

Expression of Interest to Join a Horizon Europe Consortium

Call: The impact of the use of digital tools outside school and for communication on educational outcomes and mental health (HORIZON-CL2-2026-01)

Dr. Douglas A. Parry, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Science, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands (Email: d.a.parry@vu.nl)

Expertise: Digital media use and effects, attention and distraction, adolescent well-being, digital trace data, experience sampling methods, media psychology, computational social science, smartphone log data, meta-analysis.

Research Expertise and Relevance to the Call: My research focuses on how ubiquitous digital technologies shape attention, behaviour, well-being, and everyday functioning, particularly among adolescents and young adults. I study the complex and context-dependent relationships between smartphone use, social media use, digital distraction, cognitive performance, motivation, and mental health using computational, behavioural, and longitudinal methods.

A major focus of my work concerns the measurement of digital behaviour and the development of more rigorous approaches to studying the potential effects of digital media. My research has included work on smartphone use in educational settings, digital distraction and attentional control, digital well-being, self-regulation, and the validity of self-reported versus logged digital media use, including systematic reviews, meta-analyses, behavioural studies, experience sampling research, and the use of digital trace data methodologies.

This expertise aligns closely with the objectives of the Horizon Europe call. I can contribute policy-relevant research and methodological expertise on:

- Smartphone, social media, video gaming, and digital leisure use in educational contexts
- Digital distraction, attention, concentration, and self-regulation
- Student motivation, study habits, and well-being
- The measurement of digital media using digital trace data and passive sensing
- Experience sampling, longitudinal, experimental, and quasi-experimental methods
- Digital literacy and healthy digital practices, and digital self-regulation

Possible Roles and Activities

- Designing and implementing longitudinal and intensive repeated-measures studies
- Developing behavioural measures of digital engagement, distraction, and self-regulation
- Analysing smartphone and social media use patterns across settings
- Conducting experimental studies on attention, learning, and well-being
- Supporting evidence synthesis, policy translation, and dissemination activities

Institutional Profile

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam is a leading research university with strong interdisciplinary expertise in communication science, computational social science, behavioural science, digital society research, and methodological innovation. The Department of Communication Science has internationally recognised strengths in media psychology, digital media research, political communication, computational methods, and youth media use.