

**Title:** Technology-Induced Inattentional Blindness

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Just how bad are humans at multitasking? Prior research has found that humans are not capable of or adapted to successfully focus on multiple cognitive tasks at once, however, and there is a common notion that we can efficiently multitask. Many students especially hold the false belief that they can tackle concurrent tasks, such as texting while listening to a lecture. The present study demonstrates the individual's poor ability of multitasking, and how technology such as phones can have a detrimental effect on their ability to listen to a simple conversation. Students were randomly assigned into either a treatment group that was told to multitask or a control group where participants focused on a single task. In the multitasking group, students took a one-minute texting speed test while listening to a one-minute audio clip of a casual conversation, while the control group was asked to just listen to the audio clip. Neither of the groups was informed of this, but after the audio clip finished, all participants took a quiz on the content of the audio clip. A significant difference was found between groups (multitasking and single task) on audio quiz scores ( $p < .001$ ). Students who were asked to multitask scored much lower on the audio quiz than the single-task group, indicating their poor ability to listen to a conversation while trying to text and therefore, our inability to efficiently multitask. While these technological devices provide many wonderful benefits, it's time to seriously consider the costs to our attention.

## References

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