THE CROCODILE PROJECT

The project, called CROCODILE, aims to set up and operate an infrastructure that will be used to exchange information on road traffic flows between all involved public authorities and private partners. The CROCODILE project focuses on two main aspects: the collection of information and its exchange between the participating organisations. In order to do this, the project will build the necessary infrastructure to obtain data from road traffic usage, focussing in particular on road safety and heavy goods vehicles parkings. The data collected will be used to offer real time information to road users, who will be able to access it at fixed locations on the road network or from mobile applications. This information on weather conditions, traffic, route advice, availability of truck parking, and so on will always be available along the entire corridor.

The new data collection infrastructure will allow better cross-border coordination of Intelligent Transport System (ITS) strategies, allowing for better analysis of traffic flows and improved responses to safety emergencies. It will be also allow for improved planning for professional freight transport companies, which will be able to use the parking area information to ensure optimal transit times for their vehicles. Traveller information services will be harmonised along the corridor. The project is also expected to foster the implementation of additional cross-border ITS applications for travellers, improve the efficiency of traffic flows and reduce congestions

IMPROVING RAIL FREIGHT TRANSPORT IN THE EU

Establishing the nine cross-border rail freight corridors, each with its own individual structure and management, has resulted in many improvements for rail traffic across the EU. The coordinated approach created a "one-stop-shop" for each rail corridor, allowing for better coordination and a single point of contact for all queries. The single structure is able to coordinate infrastructure works between national railway managers to ensure sufficient capacity is preserved at peak demand times. It can also ensure better traffic management, allowing for an optimal distribution of freight and passenger convoys. The result is increased efficiencies in cross-border services for rail freight transport, with a positive fall-on effect on rail passenger transport too. Furthermore, the establishment of the

corridors boosted the attractiveness of the rail sector for international freight transport, shifting demand away from roads.

THE MASTERS OF MIND CONTROL

Every day, we check our phones an average of 47 times- every 19 minutes of our waking lives- and spend roughly five hours total peering at their silvery glow. There's no good consensus about what all this screen time means for children's brains, adolescents' moods or the future of our democratic institutions. But many of us are seized these days with a feeling that it's not good. Last year, the American Psychological Association found that 65% of us believe that periodically unplugging would improve our mental health, and a 2017 University of Texas study found that the mere presence of our smartphones, face down on the desk in front of us, undercuts our ability to perform basic cognitive tasks. Adam Alter describes the current state of tech obsession as a "full-blown epidemic".

The problem, critics agree, begins with Silicon Valley's unique business model, which relies on keeping us in the thrall of our screens. The longer we are glued to an app- a value nicknamed eyeball time- the more money its creators make by selling our attention and access to our personal data to advertisers and others. You and I are not customers of Facebook or Google; we are the product being sold. This business model has driven an explosion of interest in what's known as persuasive technology, a relatively new field of research that studies how computers can be used to control human thoughts and actions. The field, which draws on advances in neuroscience and behavioral psychology, has fueled the creation of thousands of apps, interfaces and devices that deliberately encourage certain human behaviors (keep scrolling) while discouraging others (convey thoughtful, nuanced ideas). "If, 20 years ago, I had announced that we would soon be creating machines that control humans, there would have been an uproar", wrote a Stanford University behavior scientist who was one of the first academics to seriously study how computers influence human behavior. But now, he notes, "we are surrounded by persuasive technologies".

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