

The small town that banned modern technology

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Tech free: Green Bank is in the shadow of the world's largest radio telescope.

Would a tech-free life be better? “Wi-fi refugees” travel from across the USA to live in Green Bank. But for everyone else, logging off is almost impossible.

What's happening?

In the hills of **West Virginia** is the world's largest radio telescope. It scans the skies for aliens and **asteroids**. And it needs perfect silence.

Green Bank is a town nearby. It is in the US National Radio Quiet Zone, where the internet, mobile phones and microwaves are banned.

Find out more

In the last 10 years, people have moved here because they believe technology is making them sick — although not many scientists believe this is possible.

But health is not the only reason why some are choosing to stay away from technology. Since the **Covid-19** pandemic, internet use has risen.

Some people are trying to switch off their phones and computers for a day, a week, or longer.

“I want my life back,” wrote Mark Boyle in 2016. He decided to live entirely tech-free. He says he feels “healthier” for giving up technology.

But in a world with more phones than people, it may be too late. We work, shop, learn, play and connect through our screens.

So some say the answer is to use technology only for good, and to stop scrolling without thinking. **Experts** think we should say no to technology that makes our life worse. And with the rise of **AI**, this might be time to think carefully about what tech we can live without.

Would a tech-free life be better?

Some people say

"Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic."

Arthur C Clarke (1917 – 2008), English science-fiction writer

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What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: What are the advantages and disadvantages of technology?

2. Construct

What is your point of view? - Imagine your family will go "tech-free" for a day. Decide what technology your family needs and what devices you can go without for 24 hours.

3. Reflect

What might happen next? - Plan your own day without technology. Keep a diary recording how it goes.

Some say

Yes! Technology distracts us from the real world. We would all be better off in a world without social media and smartphones.

Others think

No! Technology makes our life so much easier. Think of all the things you would not be able to do without the internet. A tech-free world would be a disaster.

Glossary

West Virginia - A US state with a population of nearly 1.8 million.

Asteroids - Small bodies in space, made of metal and rock material. Asteroids usually orbit the sun, but if knocked off course they can be drawn into Earth's gravity and fall towards it.

Covid-19 - The official scientific name for the type of coronavirus that swept the world from March 2020.

Experts - Someone who knows a lot about a particular subject.

AI - A computer programme that has been designed to think.