



# Immersion English Malta

Listening Practice: [Why Can't We Stop Looking At Our Phones?](#)

Read the questions in Part 1 before starting to listen to the programme.

## PART 1 - PHONE NUMBERS

1. Larry Rosen is the author of the book, "Ancient Brains in a High-Tech World". What does his research focus on?
2. How many times a day does the average adult unlock their phone?
3. When do people pick up their phone? What are they feeling?
4. What happens when we can't check our phones? What do we become? (06.10 - 06.30)

Read the questions in Part 2 before you continue listening to the programme.

## PART 2 - THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COMPULSION

5. Who was B.F. Skinner?
6. In the 50s and 60s, Skinner discovered the most compelling and addictive form of reward schedule called the Intermittent Variable Ratio Reinforcement Schedule which boils down to in plain English, not knowing how much you're going to \_\_\_\_\_ and when it's going to \_\_\_\_\_. (09.00 - 10.30)
7. In one experiment, the animals pressed the lever and got food sometimes but not every time. What did they become?
8. Where do casinos get the majority of their profits from?

Read the text while Listening to Part 3 below. Complete the gaps in the text.

## PART 3 - HABIT-FORMING TECH (12:00)

NIR EYAL: So..er..a few years ago, I had this problem where I found that every night I was going to bed later and later because I was on my device and that wasn't good for my sleep schedule.

PRESENTER: This is Nir Eyal.

NIR EYAL: and it also wasn't good for my sex life.

PRESENTER: Nir is a successful author and entrepreneur. His success sprang from an insight he had while running his own tech \_\_\_\_\_ company.

NIR EYAL: I was at the intersection of gaming and advertising. This was back in 2007 when we started the company and those 2 industries are really dependent on changing \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ and what I found was.. was that were a lot of techniques that were being used but no one was kind of connecting those back to sound psychology principles. (12:45)

PRESENTER: So Nir Eyal set up developing a theory that took the insights of people like B.F. Skinner and applied them to the tech world. The result was a book called, "\_\_\_\_\_": How to Build Habit Forming Products". He says you start with a trigger, like a notification and then move to a reward, ideally a variable reward. (13:21)

NIR EYAL: The mother of habit-forming technology is probably email, I mean email is a fantastic variable reward mechanism because we've all seen how email sometimes can deliver good news, sometimes it's bad news sometimes it's \_\_\_\_\_, sometimes it's super important and that variability keeps us \_\_\_\_\_.

PRESENTER: It's easy to see the factors at play on our phones. All those notifications triggering us, all those apps Facebook, Twitter, Tindr, Snapchat which we eagerly open never knowing what reward we're going to get.

NIR EYAL: The reason we look at these devices as much as we do is no accident. It's quite \_\_\_\_\_. It just so happens that the technologies that we carry in our pockets happen to be a very good delivery device for many of these variable rewards.

PRESENTER: Companies can experiment with rewards and other design features and our phones provide lots of data about what keeps us using their \_\_\_\_\_.

NIR EYAL: So, everytime we give the product data, content, we approve friends or followers we're literally building the product with the company we're customising it to our needs and preferences based on our data so that it becomes better and better over time.

PRESENTER: The goal, according to NIR EYAL is that our use of these products becomes habitual.

NIR EYAL: Eventually, I begin to \_\_\_\_\_ using a technology like email with feeling bored or feeling anxious so when we're feeling lonely we check Facebook, when we're uncertain, we check Google, when we're feeling bored we check Youtube or the news or whatever. We use their products to satisfy these needs, to scratch our itch with little or no \_\_\_\_\_ thought.

PRESENTER: Our phones are always with us. So why can't we stop looking at our phones? Our third expert witness has explained how companies use the psychological principles we heard about in Part 2, in his words, "to get us hooked". Our phones are always with us and can become our default response to those internal triggers we heard about in Part 1, boredom or anxiety. But Nir Eyal doesn't want us to forget that we use products we like and that work for us. (15:03)

NIR EYAL: I mean \_\_\_\_\_. These products are enhancing our lives. I kind of take issue with title of the premise of this show in that why can't we stop checking our devices. Well, we most certainly can stop checking our devices. This isn't brain control.

#### PART 4 - WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

1. How long ago did Tristan Harris create his start up?
2. When were his customers happy?
3. What is the name of Tristan's company?
4. How would apps be rated?