

QUICK FEDI POST

I'm frustrated by my lack of time, competence and motivation to fix and finish my daktil keyboards. 2 classical daktyls and one manuform need maintenance, I could probably replace broken parts from one to another, and one manuform is 1/3 complete. I've been using these keyboards as my daily drivers for more than 7 years and I really enjoy qmk firmware - having all modifier keys on both sides symmetrically and they are split which means I can have hands in a more relaxed position as driving a chopper instead of a racing bike.

A few friends with DIY keyboards are facing similar problems. I'll try to bring them together to work on our keyboards, but for the time being I found this old cherry keyboard in the closet. It belonged to my grandfather and I bought PS2/USB connector to give it a new life. It's not mechanical but still better than other cheap key boards.

I was also considering buying commercial split keyboard but with 4 daktyls laying around it just seems wrong. Hopefully my friends will find time, we'll get together and do the necessary maintenance. #DITO

MY DIGITAL DETOX ATTEMPTS

//IMAGES: bananaphones, typewriter, Boox Mira, Digital minimalism
I've had issues with internet/screen addiction since highschool. Well it was worst at that time since I was gaming as a way to escape family issues. It got really bad and I had several 30+ hours of continuous playtime. This pretty much filled me with repugnance to videogames and I ~~don't~~ only seldomly play any. After videogames I've started to watch a lot of random videos, such as NBA trivia and similar worthless stuff, well some science related yt channels are fine, but it doesn't outweigh the negative consequences this kind of compulsive watching brings. I'll come to consequences in a second but I must also add news media outlets which I'm constantly refreshing, my email client and social media. Or I was. Forgot to mention that twitter and facebook also hit me hard. There were stages that were quite similar to those that drug and alcohol addicts go through.

At first you don't notice anything, then you try to deny and after acknowledging the issues, I tried to go over all boundaries in order to make these online activities disgusting to me. I must say this is a big mistake, there hardly ever is a boundary and with each such attempt you only get deeper into addiction.

Desperation kicks in followed by depression. I ~~was~~ isolated myself socially and with that it is harder to get help. Motivation and focus levels plummet, sleeping and eating habits suffer. That was the ~~way~~ how the worst periods of my addictions looked like, but generally there are waves. I got out of gaming addiction pretty much the same way as Mark Renton does in Trainspotting, with a backward somersault. That's how it felt and I was good for a few months and I finished the first year of my studies. But I was vulnerable to disappointments and failures and found myself spending more and more time on social networks.

Another thing that plunges me, that sucks me onto screens are wars. When Ukraine brutally suppressed the uprising in the East, when USA and EU confiscated Venezuela's gold reserves and wanted to impose pro-western president, when ISIS (western backed) started its deadly campaign in middle east, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, genocide in Gaza, Israel's attacks on sovereign states and its terrorism... I forgot the crackdown on wiki leaks and Snowden revelations. You get the idea. I'm afraid of atomic war that might broke out and I have no means of preventing or avoiding it.

Well this was probably a bit too personal and I'm not sure I should or will share this on my blog. There are also issues of lesser impact (negative) but of impact nonetheless and I notice them with other people as well. One such thing is bringing your smart phone to the toilette. Once I'm finished there I don't remember properly what was I onto and it is a good opportunity to check smartphone again. So this is a lack of focus. When we're out on drink it is harder to maintain conversation. I'm quite proud of myself when I notice people losing track of conversation and looking at their smart phones. Getting rid of my smartphone was my first thing to do, when I decided I had to address my frequent digital intoxications.

I got myself a yellow bananaphone from ebay. Improvements in focus levels were quite significant from the start. I started reading again and it has been increasing ever since. I track my reading in bookworm, federated open source (almost) alternative to Goodreads. I'm very fond of this service but I have to leave that for another opportunity. To be honest, I had additional motivation to leave smartphone behind because I had second thoughts about privacy.

Biggest drawback in using a dumbphone (which technically bananaphone is not, is the lack of navigation app. Supposedly I could make Open streetmap app working on the phone but so far I haven't

yet been successful with that. I had a lot of issues installing GerdaOS on the bananaphone which is a degoogled version of KaiOS (the reference comes from Andersen's fairytail Snowqueen). If anyone has OSM working on bananaphone, please let me know how.

I was rushing to the city center once (I'm always late) had a new jacket and when I tried to put the phone in the pocket it fall on the hard concrete and it went into peaces. These phones are actually quite durable but the problem was that connector to the screen cut off. It still technically works but I have to align the contacts right and than hold the screen tight to the phone's body. My friend made a good joke that this is a touchscreen :). I also did lend the phone to a 4 year old, that had super fun with the slide phone but was not very gentle with it.

So with the bananaphone being broken I had another few weeks of using my old smartphone and I was hooked right away. Those first-thing in the morning email and social media checks were back and afternoon kind of naps where I could spend hours watching videos via newpipe. I was dellaying getting new dumbphone but after a few weeks I found some used ones on online fleamarket and got a new one.

There was one more occasion where I got myself back the smartphone when I went to visit drupalCon and my partner was 8 months pregnant with twins and I wanted to make sure I was reachable by internet and again the old patterns were back. Late ~~time~~ night video watching, constantly checking email and mastodon ~~not~~ reading books I had brought with me. And after a night of lack of sleep it is even easier not being able to focus and spend time on the screen. I was late on switching back to ~~smartpho~~ banana but when I did, it felt good.

All in all I'm really happy with switching to dumbphone and I'd advise to anyone who is considering going on digital detox.

TYPEWRITER

Another aattempt at reducing the screentime was to try to write on typewriter instead of on a computer. This was also idea behind this blog of mine but as you can see, there is not much on it. If I further develop the idea, once I'd had a text written on paper I would scan it and OCR it with tesseract OCR, that one gave me the best results. (Of the open source OCR softwares I found. Teseract also have additional support for Slovenian language.

I was also considering writing a script that would scan a sheet of paper and recognize email header and automatically send

email. I was also planning to prepare for my radio show tech-critical and maybe do some creative writing if I'd ever found the time.

There are several drawbacks with using typewriter. It takes more time and space. You have to be more thoughtful while writing since it is harder to fix mistakes. I take handwritten notes of which parts I'd like to correct or paraphrase and do it after OCRing and importing into Emacs orgmode.

I also miss some special characters on the keyboard, namely backslash, asterisk and hashtag. I got the typewriter for birthday and when I find the time to use it I quite enjoy it. It comes in very handy when I'm at the mountainhut my family owns. I'll come to that as well. What I wanted to say is that the typewriter has Slovenian keyboard, which is fine for creating writing but I miss it for plain text orgmode characters. I sometimes check ebay for IBM selectric, which I hold dear to heart due to its appearance in Elio Petri's movie Citizen above suspicion (I hope I got this right). May be it is Costa Gavras' Z. If ever I get to the point where I won't be forced to work 8hours, I might get myself to write more.

Overall, typewriting needs more adjustment, typing is slower, mistakes are harder to correct, but there is no screen, no blue light that would mess with my biorythm.

BOOX MIRA EINK MONITOR

This was my biggest and most underutilized investment. I was reluctant to spend 2400 euro on 24inch Mira Pro screen and wanted first to try out the smaller one, which was still 900e. The smaller one is 13 inches and I planed to use it outside and to read ebooks and pdfs. But since it is a monitor, you have to have it connected to computer. In order to have it in front of you, you also need another keyboard. Then there are few setbacks that are specific for me.

I am very consistent user of darkmodes which are a no-go for eink screen. I had to set things back to light mode but for web services it means setting back per service... anyways this was an issue for me. Secondly, I have a laptops, actually two of them with a touch screen. I had to figure out how to disable touch screen on computer and enable it on eink monitor. Took me some time and I did not do it in a permanent way so ~~if~~ there were few commands that I had to run every time I connected this monitor. I did not memorize them, neither had I written a script bash to automate the process. And lastly, I did not find any nice program that enables gusetures. With nice I mean working out of the box with

minimum configuration. Toucheegg came close, but I was unpleasantly surprised when I found out that they removed scroll gestures from the latest version.

There are still plans to integrate it into a cyberdeck but not in the foreseeable future. I'm also determined to read the Prot's Emacs Lisp Elements book on this eink monitor. I have to document usage this time.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

GETTING OF GRID

I've already mentioned the mountain hut. It is poorly maintained so there is very little electricity and the water has to be brought from the nearby stream. Strangely, I have no urges to use electronic devices while I'm there. I get solid 2-3 weeks of vacations there every summer. I read a lot, hike and mounteneer and there is also a mountain lake nearby warm enough to swim. Even the phone signal is weak there.

I was considering moving there and renting an office in the village that is an hour away, but I can't leave a cosy life in a small ~~hut~~ house near Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia.

READING PHYSICAL BOOKS AND PRINTING ARTICLES

I ~~s~~ often print out articles I'd like to read on paper. I have an old laserjet and refilled cartridges are inexpensive. I can also take notes directly on paper.

I did buy a used copy of Cal Newport's Digital Minimalism book. It is a third on my list of books to read. I could probably write another reflection on my digital detox after I read it.

ANALOG WATCH

Not having a smart watch is ~~a~~ a no-brainer if you want to digitally detox. I received an old analog soviet watch, it is probably around 50years old, refurbished and runs good. I have to wind it every two days and after a week it is a few minutes off but it is good to have time on your wrist without a need to check the phone what time is it.

USE TERMINAL INSTEAD OF BROWSER

There was a low point in my computer addiction and I asked my partner at that time to take my computer away from me. I had a raspberry pie still at home and I used lynx to learn to program. Another non-graphical internet browser inside Emacs is w3m but I haven't yet got fluent using it. I should put this higher on my priority list.

There are all kind of tasks that can be accomplished in terminal. It is much safer to use terminal since there are no~~n~~ easy ways to get distracted in it. In graphical browser, there's also new tab and webpages that you use most frequently are waiting there as tempting icons. Command lines tools are also much faster than doing things in browser by mostly using mouse, there are no dark patterns and no ads. So if I can, I like to search for command line tools instead of using web UI.

I haven't really done any real investigation into digital detox. These are just things that occurred spontaneously to me. If you have similar aspiration let me know how your journey is going. As a developer I'll never be able to fully disconnect, but I must get to a healthy screen time level.

Another drawback of bananaphone is that writing messages is cumbersome. I prefer calling people even if they text me.