney hopes for all students at Pius X to take good care of themselves as a part of their daily life.

“If they are a non-athlete, my goal for them is to have great exposure to the weight room, to lifting, proper lifting techniques so that they can take that with them when they go out in the community,” Kearney said. “If it’s for our athletes, then the goal is to improve their overall ability to do things like sprint, produce force and power so that they can compete at higher levels.”



Senior Erica Horne bench presses. Horne is involved in softball and track and field. “I have always been in sports, my dad coached many sports, and in my house we have always been big sports fans,” Horne said. Photo by G. Augustine

Students and counselors collect fidgets to ease stress

THANH NINH
Staff Writer

Students typically bring school supplies to class, but some bring fidgets.

People have been collecting different types of fidgets to relieve their stress.

NeeDohs are a type of stress ball; they are currently trending, influencing students to buy a large amount of them.

“I love how NeeDohs are squishy, and they just take stress away,” junior Nyla Schulz said. Schulz has been collecting numerous NeeDohs and has now acquired six.

“I have spent around \$28 on NeeDohs, but that also includes gifts for my friends,” Schulz said.

Sophomore Joslyn Drahota also

has a collection of fidgets. She enjoys playing with them during class.

“I just like how I get to use my fidgets when I’m bored,” Drahota said. “At school, I like to use them whenever I am stressed.”

Using fidgets doesn’t only have the fun factor but has also affected students’ focus in class.

“I think fidgets help me focus and it just helps me get through the day better and also less stress,” Drahota said.

Students are not the only ones who collect fidgets. School counselor Megan Brown has bins of fidgets available for students to use during counseling sessions.

“I like using fidgets as a tool to help students when they are experiencing any type of emotion,” Brown said. “They are more open to

talk if they have something in their hand to play with.”

As a school counselor, Brown wants to provide a safe space for students, and fidgets have helped them experience that.

“I always have fidgets out when students come in, and they always feel more comfortable and less anxious than before when they have a fidget,” Brown said.

Brown has not always been a Pius X counselor; she used to be the Blessed Sacrament school counselor until she came to Pius X this year.

“I ended up with more fidgets because when I left a bunch of middle schoolers gave me fidgets,” Brown said. “I do not think that I would have as many fidgets as I do now if I was not in the elementary/middle school position.”



School counselor Megan Brown picks up a fidget from her shelf. The fidgets are for any students who may need them. “Fidgets are just helpful for students in many ways,” Brown said. Photo by T. Ninh

Lincoln Pius X

Topic: Obsessed: Trends and habits Pius X can't get enough of

Students: Gretchen Brodersen, An Vu, Sarah Volkmer, Mellisa Nguyen, Gabrielle Augustine, Thanh Ninh