

# INTERNATIONAL MANIFESTO FOR A UNIVERSAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO BE OFFLINE

*We are neither technophobes nor techno-worshippers. We just want the freedom to use or not to use the Internet to manage our daily lives. We want to be able to talk to competent public officials or technical staff instead of relying on an “app”, a “chat”, a “chatbot”, or the robot of a call center that often doesn’t understand our question. Many people are losing access to their rights out of discouragement in the face of falsely “simplified” online administrative procedures.*

**Digital connectivity should be an option, not an obligation.**

Digital technology is tightening its grip year after year and at the same time, human relations are undermined. The obsolescence of our humanity is being programmed. The widespread use of GPS has reduced our sense of direction, online encyclopedias are diminishing our ability to memorize, screen-based teaching lowers academic performance (according to the OECD's PISA report), and generative artificial or synthetic intelligence risks rendering us useless by deciding everything for us. The rise of the Internet of Things and Bodies (IoT & IoB), along with transhumanist projects for an « enhanced » humanity, are far from reassuring. **Little by little, we're becoming “data fodder”, tracked like goods or animals.** Every pretext – security, pandemics, terrorism, child abuse – is used to justify our ever increasing digital surveillance and control and by installing cameras everywhere. The growing centralization of our most personal data in digital databases is a cause for concern. The biometric passport and the Digital Identity Wallet pave the way for new forms of totalitarianism. **Is the digital web not becoming our prison? Moreover, any interconnected, centralized, and mandatory system is not only a threat to freedom, it is also vulnerable at a time when cyberattacks are on a rise.**

**Connectivity is demanded in almost every aspect of daily life:** working remotely, receiving a parcel, sending a letter, opening a door to a building, carrying out a banking transaction, booking a medical appointment or accessing public services. More recently, the suppression of train tickets, the end of printed receipts, the advent of digital currency, are all part of a process that sends a flood of information to misleadingly labeled “*dematerialized cloud*” storage systems that are just energy-hungry and waterguzzling data centers that encroach upon farmland across multiple continents. **Anti-paper propaganda** has shaped our minds to such an extent that we believe in good faith that we are acting in the interest of the planet by receiving endless online ads and being automatically redirected to digital platforms, all the while forgetting the enormous ecological footprint of

producing and powering electronic devices. *Paper can be recycled six times over, while a so-called “smart” phone can hardly be recycled at all!* We want to be able to keep physical currency, checks, train and cinema tickets, textbooks and passports... on paper. We wish to preserve the age-old use of books and printed documents, which have been the foundation of our civilizations, and to maintain human contact. ***We are committed to maintaining a genuine social life without a smartphone.***

**In the name of convenience and “Progress,”** the market, driven solely by short-term profit and blind to the proven vulnerabilities of children, is pushing technological innovation (such as 5G, and soon 6G) and encouraging customers to seek **a constant, manipulative and addictive connection.** Some even claim, cynically or naively, to serve the "ecological transition" in this way! But this hyperconnected society of digital dependency and control is, in fact, ecologically irresponsible and unsustainable: why overload the power grid at the risk of blackouts? Why should we develop tools that deplete the planet's limited resources, pollute and destroy biodiversity without reducing our carbon footprint? It takes 183 kilograms of raw materials to produce a smartphone weighing 200 grams, and 32 kilograms for the integrated circuit of a 2 gram microchip. Can we accept disfiguring our planet to power billions of digital devices? **The (global) war over metals, rare earths and water has already begun;** more and more water will be needed to manufacture our endless digital gadgets and cool the proliferation of data centers and nuclear power plants. For our ever-faster communications, **“constellations” of civilian and military satellites, clutter and damage the skies** with debris despite scientists, astronomers, and meteorologists sounding the alarm. **And we want PEACE – and more wisdom in the world.**

**The well-documented link between the destruction of the planet and the loss of human bonds is experienced as a catastrophe,** even by younger generations, who are the most digitally connected. This disaster compels us *to change course:* it is certainly not by forcing everyone to survive and consume via a smartphone – or even a wired connection – that we will save humanity and the living world.

The impact of overexposure to screens on children and adolescents' mental and physical health, development and emotional well-being is well documented. They are also the most vulnerable to the harmful effects of wireless radio frequencies and social media manipulation.

**On the verge of being imposed, universal connectivity can lead to discrimination and distress** for those affected by digital « illiteracy », uncomfortable with the Internet or without access to it, and for those suffering from symptoms of electrohypersensitivity (EHS) or electromagnetic radiation syndrome (ERS), whose numbers are steadily increasing due to wireless communication systems and smart meters. Significantly less electromagnetic pollution would be beneficial for everyone, fauna and flora included.

As is the case with pesticides, neonicotinoids, PFAS, endocrine disruptors, and other nuisances caused by our industrial civilization, the health issues associated with pulsed microwave radiation accumulating in our environment are deliberately underestimated under pressure from lobbies that sow doubt despite numerous solid scientific studies. Furthermore, cyberattacks on hospitals and the looting of health data will increase in *a never-ending game of cops and robbers*. We must finally accept that **we will never be fully protected**, despite the soothing and self-serving rhetoric about digital safety.

**Discrimination affects** people who:

- out of ecologic awareness, refuse the energy waste imposed by digital technology and having to be constantly connected;
- out of economic awareness, refuse to buy high-tech connected devices that are too quickly obsolete and often unnecessary;
- out of humanitarian awareness, reject the exploitation of impoverished *click workers* to enrich AI data and that of children in hyperpolluted cobalt and rare earth mines in Congo and elsewhere, children who, far from our eyes, are paying a very high price for our digital comfort;
- out of political awareness, resist Big Brother's control, the extortion of consent, and the excesses of mass digital surveillance.
- due to environmental illness, reject the ubiquity of electromagnetic pollution that undermines their fundamental rights and autonomy.

*The fascination of our elected officials, our media, and much of the population with digital technology has blinded us to its devastating potential. And we strongly hope that they will hear our appeal.*

There is a way back to a desirable life in a livable world. It's simple, inexpensive and within everyone's reach: **freedom to have THE CHOICE, not to connect, or to disconnect**. This step aside would allow the return of poetry, conviviality and human togetherness.

Before it's too late, it's time to reclaim *our human sovereignty* in a world saturated with digital technology, to turn away from deadly extractivist intoxication and electrical waste, *and to embrace true sobriety, beginning with a drastic reduction in our digital consumption*. This concerns our physical and mental health, our increasingly diminished free will and capacity for discernment – as well as the fate of our already ailing planet.

There is still time to weave bonds without the filter of algorithms, to relearn human autonomy. This is a matter of defending our freedoms, what remains of our privacy, social protection, health, quality of life, and the recognition of minorities, along with a call to decolonize our imagination.

**It's time to complete the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

**We reject the obligation to be connected, as well as the full digitalisation of our social live. We will connect *when and if*, WE,**

**THE CITIZENS, consciously decide to do so.** Because at stake are the very spirit of democracy, the future of our civilizations, and the values of a new humanism extended to all living beings.

**We request the establishment of a UNIVERSAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO BE OFFLINE and/or DISCONNECTION.**

Collectif nantais de veille citoyenne (CNVC)  
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