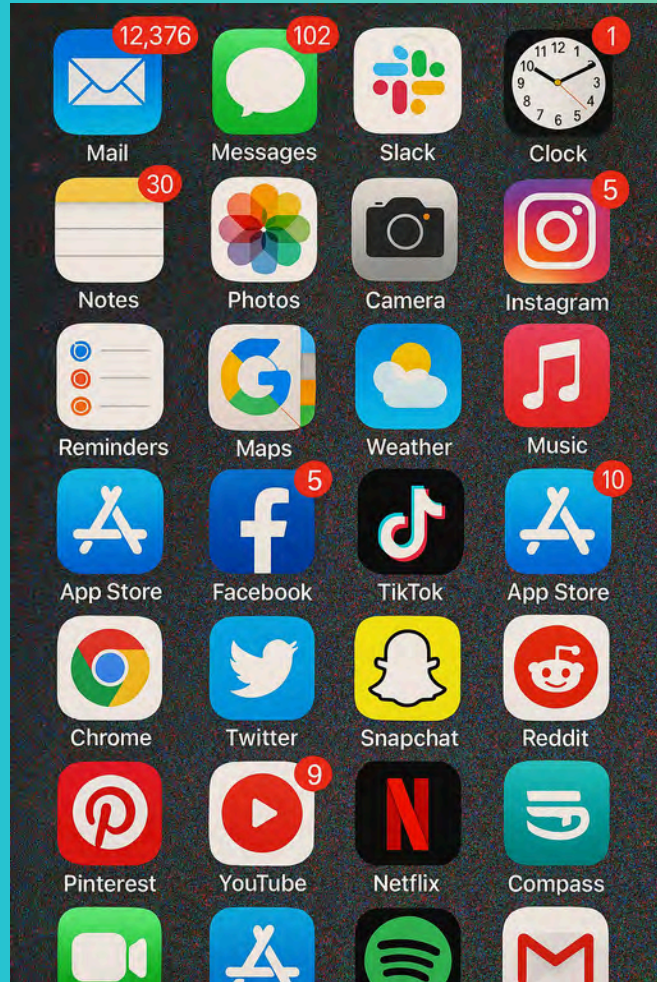


Between Scrolls and Silence

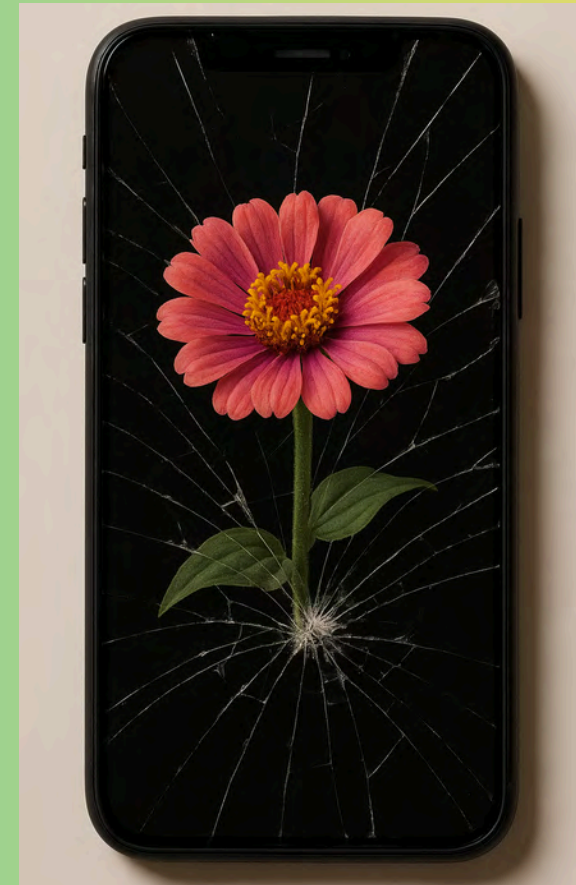


Between Scrolls and Silence begins with a question: When was the last time you were truly offline—not just disconnected from Wi-Fi, but reconnected with yourself?

In a world where our thumbs swipe more than our eyes blink, where every moment is filtered, tracked, and shared, this zine is a pause. A breath. A deep dive into the digital loop I live in—and the quiet I'm learning to reclaim. This is not just a story about technology. It's about identity, distraction, creation, and the fragile art of being present.

Welcome to the space between the noise and the stillness.

My Life in a Digital Loop



My Life in a Digital Loop

By: Maryam

This zine is a snapshot of the in-between—the space where buzzing notifications meet quiet thoughts, where I lose myself in the scroll and slowly find myself in the silence.

It's emotional, honest, and a little gritty—like a cracked screen that still lights up. Inside, you'll find stories, sketches, fragments, and reflections about what it means to live, create, and feel in a world that never stops moving.

This is my attempt to press pause—to explore the loop, question it, and maybe break it.

Introduction

Plugged In, Zoned Out

Dear Reader,

I wake up every morning to the soft chime of my phone—before my eyes fully open, my fingers are already swiping. Notifications flood the screen like waves, some urgent, most pointless. Emails, updates, reels, and reminders—all waiting, all demanding my attention. Before I’ve even had water, I’m plugged in.

Technology has become the background music of my life. It hums quietly behind every moment—guiding, distracting, informing, numbing. Sometimes it feels like a superpower. I can learn a new skill in seconds, create art with my fingertips, or connect with someone halfway across the globe. Other times, it feels like a loop I can’t escape—scroll, like, refresh, repeat.

This zine is a pause.

It’s my attempt to step out of the loop and look at it—to untangle the ways technology shapes who I am, what I create, and how I feel. I’m writing this now because I’ve reached a point where I need to understand my relationship with tech on a deeper level. Am I using it, or is it using me? Am I connected, or just constantly distracted?

There are days when my creativity thrives because of digital tools. There are nights when the glow of my screen keeps me from sleep and peace. I live between those extremes—between scrolls and silence.

I don’t have all the answers, but in these pages, I’ll share stories, reflections, questions, and fragments of my daily digital life. I hope they resonate with you—whether you feel overwhelmed, inspired, addicted, curious, or somewhere in between.

Let’s explore what it means to live in a world where we’re always online but not always present.

Welcome to Between Scrolls and Silence.

Maryam



A Day in My Digital Life

From Alarm to Algorithm


Purpose: This piece offers a real-time look into how deeply technology shapes daily life, highlighting both the comfort and the chaos of living in a digitally-driven loop.

A Typical Day

- 7:15 AM:** Wakes up to phone vibrations, snoozes once, then reaches for Instagram before even opening eyes. Mindless scrolling begins.
- 8:00 AM:** Notion to-do list offers a brief sense of control, shattered by an overwhelming inbox. Tries to resist checking email—fails.
- 9:00 AM:** Commute soundtracked by Spotify’s “Focus & Flow” playlist. Google Maps takes over. Physically present, mentally distant.
- 12:30 PM:** Lunch with YouTube and Reddit. Silence is scary. Distraction pairs with digestion.
- 3:00 PM:** Notifications pile up. Screen time warning hits. Coffee and TikTok fill the fog, but the dopamine crash feels empty.
- 6:00 PM:** Work ends, phone stays. Instagram again. Comparison creeps in—others seem better, more. Self-worth dips.
- 9:30 PM:** Bedtime becomes doomscrolling. News, noise, podcasts—anything but silence. Sleep comes, but peace doesn’t.



Tech + Identity

 **Purpose:** To reflect deeply on how digital platforms—especially social media—shape, distort, or even liberate your sense of self. This section invites readers to consider the contrast between the person they show online and who they feel they truly are offline

Curated Me vs. Real Me

It's surprisingly easy to craft an idealized version of myself online—filtered, witty, polished, and confident. My curated presence hides the chaos, anxiety, and uncertainty behind the scenes. The real me is softer, more hesitant, and far from perfect.


During the pandemic, the line between online and offline selves blurred. I began measuring my worth through engagement, even deleting posts that didn't perform. That moment made me question whether I was expressing myself or trying to impress others.

Now, I'm learning to be more honest—posting imperfect photos, sharing thoughts that don't follow trends, and embracing the truth that I'm not a brand. I'm human—messy, beautiful, and real.



The Overwhelm

A Personal Story of Tech Burnout

 **Purpose:** To explore the emotional and mental toll of constant connectivity, showing how easily technology can slip from a helpful tool to an overwhelming burden. This section should be both personal and reflective, grounded in your experience but tied to broader cultural pattern.

Notifications & Noise

It began as harmless background static—occasional pings and likes. Gradually, the noise intensified: constant app alerts, never-ending group chats, and marketing pings. The phone buzzed nonstop, and so did the brain.

One weekend, after spending 9 hours on the phone—mostly on Instagram, TikTok, and news apps—it hit hard. The screen time report was a wake-up call. The feeling was overwhelming, like being in a room full of shouting voices—none your own.

So, a bold move: deleting Instagram and TikTok for just one week. The first days felt strange—empty home screen spots triggered phantom habits. But by Day 3, silence returned. The inner voice, once drowned out, became audible again.


Journaling. Walking without sound. Cloud-gazing. Not total healing, but a moment of mental stillness—an exhale. The addiction wasn't to any one app, but to input itself. The scroll. The illusion of productivity. The FOMO (Fear of Missing Out).

The realization: algorithms are built for attention capture—not just entertainment. With that awareness came action: setting screen limits, silencing non-essentials, and taking monthly “silent days.”

It's not a flawless path. The loop still tempts. But seeing the loop—and naming it—offers control. And in that awareness lies power.



Ethical Reflections

 **Purpose:** This section explores the deeper, often invisible moral and societal implications of living in a digitally dominated world. While earlier sections explored personal feelings and habits, this one steps back to look at the bigger picture—the systems, ethics, and consequences of tech on our lives and societies.

Swipe with Caution

We engage with our devices constantly—swiping, scrolling, tapping—but rarely consider what we’re giving up in return.

At first, technology felt neutral—a tool for exploration. But it’s become clear that hidden systems behind our feeds and recommendations are constantly tracking and influencing us, which feels unsettling.

Convenience comes at a hidden cost: our privacy. We often accept terms without thinking, trading personal data for ease. Lately, the writer has started questioning who benefits from this exchange.

Surveillance has evolved beyond cameras. It’s embedded in our digital lives—tracking our searches, locations, and feeds, often without us realizing it.

Apps are intentionally designed to be addictive. Features like infinite scroll and autoplay aren’t accidental—they’re built to keep us engaged. Even with awareness, it’s easy to fall into the trap.


AI systems can inherit and reinforce societal biases. When trained on flawed human data, they can perpetuate discrimination—highlighting how ethics and code are closely linked. In response, the writer tries to be more mindful—researching apps, using privacy-focused tools, managing permissions, and encouraging open conversations to push back against unethical tech.

Technology holds immense power, and while not inherently harmful, it requires accountability. Users may not control everything, but we can choose to engage more consciously.

Ultimately, every digital interaction matters. Every swipe is a choice.



Closing Thoughts

 **Purpose:** To bring your journey full circle and leave readers with a sense of resolution, reflection, and hope. This section shifts the tone from critique and exploration to healing and intention. It acknowledges the challenges of digital life but leans into the possibility of finding balance.

Disconnect to Reconnect

I’ve lived in the loop.

From morning notifications to midnight scrolling, my days have often blurred into swipes and taps. But somewhere between the chaos of connection and the quiet longing for stillness, I found the space to ask: what kind of relationship do I want with technology?

Not a breakup. Not a detox.

Just a better conversation.

I don’t want to reject the digital world—I just want to stop letting it dictate my rhythm. I want to be more intentional. I want to create more than I consume. I want to listen to my own thoughts without the hum of everyone else’s opinions.

So here’s my promise to myself:

One hour each day, phone off.

No scrolling, no updates—just me, a journal, a walk, a book, a moment of real presence.

Maybe it won’t be perfect. Maybe I’ll forget, fall back, or cheat.

But I’ll keep coming back to that quiet.

To that silence.

To myself.

Because disconnecting isn’t about going offline.

It’s about finding the parts of me that were never on the screen to begin with.

