

Wisdom Lab: Rage Against the Machine

27 September, 2021 | A record of the gathering and our zoom chat

Slides available [here](#)

Feedback survey [here](#)



Discipleship in the digital age

One thing has become crystal clear over the last year: we're incredibly dependent on technology.

With family chats on Zoom, working from home, and church online, our screen time has gone through the roof, and we've relied on tech to connect us to the outside world.

And this dependence isn't new. You're reading this on an electronic device. Your phone's probably in your hand or within arm's reach. And there's a good chance you spend [several hours](#) on that phone each day.

But how often do we stop to think about how the technology we use every day is forming us? Is it possible that our technology is subtly teaching us what's good, what's evil, and what it means to be human?

As the digital world grows in influence, it's vital to understand how it serves – and violates – God's purposes for creation. Because as Christians, we all have a duty to use our technology in a way that brings healing to ourselves and our communities – and communicates the gospel to our virtual neighbours in a meaningful way.

Join us for an evening of lively discussion on this crucial topic – and discover together what it looks like to make a difference for Christ in this tech-dominated age.

Speakers:

Matt Jolley, Research & Development – Culture and Discipleship, LICC

After graduating from Durham with a degree in Theology, Matt joined the team at LICC with responsibility for conducting research for upcoming projects, reviewing current products, and writing for the website. He's since taken on the editing and co-ordinating of our weekly Connecting with Culture blog, and has joined the Culture and Discipleship team, helping disciples navigate tricky cultural terrain wisely and fruitfully. Outside of work, Matt enjoys playing sport, eating good food, and playing the drums. He's yet to find a way to do all three at once.

Dave Benson – Director, Culture and Discipleship, LICC

Dave is a leading thinker and researcher on the role of faith in 21st-Century western culture. Formerly a lecturer at Malyon Theological College, he now heads up our work for Culture & Discipleship. In his own words, his mission is 'to cultivate disciples with wisdom for the way of Christ in a post-Christendom culture.' He enjoys hiking, running with his wife Nikki, drumming, and photography. He is also pathologically clumsy and owns a motorbike – which (perhaps thankfully) is stranded in Oz following his move to London.

Key Links:

- For the first of two blogs written in the run up to the event, expanding on what it means to 'Listen' and 'Imagine' a better way of using our tech (and especially our phones), see <https://licc.org.uk/resources/christlike-living-in-a-high-tech-world/>
- For the second of the two blogs, looking at how we might respond through spiritual practices and strategic action, living and telling God's story, see <https://licc.org.uk/resources/what-do-we-do-now/>
- For what it means to be a whole-life disciple, and why this must extend to our use of tech, see <https://licc.org.uk/resources/what-is-a-whole-life-disciple/>
- For more on the wise peacemakers framework of how to listen, imagine, create, and communicate, see <https://licc.org.uk/resources/wise-peacemakers-part-1-of-5/>

Question: What's your favourite app and why?¹

¹ For privacy, the names of contributors have been removed

- 'apps: the guardian, linkedin and whatsapp'
- 'Favourite app online chess. Had to give it up in Lent!'
- 'Youtube - for relaxing and entertainment'
- 'My favourite app is the Tesco app, can't stop looking at food for the weekly shop'
- 'Yes, I enjoy the OS maps app - all the OS maps in the country :-)'
- 'Twitter'
- 'Spotify is my favourite app'
- 'Apps: Garmin Connect for fitness tracking, also online chess!'
- 'Facebook, youtube'
- 'Favourite app a plane trackers'
- 'ViewRanger, good maps for walking, shows if it will be too far, records where you go, finds out where you actually are when lost'

Question: 1) Where do I see the creational good in this hi-tech, and how does my mobile use magnify God's image in me? And...

2) Where do I see the cultural idolatry in this hi-tech, and how does my mobile use mutilate God's image in me?

- 'Creational good from greater connection. Cultural idolatry from greater consumption.'
- 'Idolatry UNQUESTIONING assumption that technology is good.'
- 'Connecting with others easily and compare with others, Distraction from serious and deep thought, Being present'
- 'helps Communication but hinders Incarnation'
- 'We're tempted to believe we're omniscient and omnipresent ... all knowing and everywhere ... but we're not, so we end up thinning out all our knowing and relating'
- 'Danger with online bullying and self-esteem problems with young people'
- 'Even faith apps now gamify things - prayer streaks, you version bible reading streaks etc.'

To go deeper:

- Jean Twenge's research into the impact of technology, and particular phone use, upon Gen Z:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/has-the-smartphone-destroyed-a-generation/534198/>
- John Dyer's excellent book placing technology within a biblical framework, from creation through to new creation:
<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Garden-City-Dyer-John/dp/0825426685/>
- Tips for how to use Facebook, and social media, to God's glory:
<https://licc.org.uk/resources/being-fruitful-on-facebook-wisdom-for-the-web/>

- Practical suggestions and principles for how to put your technology in its proper place: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Tech-Wise-Family-Everyday-Putting-Technology-ebook/dp/B01M1SDHYT/>
- An app that both helps you concentrate and helps the planet: <https://www.forestapp.cc/>
- The docu-drama 'The Social Dilemma', along with a blog piece discussing how excessive social media use may be affecting us as disciples: <https://www.netflix.com/gb/title/81254224> and <https://licc.org.uk/resources/misconnection-and-our-social-dilemma/>
- John Lennox's apologetic, particularly looking at AI but which applies to technology more widely, on the good news for a high-tech age: https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/0310109566/?coliid=IWUPAPU2A3PAU&colid=BKWHQ7NVS4LG&psc=1&ref=lv_ov_lig_dp_it
- A thought-provoking article that compares social media to alcohol – potentially good in moderation, but potentially dangerous when used without limits: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/09/social-media-attention-alcohol-booze-instagram-twitter/620101/>

Appreciative Comments:

- 'This seminar is very helpful, thank you. Very well-balanced'
- 'Yes, great to have a discussion like this.'
- 'Very worthwhile'
- 'My first time attending LICC's event and think it is great. We need this kind of exploration talks on practical issues, where people can contribute opinions and brainstorm together.'
- 'thanks very much for this evening. good to hear others speaking, lots of overlap with other discussions I have had but really liked your session on how we can use our phones to further our faith and share our faith, nice fresh angle'
- 'Thank you for a very stimulating and challenging evening'
- 'Thank you so much. this will make a big impact upon me and I pray my family. Great evening.'

Future Events to Consider:

- Across four fortnightly gatherings, explore Justin Whitmel-Earley's book *The Common Rule*, and explore practices and habits of purpose for the modern world: [Open Book: The Common Rule](#)
- Join a mid-week micro-retreat to step back, pause, and process your work with God: [Retreat Your Self](#)
- To continue looking at the power of habit, this time for the workplace, try [Workplace Habits for Better Decisions](#)