

Discursive Imaginaries and On-the-Ground Practices of Resistance Technologies in Online Communities: Post-Print

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Date: 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the existential conditions of individuals in the technological era, presents the everyday landscapes and specific details of human-technology negotiations, and reflects upon the human-technology relationship. **Method:** This study takes the Douban anti-technology dependence group as its research object, uses posts within the group as research data, and employs discourse analysis as its research method to examine online the discourse and imagination of technology resistance in internet communities, display their localized practices of resisting technology, and interpret the meanings they attribute to acts of resistance. **Results:** The study finds that individuals can not only perceive the penetration, erosion, and alienation of the technological system upon themselves and their personal lives, but also reflexively examine the impact of technology and the human-technology relationship, and actively explore specific tactics for resisting technology dependence. **Conclusion:** The discursive imagination of technology resistance is a hybrid mixture of embodied experience, media discourse, and academic theory, which constructs a legitimate context and reasonable logic for implementing resistance actions. The localized practice of anti-technology dependence is a form of self-salvation involving discursive discussion, media inscription, and embodied action.

Full Text

Title: Discursive Imagination and Local Practice of Technology Resistance in Online Communities

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Abstract: [Purpose] This study examines the existential conditions of people in the technological era, presenting the everyday landscape and specific details

of human-technology negotiation while reflecting on the relationship between humans and technology. [Method] Taking the “Anti-Technology Dependence” group on Douban as the research object, with group posts as research materials and discourse analysis as the research method, this article conducts an online investigation into the discourse and imagination of technology resistance in this online community, documents their local practices of resisting technology, and interprets the meanings they attribute to their resistance actions. [Results] The study finds that individuals can not only perceive the penetration, erosion, and alienation of technological systems on themselves and their personal lives, but also reflexively examine the influence of technology and human-technology relationships, actively exploring specific tactics to resist technological dependence. [Conclusion] The discursive imagination of technology resistance is a hybrid mixture of embodied experience, media discourse, and academic theory, which constructs a legitimate context and logical framework for implementing resistance actions. The local practice of anti-technology dependence is a form of self-salvation involving discursive discussion, media inscription, and embodied action.

Keywords: online community; human-technology negotiation; technology resistance; discursive imagination; local practice

When technologies coalesce into massive systems that become the infrastructure people inhabit and the fundamental framework for survival, can tiny individuals trapped in this dense technological web perceive their own condition and comprehend technology’ s influence?

Marshall McLuhan argued that technology, as an extension of the human body, introduces new scales and creates new environments.[1] The social and psychological impacts they produce are mitigated by the so-called “narcissistic numbness” syndrome, which renders individuals not only unconscious of technology’ s effects but also oblivious to the new environment.[2] In McLuhan’ s view, artists with integrated consciousness can keenly perceive the changes brought by technology, bearing the hope and heavy responsibility of awakening and redeeming the masses. Similarly, Herbert Marcuse believed that technological systems not only alienate the masses into numbness but also discipline them into one-dimensional beings, subtly dissolving individual critical capacity and resistance practice.[3] Ordinary individuals indulge in the false satisfaction provided by technology, becoming integrated into and co-opted by technological systems and technological domination. The negative thinking of protest logic is reversed by technological rationality into affirmative thinking, meaning the masses voluntarily lay down their critical weapons, abandoning opportunities to seek alternatives and the ultimate goal of liberation. In Marcuse’ s pessimistic view, the technological system and its domination appear as an ironclad monolith, leaving no room for the masses’ self-awakening and resistance, let alone individual self-salvation and liberation.

However, some researchers have delved into the fabric of everyday life to examine individuals' local practices of technology use, revealing a completely different picture: technology users are not disciplined objects without resistance or agency, but active technology domesticators, textual poachers, and guerrilla tacticians. Through his investigation of television in everyday domestic contexts, Roger Silverstone unveiled the process and pathways through which this media technology is accommodated into household space and integrated into daily practice. He viewed the adoption of new technological products as a process of taming, concretely demonstrating people's actions in consuming television and their efforts to incorporate it into the tracks of everyday life. This demonstrates that "new technological forms are not simply absorbed, nor do they remain unchanged when confronted with everyday life." [4] Janice Radway's study of women's practices of reading romance novels shows that seemingly mundane reading behavior actually contains resistant implications, viewed by these female readers as a form of "declaration of independence." Radway made strenuous efforts to provide sufficient evidence that when women are confined to traditional roles and social expectations of providing care and emotional nourishment for others, reading romance novels becomes a form of personal resistance against such circumstances.[5] Michel de Certeau described this reading behavior as "trickery that infiltrates the interstices of cultural orthodoxy through allowing one's own creativity to seep in." [6] He praised this "unbridled" "poaching" behavior for its reflected subjectivity and productive value, calling it "poetic operations." Clearly, unlike the Luddites who, driven by fear and hatred, engaged in high-profile smashing and destruction of machines, the resistance practices of micro-level individuals are more hidden and circuitous, intertwined with other social practices, difficult to separate, and integrated together into daily routines. These silent resistance dramas staged by individuals in their own living spaces often escape researchers' observational categories.

In recent years, as information and communication technologies such as the internet, computers, mobile phones, social media, big data, and algorithmic recommendations have penetrated every aspect of everyday life, people have personally experienced the convenience they bring while also witnessing their reconstruction of life patterns. The materiality, affordances, and positive/negative effects of technology gradually manifest in everyday human-technology contact, are recognized and captured by people, and translated into simple cognition and imagination, which may then trigger reflection on usage practices. The combination of cognitive-level transformations and personal experience of technology's negative effects may become a motivating factor for individuals to develop resistance consciousness and behavior. Some studies have found that to escape accelerationism, permanent online connectivity, mobile phone addiction, and other issues, resisting mobile phones to achieve disconnection, deceleration, and de-addiction has become a lifestyle for some people.[7] Other research shows that even among younger, less socially experienced adolescent groups, technology resistance behaviors exist. Some scholars have found that teenagers use their agency to understand, engage with, and experience the possibilities of al-

gorithms, and implement actions to resist algorithms based on their algorithmic experiences.[8] In fact, attachment to and resistance against technology often coexist and even alternate, meaning resistance may be intermittent, improvised, and highly likely to suddenly terminate without further continuation.

These different perspectives on technology resistance are not contradictory; rather, they fragmentarily reveal the diverse resistance practices and landscapes in everyday life. This reminds researchers to be vigilant against the limitations of one-sided perspectives and the untimeliness of binary frameworks, emphasizing the necessity of grounded observation that delves into the fabric of everyday life. Correspondingly, research on technology resistance is increasing daily. Scholars have already paid attention to social phenomena and issues such as media non-use, social media fatigue, digital detox, and digital minimalism, directly or indirectly involving technology users' resistance behaviors and analyzing the reasons and specific methods of resistance. However, existing research has conducted relatively little discourse analysis of users' technology cognition, relatively neglected details of their resistance practices, and insufficiently excavated the meanings of resistance actions. This article argues that the resistance tactics deployed by tiny individuals facing massive technological systems demonstrate the art of the weak—these are individuals' own resistance narratives, the poetics of silent resistance, and micropolitics in everyday life, all worthy of in-depth exploration and detailed analysis.

2. Research Design: Anti-Technology Dependence in Online Communities

Examining online communities formed on digital platforms with the common purpose of resisting technology dependence can provide rich materials for investigating resistance practices among ordinary people in everyday life. Community members not only share their personal experiences and insights from daily technology use but also publicly discuss their cognition of specific technological forms and abstract technological systems. Furthermore, some members have initiated self-challenges or experiments against technology dependence, disclosing the specific circumstances, insights, and results of their local practices through self-reporting forms such as check-in records and summary posts. This article argues that these publicly released contents can serve as research materials to examine the everyday landscape, specific details, and personal experiences of resisters' interactions with technology. In a sense, approaching the real conditions of everyday life and understanding how individuals integrate/appropriate technology, arrange their lives, and settle their minds in specific contexts and contexts helps break free from the shackles of binary frameworks and overcome the one-sidedness of technological determinism and social determinism. Within a sustained tension, it can comprehensively reveal the multidimensional aspects of humans and technology, the multiple details of human-technology interaction, and the complexity of human-technology relationships.

This study takes the Douban community “Anti-Technology Dependence Group”

as its research object, using group posts and comment replies as research materials. Established on May 25, 2021, the group had 34,952 members and 443 posts (as of August 25, 2022). According to the founder's initial vision and rough plan, the group mainly published three types of content: practice check-in posts sharing personal resistance tactics and insights; daily observation posts sharing observed phenomena of technology dependence for reflection and discussion; and theoretical discussion posts sharing cognition, viewpoints, or discussions about technology.[9] In addition, there were actually other types of posts: help-seeking posts requesting assistance from group members for knowledge or experience; recruitment posts seeking survey or interview subjects for research tasks; and other posts such as advertisements unrelated to the group's theme. After reading each post individually and filtering them, this study ultimately identified 191 posts as analysis objects. This article primarily uses post content and subsequent replies as texts, examining community members' cognition and imagination of technology through discourse analysis, summarizing their personal tactics for implementing resistance, presenting specific details of their local practices, and interpreting the internal meanings of their resistance actions.

It must be noted that this research object has certain particularities: First, the research subjects are characterized by youth and high education levels. This group has rich technology use experience and can reflexively examine their own practices. Older and younger groups are not within the scope of this study. Second, the subjects self-identify as having varying degrees of technology dependence and believe their behaviors need correction. Their attitude toward technology is pragmatic; they are not complete technology abandoners but ambivalent "micro-resisters" toward technology. Here, "micro" has three meanings: compared to the massive scale and powerful force of technological systems, users are tiny individuals with weak power; compared to organized, large-scale social mobilization resistance, individual resistance practices are small, fragmented, unscaled, and unsystematic; compared to subversive liberation struggles, personal resistance is a fine-tuning of one's own life and practice. Finally, the technologies that subjects resist are information and communication technologies, mainly including the internet, mobile phones, computers, social media, various apps, big data, algorithmic recommendations, search engines, and other specific technological forms. Among these, discussions opposing mobile phone dependence are the most numerous. Based on this, the technology resistance practices of this research object have their specific context and internal logic: (excessive) technology dependence is endowed with negative connotations by community members, requiring rational action subjects to examine and correct it. With this as the motivation or starting point, technology resistance becomes logical and imperative. Given that the subjects' technology resistance involves self-awakening at the consciousness level and self-experimentation at the behavioral level, the following sections will specifically examine their discursive imagination and local practice of technology resistance.

3. The Wisdom of Ordinary People: Discursive Imagination of Technology Resistance

As is well known, cognition and imagination of technology directly influence subjects' usage behaviors to varying degrees. How, then, do users cognize technology? Social psychology holds that cognition is a process involving perception, learning, and reinforcement.[10] Cognizing technology includes recognizing and understanding technology' s materiality, affordances, relationships, history, and impacts. An online investigation of the Douban Anti-Technology Dependence Group reveals that community members' discursive imagination of technology is a hybrid mixture of embodied experience, media reports, and academic theory.

Specifically, individuals' cognition of technology has at least three sources: First, embodied experience at the personal level is users' intuitive pathway to understanding technology, forming simple knowledge about it. Human-technology interaction is a process of intimate encounter between bodies and technological objects. In this process of embodied engagement, the body and its perceptual systems are mobilized to experience and evaluate technology' s various characteristics.[11] One user frankly stated, "I rarely engage with related theories and books, relying purely on inner feelings to judge and handle problems arising from technology abuse." [12] To some extent, this first-hand personal experience becomes an important basis for individuals to accommodate technology. Second, mass media interpretations of technology are transmitted to individuals through public reports and are decoded, clipped, absorbed, and internalized by them in various forms. In other words, individuals learn about technology through media reports. Media continuously shape people' s cognition and imagination of technology through relentless information flows. For example, the talk show *Thirteen Invitations* featuring a dialogue with Professor Wu Guosheng on science and technology topics was used by the group to extend discussions on specific technological issues such as "the internet' s disregard for the physical body" and "the values behind technology/algorithms." Documentaries like *The Social Dilemma* were also used by group members to enhance their understanding of technology' s negative effects. Third, academic discourse on technology is received and appropriated by individuals to varying degrees through reading practices. Books such as *Alone Together*, *The Shallows*, and *Digital Minimalism: Choosing a Focused Life in a Noisy World* are recommended among members to deepen and broaden their cognition of technology. The technological viewpoints of scholars like Marcuse, McLuhan, Heidegger, and Lucien Sfez resonate with some members, becoming reference theories for their understanding of technology. One user, inspired by Heidegger' s view of technology, reflected that "our current world is a world concealed by modern technology; everything we see is a world filtered by modern technology, such as the precise push of big data." [13] Academic discourse expands into the field of everyday life, with relevant theories becoming not only weapons to critique technology but also inspiration and guidelines for formulating resistance tactics. A user who strongly recommended the book *Stolen Focus: Why You Can' t Pay Attention—and How to*

Think Deeply Again posted, “Because the content of the recommended book is truly shocking, I personally believe it’s necessary to promote it in similar groups. The more people understand it, the more they can approach anti-technology dependence with a stable mindset, avoiding falling into psychological health traps such as self-blame.” [14]

Overall, individuals’ cognition and imagination of technology have distinct subjective coloring, are fragmented and scattered, unsystematic, and constantly changing—a mixed product of perceptual experience and rational thinking, intuitive cognition and theoretical learning. However, it cannot be denied that these simple experiential assertions reflect individuals’ specific cognition and imagination of abstract issues such as technology’ s influence, role, and status, shining with the wisdom of ordinary people.

3.1 Self-Awareness of Technology’ s Alienation of the Body

From the founding declaration of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group to members’ self-disclosure posts, all indicate that personal experience of technology’ s negative effects and daily observation are the direct reasons stimulating them to issue resistance declarations and initiate resistance actions. The founder frankly stated that technology’ s all-around penetration into life has caused impacts that are difficult to evaluate. While enjoying technology’s convenience and benefits, it is necessary to remain vigilant about its hidden concerns, because “when we rely too much on technology, we ourselves actually become weaker—whether in physical function, social relationships, or thinking abilities, and so on.” [1] When some members post personal resistance declarations in the form of check-in practices, they begin by narrating their personal experiences and encounters with technological alienation. This prompts them to re-examine taken-for-granted technological forms and urges them to take action to resist alienation. One member who was deeply dependent on mobile phones reported having already perceived that “the phone is hard to put down,” and “can feel the warning signals sent by the body,” wanting to “say goodbye to chaotic life.” [15] Thus, they initiated a self-experiment. From this perspective, individual experience derived from embodied practice is translated into simple cognition of technology’ s influence, which may then stimulate consciousness and behavioral resistance.

Based on post content, community members’ self-reports of awareness of technology’ s alienation of the body can be found everywhere. Posters often disclose multiple pieces of evidence and details of alienation based on personal perspectives and firsthand experience. These displays mainly focus on three aspects: First, the physiological level. Technology leads to poor health conditions. These include physiological problems such as declining vision, poor posture, dizziness, headaches, fatigue, and insomnia, as well as psychological issues like anxiety, tension, depression, frustration, loss, and internal depletion. For example, one user specifically revealed their actual situation: “First, I’m nearsighted, now with 700-800 degrees in both eyes and slight astigmatism. Second, due to long-term

late nights, my endocrine system is disrupted and hormone levels are unstable. I have polycystic ovary syndrome and had a breast fibroadenoma removed in February. Baidu searches show these are most likely caused by staying up late. And why stay up late? Playing with my phone, of course. I have heavy dark circles under my eyes all the time, a sallow complexion, and acne that comes and goes. Also, due to poor posture from long-term phone use, my spine is uncomfortable.” [16] Other users experience anxiety about being disconnected or missing out on information, feeling “like a derailed train car,” worried about “not keeping up with others’ rhythms and paces.” [2] However, when users realize their excessive dependence on or improper use of technology, they fall into internal depletion of blaming themselves for “wasting time” and “frittering away life,” feeling “terrible,” “regretful,” and “guilty.”

Second, the cognitive level. Technology weakens critical thinking abilities, reducing focus and patience. Some users observe that “people are becoming more impatient now, watching videos at 1.5x speed, unable to read long paragraphs, as if they’ ve lost patience and are particularly anxious.” [17] Users with similar experiences lament that “short videos really drastically reduce thinking ability,” with “patience levels dropping off a cliff.” [3] Some confess that when consuming information, they generally receive it wholesale “without using their brains.” Others describe it as “the brain being like a rusted gear, unable to think, only able to passively accept.” [18] The result is that memory is not deep, “all events and emotions seem like fleeting flashes that vanish in an instant,” [19] and may also lead to “information cocoon” effects where “the ability to accept dissent weakens, viewing issues becomes increasingly polarized, and gradually extreme.” [20] Additionally, technology’ s stickiness attracts users’ attention, making it difficult to concentrate, “wanting to pick up the phone to check every five minutes.” [21]

Third, the behavioral level. On one hand, technology’ s stickiness strengthens behavioral addiction, causing users to indulge and become unable to extricate themselves. Inertial behaviors such as “scrolling through phones/Weibo/short videos/Moments when idle and bored” are examples. On the other hand, technology sometimes fosters laziness, degenerating certain physical skills. The group founder keenly perceived technology’ s reshaping and elimination of traditional lifestyles and its dulling of certain human skills, thus clearly stating, “This group does not oppose all technology, but wants to oppose the degeneration of certain abilities caused by excessive dependence on technology and the situation where life becomes completely impossible without certain tech giants.” [22] Some users “discovered they had really lost certain essential skills,” unable to identify directions without electronic navigation, “suddenly feeling a sense of defeat.” [23] Others report having lost the ability to cope with boredom, to the point that “without a phone, they don’ t know what to do.” In fact, members discovered that a common problem in resisting technology dependence is finding a balance between breaking free from technology dependence and coping with technology deprivation. This requires not only actively seeking feasible alternatives but also regaining or cultivating certain skills that don’ t require technological as-

sistance. Obviously, the above alienation effects shatter individuals' beautiful imagination of technology, forcing them to confront technology' s dual nature and reflect on their existing cognition of technology. Based on this, opposing (excessive) technology dependence and resisting technological alienation become urgent matters concerning personal health and immediate interests. Thus, technology resistance is endowed with philosophical meaning about self-salvation and liberation at the individual level.

3.2 Daily Observation of Technology' s Alienation of Life

Beyond recognizing technology' s alienation of the individual body, perceiving technology' s alienation of life is another important reason for individual resistance to technology. Similarly, this unfolds at the micro-level of personal life. Technology' s diffusion in the lifeworld is not accomplished overnight and is not easily detectable. Posters disclose that they mainly perceive and reflect on technology' s influence on everyday life by examining and observing their personal lives. In daily usage practices, they personally experience the convenience, satisfaction, and pleasure brought by technology. To a large extent, technology' s positive feedback strengthens its stickiness, attracting users to actively engage with it, which then solidifies certain human behaviors during repeated use, prompting them to develop specific habits. Thus, technology embeds itself in everyday life and positions itself within social structures through human bodies as anchors. McLuhan keenly observed that new technologies produce strong sensory impacts on first-time users, but “when the entire community has absorbed the new perceptual habits into all areas of work and communication, the initial shock melts away.” [24] However, the real revolution is just beginning: to incorporate and integrate new technology into the fabric of personal life, individuals enter a prolonged “adjustment” phase, rearranging practical activities and reshaping life order to align with the new technology. Obviously, when individuals' practical behaviors change, their life landscape changes accordingly. Technology' s transformation of individual life is evident in everyday practices such as mobile payments, QR code ordering, food delivery, QR code transportation, electronic navigation, algorithmic recommendations, cloud-based socializing, online meetings, virtual classrooms, online registration, remote consultations, electronic surveillance, facial recognition, and many other aspects. Technology imperceptibly and forcefully implants its own logic into the lifeworld, forcing individuals and society to arrange everyday life and social practices based on it, thereby reconstructing the basic landscape of personal and social life. By squeezing out or excluding other lifestyles and practical activities not based on technological logic, technology exerts pressure on individuals, groups, organizations, or societies that have not embraced it, urging them to open their arms.

However, has technology made life better? The answer is obvious. Members of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group are not what Neil Postman called “technological cyclops.” They have witnessed both the bright and dark sides of

technology. As one user disclosed, while experiencing the benefits of technology, they also “feel dazzled and exhausted by the endless stream of new products and never-ending updates.” [4] Undeniably, the sugar-coated shells thrown by technology’s positive effects can to some extent obscure its negative effects, causing users to be short-sighted or blind to technology’s negative impacts during certain periods. However, this does not mean users cannot recognize technology’s deceptive tricks. This study finds that when users observe and examine their personal lives at certain junctures, they can perceive technology’s shaping and influence on their lives. Specifically, members of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group have two main discourses for writing about technology’s alienation of life: One is depicting a personal life landscape where various practices are arranged around technology, demonstrating technology’s comprehensive penetration and deep embedding, and accusing technology of taking over everyday life. One user reported, “Previously, mobile phones existed only as auxiliary tools to make life more convenient. Now mobile phones dominate all of life, spending all day on the phone, always on the phone.” [25] In response, some users insightfully recognize that “technology is our world,” “our environment,” “every detail of the world we live in is organized in a technological way...We have no power to refuse to live in such an environment. In this environment, our purposes, means, goals, behaviors, activities, passions, and dreams and desires all need to be connected and realized through technology.” [5] Therefore, many members post laments about technology controlling life, hoping to resist through practical actions, “to become masters of their own lives again,” to regain control of life, and “to find the life they long for.” The second is accusing certain specific technological forms, after coupling with social structures and becoming institutionalized, of generating irresistible coercive force and binding power that compels individuals to embrace technology. For example, one user described WeChat as “the root of all evil yet indispensable,” frankly stating their contradictory psychology: “Sometimes I really want to delete WeChat, but that’s really impossible. I need to contact people and receive notifications every day, and once deleted, many records may be irretrievable.” [26] Similar discourse also appears in complaints about mobile phones: “Going to the hospital, taking transportation, going out to have fun—everything requires a mobile phone! Why do convenient things always end up becoming mandatory!” [6] Obviously, there is a huge gap between the utopian ideal of technology and the reality of alienated life, which stimulates individuals’ dissatisfaction and anger with their current life situation and prompts them to seek ways out to change their circumstances. Thus, the resistance behavior of anti-technology dependence is once again endowed with rationality and necessity at the individual level.

3.3 Examination and Reflection on the Reversal of Human-Technology Relationships

When members expose specific facts and concrete evidence of technological alienation, they directly or indirectly touch upon the abstract metaphysical question of the relationship between humans and technology. From their narrative dis-

course, in their conventional imagination, humans are rightfully technology users and controllers; therefore, the proper mode of human-technology relationship should be master-servant, user-tool, or controller-controlled relationships. In other words, humans are the measure of technology, standing above technology, not the reverse. However, from their self-examination and reflection, users are surprised to discover technology's usurpation and the reversal of human-technology relationships. Common rhetoric used by posters to describe their relationship with technology includes "mobile phones replacing brains," "being led/dominated/controlled/kidnapped by mobile phones," "being domesticated/manipulated/eroded by technology," "degenerating into tool people," and "shaken subjective status." In view of this, some declare that the essence of anti-technology dependence is opposing technological control and defending human subjective status, "seizing the initiative." In fact, the imagination and cognition of the reversal of human-technology relationships are mainly based on personal experience of technological alienation and daily observation. Additionally, they are influenced by relevant media discourse and academic discourse circulating in the public sphere. Some posts reveal that films and TV series like *The Matrix* and *Black Mirror*, which present plots of technological domination, and certain scholars' critiques of technological rule, provide concrete imagination for them to examine the relationship between humans and technology and the changes in their respective positions.

From the online community discussions, members' attributions for the reversal of human-technology relationships mainly fall into two types: One points to the self, believing that personal self-control or self-discipline is insufficient, and that in the process of technology dependence or addiction, control is unknowingly lost. Because "the pleasure of degeneration far outweighs resistance through positive emotions," [27] even rational reins cannot restrain the 失控 behavior of indulging in technology. The other points to technology itself, believing that developers behind technology, profit-oriented and understanding human weaknesses, actively cater to people's preferences, finding ways to enhance technology's stickiness, cultivate users' unconscious habits of technology dependence, and then voluntarily or involuntarily cede control. Although the above attributions are merely subjective judgments based on individual experience, lacking rigorous argumentation, these simple causal inferences become important bases for them to formulate resistance tactics. Existing research has proven that mobile phone resistance strategies are closely related to people's responsibility attributions.[28] Although some members consciously feel they cannot fully control ubiquitous technologies and are powerless to resist massive technological systems, they settle for hoping to establish an equal relationship with technology and coexist peacefully. However, members of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group are all dissatisfied with their current relationship with technology to varying degrees. Based on this, the third meaning of technology resistance is to rectify the reversal of human-technology relationships.

It is not difficult to see that stating personal experience of technological alienation and listing factual evidence of technology dependence are the dominant

discourses in the Anti-Technology Dependence Group's discussions about technology cognition. This provides a legitimate context for the claim and practice of resisting technology, endowing it with the meaning of self-salvation. It is worth noting that the public discussion of anti-technology dependence embeds an ought-is thinking framework and discursive logic. In the rhetoric describing technology's actual roles, purposes, and effects, there are implicit personal imaginations and expectations of technology's proper roles, purposes, and effects. Obviously, reality is unsatisfactory. Members' online narratives depict a life landscape that is out of control, chaotic, and empty due to technology's dominance, portraying a self-portrait in a state of imbalance or incoordination. The deep cause of this disharmony is the inconsistency between individual cognition and behavior—that is, a contradiction and misalignment exists between the cognition of opposing technology dependence and the current behavioral reality of excessive technology dependence. Social psychologist Leon Festinger believed that this state of cognitive dissonance is psychologically uncomfortable and thus drives individuals to achieve a coordinated state.[7] In this sense, the resistance of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group represents tiny individuals' efforts to anchor themselves, settle their bodies and minds, and seek balance in a lifeworld deeply embedded with technological systems.

4. The Art of Micro-Actors: Local Practice of Technology Resistance

As mentioned above, the Anti-Technology Dependence Group's discussions about technology mainly focus on its negative effects and specific manifestations. These discourses are a hybrid mixture of embodied cognition, media viewpoints, and academic theory—a subjective expression of individuals' cognition and imagination of technology. Through the form of public posting, members complete the observation, examination, and reflection on their own conditions in the virtual space of online communities, while simultaneously externalizing this introspection through mediated presentation. This is both a mediated inscription and dissemination of embodied practice and a construction and confirmation of group identity. In the process of stating their own experiences, individuals construct a legitimate context and causal logic for technology resistance, paving the way for implementing specific resistance actions. In a sense, this mediated self-disclosure is the opening chapter of individuals' redemption narratives, a public declaration of their self-salvation actions, and a battle proclamation issued to the technological system in a resistant posture. The virtual platform where online communities reside provides an observational space for examining technology resistance in everyday life, and the discourse production of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group opens a window for understanding members' local practices. The following will present and analyze the specific circumstances and details of members' resistance practices based on two types of posts in the Anti-Technology Dependence Group: “practice check-ins” and “experience sharing.”

4.1 Constructing the Field of Technology Resistance

The resistance practices of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group unfold in two different spaces: One is the online virtual space where the online community resides. Here, members mainly engage in discourse production—that is, mediated inscription practices. This includes recalling past technology use experiences, monitoring and recording current resistance actions, and commenting and interacting among group members. The other is the local physical space where members live. This is the “main battlefield” where individuals carry out resistance actions and deploy various specific tactics. In contrast, this is a hidden personal private space where embodied actions are not public or conspicuous. For individuals, technology resistance is a self-experiment and self-challenge fought “alone.” Only through mediated self-presentation can others see it. Therefore, publishing check-in records and experience inventories makes local practices occurring in private contexts visible. This visibility has at least three meanings for posters: first, satisfying individual desires for sharing and dissemination; second, obtaining social support through interactive feedback such as comments and likes; and third, translating community attention into external supervision to urge themselves to persist in resistance.

Based on this, a behavioral pattern of resistance in the Anti-Technology Dependence Group can be identified: posting resistance declarations, goals, strategies, and tactics online—conducting self-experiments offline—regularly checking in online to record and share action progress and results—offline practice—online recording—repeating this cycle until resistance is interrupted or ends. Through this, members migrate and shuttle between different spaces, using themselves as anchors to connect the two spaces and construct a personal field of technology resistance. This field is rooted in the personal lifeworld deeply embedded with technological systems. It is not a closed space but rather intertwines and permeates with other fields. It provides conditions for individual resistance practices while also constraining and restricting them.

4.2 Implementing Tactics of Technology Resistance

From the online posts, although individuals have to succumb to technology’s structural pressure in certain situations, they seek opportunities and spaces for resistance in the gaps of technological systems, attempting to gain brief respite and slight freedom in their negotiations with technology. Members’ self-disclosures show that the tactics for implementing technology resistance are diverse and multifaceted. The arrangement of tactics is not random, arbitrary, or unmethodical. On the contrary, individuals have their own logic and process for considering tactics: identifying the problems they face—analyzing the causes of problems—clarifying resistance goals—detailing resistance content—arranging specific tactics accordingly. Specifically, the overall goal of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group is to oppose (excessive) technology dependence, while members’ goals vary. These include relatively broad goals such as “breaking internet addiction,” “preventing mobile phone/screen addiction,” “re-

sisting algorithmic recommendations,” “using mobile phones correctly,” “making not using mobile phones a habit,” “finding ideal life,” and “evolving from a tool person to a person who uses tools,” as well as more specific goals like “quitting Douban/Xiaohongshu/Weibo/Taobao,” “uninstalling games and social apps,” “recording mobile phone usage time,” “reducing screen time,” and “quitting meaningless phone scrolling before sleep/in fragmented time.” These goals are the product of members’ self-diagnosis of their personal situations.

Further tactical deployment must both focus on goals as guidance, target the right problems, and flexibly adjust according to practical effects. Overall, the gist of resistance actions is “breaking the old and establishing the new” —on one hand, breaking existing behavior patterns considered unhealthy, irrational, or incorrect, and on the other hand, establishing or cultivating new, healthy, rational, and correct behavior patterns. The arrangement of resistance tactics involves both thought and action domains. Thought-level tactics include self-monitoring through conscious observation, clarifying the meaning of self-existence through repeated introspection, resisting technological temptation through rational critique, breaking dependence through self-suggestion of technology’ s negative effects, self-encouragement and reconciliation when resistance encounters obstacles, and regularly reviewing practice progress. When sharing successful methods for quitting electronic devices, one member first proposed adjusting cognition, suggesting breaking previous thinking reaction chains and “recognizing from the bottom of your heart that playing with your phone cannot bring real happiness. We must be clear that those pleasures only last a few seconds; after stopping, only endless emptiness remains. They cannot bring you lasting satisfaction and happiness, only consuming your time and life.” [29] The logic behind this view is the belief that “changes in thought will bring changes in behavior.” This provides an explanation for how academic discourse infiltrates online community discussions through reading practices.

Action-level tactics are where “each shows their own magic.” Some research has specifically summarized various tactics for resisting mobile phones: manipulating mobile phones by cutting off networks, powering off, shutting down, or locking them, physical isolation, screen settings, and time management to dissolve their affordances; resisting mobile phone dependence by turning off notifications, centralized use, active searching, and creating redundancy to tailor mobile phone texts; and planning mobile phone usage contexts through situational binding, functional segmentation, simulated scenarios, and family relationships to break stubborn habits.[30] Additionally, adhering to “online check-ins” is a unique tactic of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group. Check-in content mainly involves regularly recording the progress of local practices, such as screen contact time, ways and purposes of using technology, and alternative options, interspersed with scattered personal insights, feelings, observations, and thoughts. As mentioned earlier, this is a mediated presentation of private behavior made public. For posters, online disclosure is both evidence exhibition of resistance practice and self-writing and inscription of redemption actions. Replies may provide ideas for posters to adjust tactics and offer support and motivation to

continue local practices. Notably, these tactics include the appropriation of technology itself, such as using certain software to monitor usage duration, using feature phones to replace smartphones, or using web pages instead of apps. In other words, resisters attempt to use technology to solve technology's problems. Thus, technology is both a weapon of critique and an object of critique. This tactic of using technology to replace and defeat technology, on one hand, exposes the contradictions and paradoxes of resistance practice, and on the other hand, confirms the dense envelopment of technological systems. To some extent, this sets the stage for the limited effectiveness of resistance practices.

4.3 Taking Stock of Technology Resistance Results

Frankly speaking, simply labeling the resistance actions of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group as failures or successes may miss the specific details of their local practices, obscuring the complex changes and vivid landscape of human-technology negotiation. Especially, it may overlook the nuanced bodily feelings reflected in their self-disclosures and the multiple dimensions and aspects of humans and technology they map. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully examine resisters' self-writing and definition of resistance actions. In regular check-ins and experience-sharing mediated narratives, members mainly take stock of their resistance practices from two aspects: first, reviewing, recording, and feeding back the actual circumstances and progress of daily actions; and second, disclosing personal experiences and feelings.

Specifically, local practices of resistance are diverse: some strictly discipline themselves and persistently conduct self-experiments, while others waver, with intermittent actions; some only keep resistance at the thought level; some strive to find alternatives to technology, while others are at a loss when suddenly stripped of technology, encountering obstacles in everything; some enthusiastically rearrange life order and content, while others don't know what to do with the free time after isolating technology; some change tactics when resistance is blocked, while others 顺势 “surrender” and give up...Of course, individuals' bodily feelings in resistance practices also vary: some regain a sense of autonomy and achievement through self-control, while others feel self-blame, disappointment, and shame when losing control; some experience fulfillment and happiness in reorganizing life order, while others feel extremely unadapted during behavioral adjustment periods; some obtain momentary peace and feel refreshed when temporarily leaving technology, while others feel anxious and lost; some have firm wills when resisting previous technology habits, while others repeatedly waver and suffer. In this regard, some sigh, “Life without mobile phones and networks—clouds are beautiful, flowers and trees are beautiful, it's truly pleasant.” [8] Others frankly admit, “At first there was a strong sense of novelty,” but “later I slowly forgot about my challenge” ;[31] “I have to admit that at the beginning, quitting mobile phones was like quitting drugs, with ants crawling all over my body, unable to sit still.” [32] Ultimately, some declare their self-experiments successful, feeling that “time has become mine again / life can be

more controlled by myself,” “very fulfilling, happy, and satisfying” ; others swing between self-restraint and behavioral 失控, “uninstalling an app then reinstalling it,” “unconsciously overusing when mentally lax,” “engaging in retaliatory use after forced abstinence,” finally announcing challenge failure and “returning to the past” ; still others return after interruption, attempting to launch a new round of self-challenge.

Whether detailed records of actual actions or truthful disclosures of embodied feelings, these are not meaningless “running accounts.” On the contrary, they are mediated writings through which resisters take stock of and examine their local practices, important indicators for self-evaluation and meaning interpretation of resistance actions. As concrete evidence of resistance practices in the Anti-Technology Dependence Group, they disclose different subjects’ resistance stories, portray different resister profiles, and showcase the “resistance art” of weak micro-actors. On the surface, these self-reports contradict each other, but in essence they are not opposed; they happen to truthfully reveal the multiple situations of human-technology interaction, the vivid details of human-technology gaming, and the paradoxes and dialectics inherent in both humans and technology. The mediated disclosures of resistance subjects show that individual resistance practices are not smooth but are intermittently interrupted, advancing or terminating according to resisters’ intentions. The gap and disconnect between consciousness-level awakening and action-level resistance somewhat weaken the effectiveness of resistance actions. It cannot be denied that regardless of whether self-assessment is failure or success, resistance practices have certain impacts on subjects: for those who successfully save themselves, new behavior patterns may be solidified into new habits; for those who consider their challenges failed, as long as the problem of cognitive dissonance is not resolved, the bodily feelings shaped by technological alienation will stubbornly urge them to return to balance. In a sense, the implementation of resistance opens a crack between subjects and technology, providing some possibility for individuals to break free from the dense envelopment of technological systems.

Overall, the resistance practices of the Anti-Technology Dependence Group represent a self-salvation initiated by different subjects in personal life fields, connecting online and offline spaces, involving discursive discussion, media inscription, and embodied action. In this contest between humans and technology, multiple aspects of human subjectivity, agency, weakness, and inertia, as well as the powerful disciplinary force and controllability of technological systems, are all revealed. These diverse grounded descriptions break binary imaginations and cognitions about human-technology interaction and relationships. They show that the relationship between humans and technology is not a simple static relationship of subject/object or control/controlled, but a dynamic relationship of mutual dependence, interactive symbiosis, and continuous gaming. Facts prove that in the field of everyday life, there exists a sustained tension between humans and technology, with their wrestling silently performed in unnoticed corners. This is micropolitics in everyday life, the poetics of silent resistance by micro-actors.

The online investigation of the Douban Anti-Technology Dependence Group shows that individuals are not numb technology users, nor are they docile, non-resistant disciplined objects. They have varying degrees of consciousness and awareness of their relationship with technology and their situated conditions. These hybrid products of embodied cognition, media discourse, and academic viewpoints construct a legitimate context for resisting technology. Although technological systems have woven a massive and dense network that envelops insignificant individuals, they are not monolithic. The internal drive of individual autonomy allows them to find spaces for deviance, negotiation, and resistance in the gaps of technological networks. Diverse tactics are performed here in turn to resist technology's discipline and alienation. Resisters' mediated confessions show that the unfolding of these resistance actions is not smooth. Existing habits and bodily feelings form a centripetal force that pulls against the centrifugal force formed by new habits and bodily feelings. Individuals at the center of the vortex must not only cope with the structural pressure exerted by the external technological system but also combat the powerful inertia of their own thought and behavior patterns. The implementation of tactics is also closely related to the capital that individuals can possess and appropriate, including social capital, economic capital, cultural capital, and technological capital. These capitals define individuals' positions in technological fields and social structures, providing tools and resources for resistance practice on one hand, while directly limiting the feasible paths and negotiation spaces for resistance on the other. The mediated writing of resistance actions' local practices is a public presentation of originally invisible micropolitics. It is both a link in technology resistance, providing evidence for confirming the implementation of resistance, and a biography that individuals establish for their self-salvation actions. The varying resistance narratives are inscribed, disseminated, read, and discussed in digital space, gradually gaining momentum and attracting media attention, thereby triggering public examination and reflection.

It must be noted that resistance practices starting from opposing technological alienation may lead to new forms of alienation. Facing the coercive and binding force after technological systems become institutionalized, individuals often feel powerless to resist and unable to escape. Although individuals strive to find alternatives to technology, actual implementation is fraught with difficulties. This on one hand intensifies the suffocating feeling brought by technology, and on the other hand squeezes the space for individual resistance, forcing resisters to turn inward and advising themselves to use technology rationally as a stopgap measure. Additionally, limited by personal vision and cognition, anti-technology dependence resistance actions are strictly confined to the micro-level of personal life, defined as self-experiments or challenges with redemptive and liberating meanings. In other words, individual technology resistance only points to the resisters themselves, without touching the massive technological systems and social structures and the invisible owners and controllers behind them. The tactic of escaping technology's huge centripetal force simply relies on sufficient self-discipline and self-control to resist technology's temptations. Thus, resistance

against external technology is translated into resistance against the self. On the surface, this is the most accessible, handy, and pragmatic circuitous tactic for resisters. In essence, it easily causes resisters to surrender when their will is weak, leading them into mental internal depletion of self-criticism and self-denial. Byung-Chul Han argues that this performance subject, who fights against themselves and engages in self-exploitation, is a product shaped by the performance society. He points out that we must be vigilant that the performance subject will “lead to a destructive self-condemnation and self-attack in the inability to be able.” [11] And this spiritual violence is precisely the manifestation of the alienation of technology resistance behavior. It must be admitted that individual resistance practices fighting alone are difficult to shake the stable position of technological systems, but they hold promise for providing individuals with possibilities to reshape human-technology relationships, reconstruct life appearances, and reconcile cognitive contradictions. How to connect this micropolitics of everyday life with macro social politics, find an appropriate mode of human-technology coexistence, and settle body and mind are important issues worthy of further exploration.

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(Responsible Editor: Li Jing)

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