

Switch Off the Internet (Briefly!)

This activity is about recognising the need for essential infrastructure - in this case the internet - by doing without it for a while.

Section: All
Time: 1 day
Where: Home

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



PLAN

Terms like Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure can be a bit vague, but bring it home to scouts with this activity. Imagine if the infrastructure which they take for granted - digital access to communication and information - is taken away! Then they will understand the importance of infrastructure a bit better! The aim here is not to try to get by without the internet, but understand how our modern lives depend on it. In preparing for this, the scouts need to figure out what devices they use which are connected to the internet. There will be the obvious ones, like smartphones and laptops, but there might also be other things, like streaming services on the television. Don't forget, there will be no asking Alexa either! Finally, the scouts need to set a timeframe for this. If they do it for too short a time, they will learn nothing from it, while doing it for too long might make them feel like they are back living in a cave! Something like a full day might be good. This discussion in itself should show how much we rely on the internet.

DO

With everything figured out, all the scouts have to do is disconnect! This will bring lots of challenges if they make extensive use of the internet, but that is the whole point of the activity. The wider they set the restriction, the more they will learn from it. So, no watching movies that were downloaded over the internet yesterday, or listening to music in the same way. Apart from having some extra time on their hands to tidy their rooms, they can also use the time to consider what it would be like to have limited or no internet access in the modern world. Many scouts, like others their own age, will already have a finely-tuned understanding of fairness. While sitting on the end of the bed, not using their phone, they could consider if it is fair on youth elsewhere to not have access to essential infrastructure.

REVIEW

Bringing the scouts back together, encourage them to share their experiences. What was it like for them having no access to their normal digital networks? What were the important things that they could no longer do? What did they find themselves doing instead? The key point to have the scouts consider is how this essential infrastructure benefits them. What about young people the same age who are growing up without this access, or with only very limited access? Are they at a disadvantage in terms of access to information, new ideas, relevant skills and employment prospects?



In a nutshell...

- Plan when, and for how long, to do without the internet
- Scouts take a big, deep breath, and disconnect
- Chat about the difficulties the scouts would face with no access to the internet



Follow-on

Take the same approach to having water on tap - another crucial element of infrastructure. What if all water had to be carried into the house, even just from an outside tap. Imagine if it was further away. Scouts could do the same with electrical infrastructure and try going for a period of time with no electricity.



SDG 9 Industry Innovation & Infrastructure

SDG 9 seeks to Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all. Through experiencing the lack of key infrastructure, even for a short while, scouts can develop a deep understanding of what this aim means in practice.



Find out more!
 Visit - www.betterworld.ie
 Contact us - sustainability@scouts.ie
 Produced by the Scouting Ireland Sustainable Scouting Team