Zürcher Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften

zh aw Angewandte Psychologie

# Digitization and sufficiency

Lilian Suter MSc

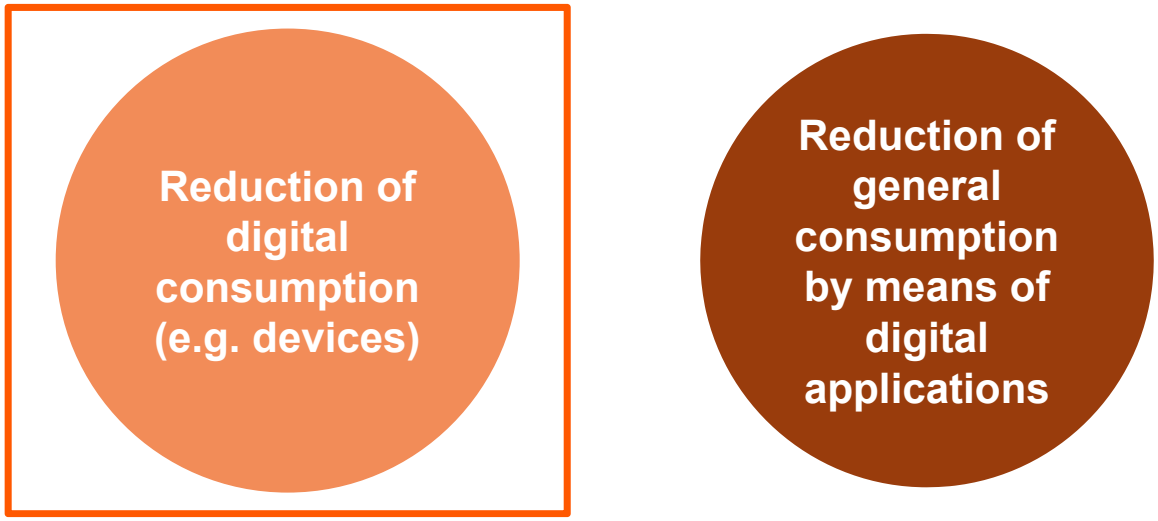
Online workshop «Shaping a sustainable digital future»

May 8 2020

# Overview

- How can digitization be used to achieve environmental goals?

- **Promotion of sufficiency:**
  By creating incentives **to reduce environmentally harmful consumption**, the economy is to be decelerated and **the trend towards a consumer and throwaway society counteracted**.



# Insights into the research project "Digital Sufficiency"

- Objective: The increasing use of digital media can have a negative impact on the environment. The interdisciplinary project team wants to reduce the ecological burden by encouraging **young people to use digital media in a more "resource-friendly" way.**

- Interdisciplinary Project: Cooperation between the Institute for Environment and Sustainable Development IUNR of the ZHAW and the Department of Media Psychology of the ZHAW

- The project was supported by Mercator Foundation Switzerland.

# Insights into the research project "Digital Sufficiency"

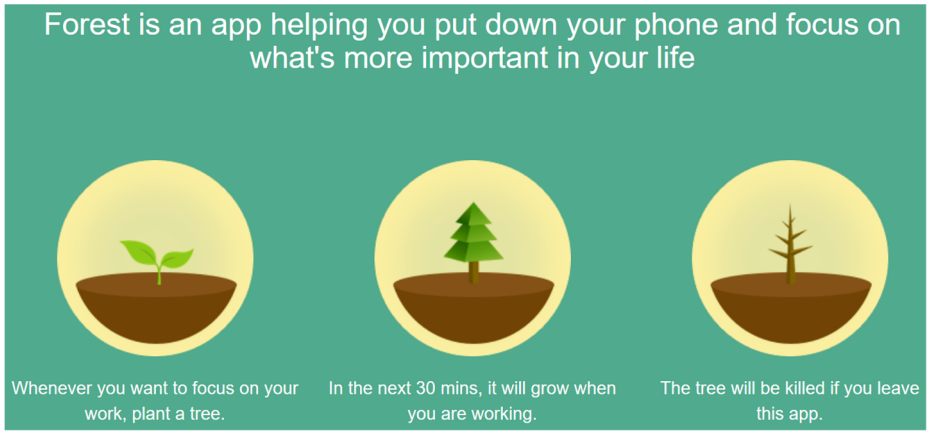
1

Which media behavior puts a strain on the environment? Which behaviors could we influence "favorably"?

- A few guesses: generally use media less, use less data intensive activities (e.g. streaming)
- Existing offers emphasize above all the aspect of "digital detox", e.g. App "Forest":

➢ Survey of young people and their media behavior

➢ Based on this: calculation of the life cycle assessment



# Insights into the research project "Digital Sufficiency"

1

Which media behavior puts a strain on the environment? Which behaviors could we influence "favorably"?

- Behavior significantly less harmful to the environment than manufacturing the devices!
- **The service life** of a device has a decisive influence on the life cycle assessment

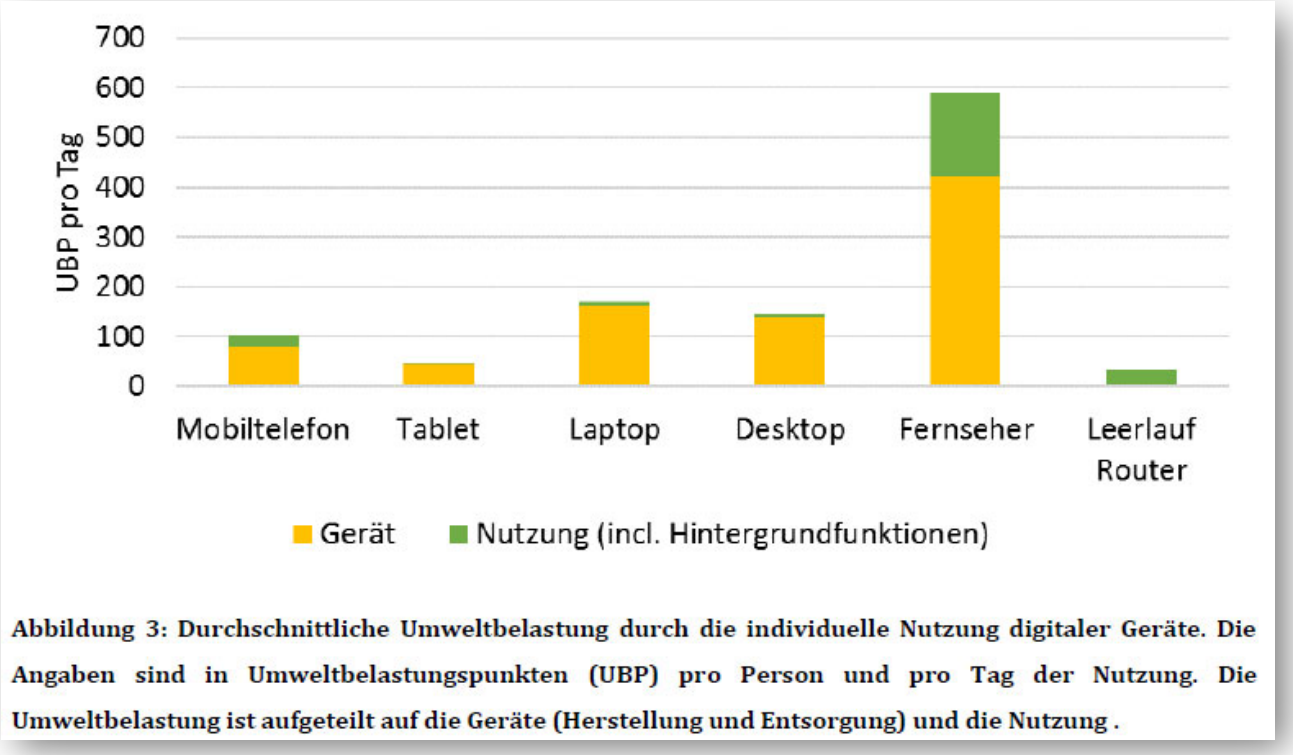


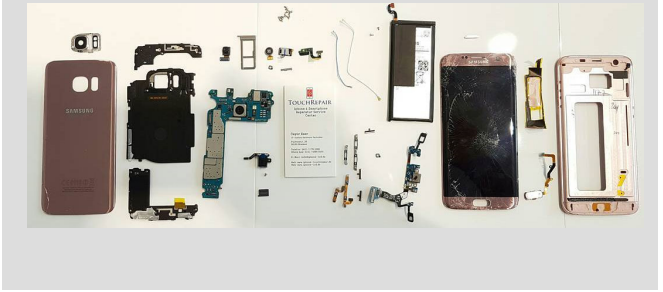

**Abbildung 3: Durchschnittliche Umweltbelastung durch die individuelle Nutzung digitaler Geräte. Die Angaben sind in Umweltbelastungspunkten (UBP) pro Person und pro Tag der Nutzung. Die Umweltbelastung ist aufgeteilt auf die Geräte (Herstellung und Entsorgung) und die Nutzung .**

# Insights into the research project "Digital Sufficiency"

1 Which media behavior puts a strain on the environment? Which behaviors could we influence "favorably"?

2 How can we extend the service life of smartphones? campaign ideas:

**Handy-Tuning-Bus**



# Insights into the research project "Digital Sufficiency"

1 Which media behavior puts a strain on the environment? Which behaviors could we influence "favorably"?

2 How can we extend the service life of smartphones? campaign ideas:

# Insights into the research project "Digital Sufficiency"

1. Which media behavior puts a strain on the environment? Which behaviors could we influence "favorably"?

2. How can we extend the service life of smartphones? campaign ideas:

**ALTERNATIVEN ZUM SMARTPHONE**

# Insights into the research project "Digital Sufficiency"

1. Which media behavior puts a strain on the environment? Which behaviors could we influence "favorably"?

2. How can we extend the service life of smartphones? campaign ideas:

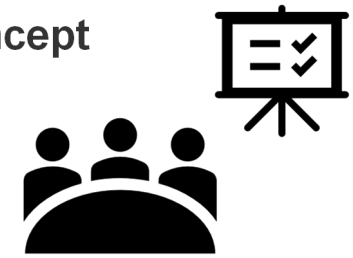
➢ **Unfortunately, ideas are not well received by adolescents** (focus group discussions)

# Insights into the research project "Digital Sufficiency"

1. Which media behavior puts a strain on the environment? Which behaviors could we influence "favorably"?

2. How can we extend the service life of smartphones? campaign ideas:

3. Cooperation with advertising agency: **new campaign concept**



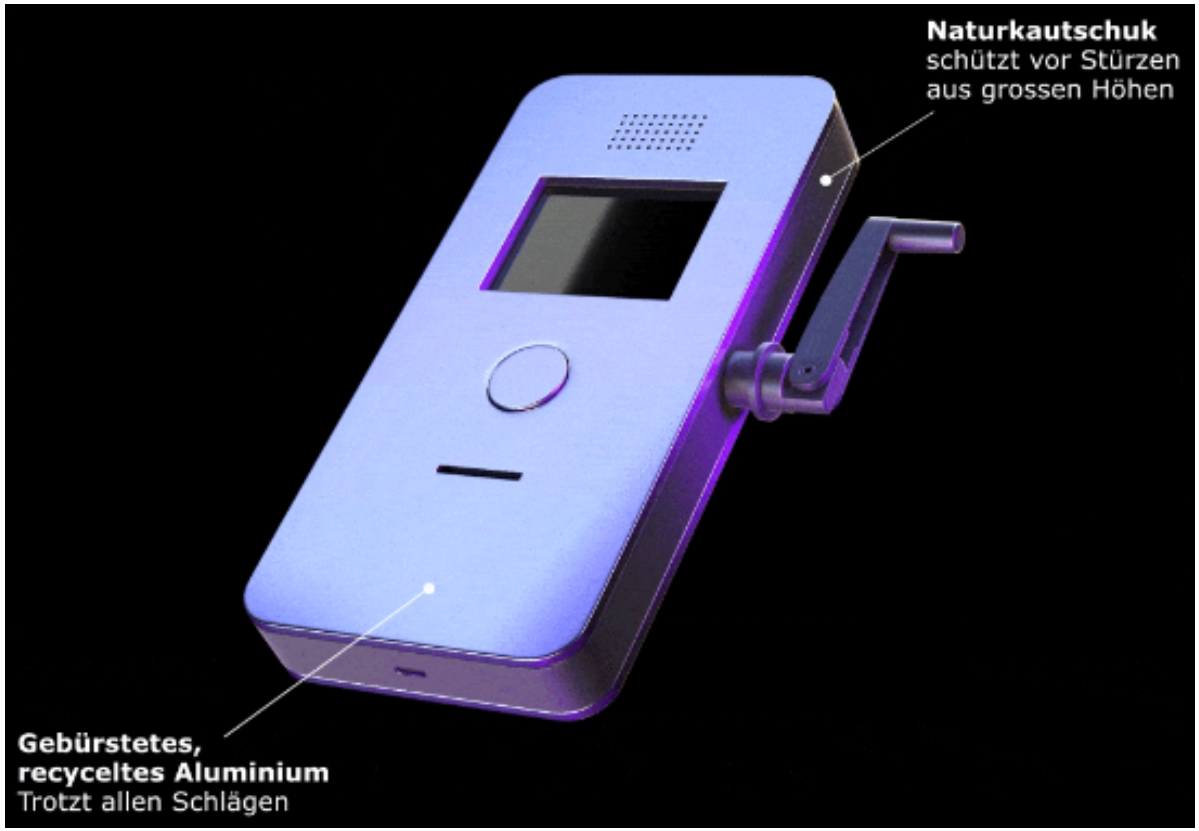
# Insights into the research project "Digital Sufficiency"

3

www.ugphone.ch

- Support crowdfunding OR make a **promise** to use your smartphone for at least 3 years
- Inclusion of two Swiss YouTubers

- Over 200 promises received. A **positive effect** was observed among those who took part (evaluation).



# The challenge of sufficiency

- Field of tension "restriction vs. freedom":

  If a renunciation is not voluntary, psychological **reactance** can occur, i.e. resistance to the restrictions:

  - Feeling of "now more than ever“
  - Claim/use of alternative free behaviors
  - Aggression

# Thank you very much for your attention!


**Lilian Suter MSc**

ZHAW Zürcher Hochschule
für Angewandte Wissenschaften
**Departement Angewandte Psychologie**
Psychologisches Institut

Pfingstweidstrasse 96
Postfach 707
CH-8037 Zürich

Tel. +41 58 934 84 56
lilian.suter@zhaw.ch
https://www.zhaw.ch/de/psychologie/forschung/medienpsychologie/

# Additional materials

- Projektwebsite «**Digitale Suffizienz**» (Projekt abgeschlossen):
  https://www.zhaw.ch/no_cache/de/forschung/forschungsdatenbank/projektdetail/projektid/1389/

- Projektzusammenfassung «Digitale Suffizienz»:
  https://projektdaten.zhaw.ch/Research/Projekt-00001389/DigiSuff_Summary.pdf

- Kampagnen-Website zum **ugPhone**: www.ugphone.ch

- Weiterführendes Projekt «**Lifesaving - extending the lifespan of mobile devices**" (NFP73):
  https://www.zhaw.ch/no_cache/en/research/research-database/project-detailview/projektid/2924/ oder
  http://www.nfp73.ch/de/projekte/nachhaltiges-verhalten/lebensdauerverlaengerung-fuer-mobilgeraete

LIFESAVING
extending service life