2.13: The Distracted Reader

So, you have found the best place and the best time for you to do your reading, but “Oh no!” you become consumed with the YouTube clip showing goats yelling “Ahhhh!” … and then, of course, you decide to check up on your friends’ social media pages and some memes to cheer you up.

It happens to everyone.

Technology and social media are great, but these mediums can also be so distracting from your studies! On top of that, you may also have commitments that pull you in multiple directions including pets, work, family, and friends.

You can’t eliminate distractions completely, but you can think about how you can best minimize the distractions that are most distracting for you. Listen to the Audio Podcast 2.1 by a nursing student from Ryerson University about strategies that she uses to minimize distractions while reading.
Audio Podcast 2.1: Minimizing distractions [2:59]

Student Tip

Minimize Distractions

Put your smartphone in another room or turn it off (yes seriously, really, do it!). Close all social media pages. Find a
location where you won’t be interrupted, such as the library or a coffee shop. You might find reading on the train or bus works for you if you have a long commute. Give yourself timed breaks: enjoy your break however you wish, but remove all distractions when your break is done so you can refocus.

Self-control Apps

Need help with self-control? Many computer and phone apps can help you minimize distractions. You just need to find the ones that work for you. Talk to your peers and try some out. See Table 2.2 for some common apps that your peers talk about.

Table 2.2: Self-control Apps

- **Waste No Time** is a popular one because you can personalize everything:
  - You can personalize the websites you want to block and allow.
  - You can edit the time range: define work hours and how much time you want to allow yourself to visit the blocked sites during work hours and outside of work hours.

- **Just Focus** can help with self-control, and is easily disabled by pressing a button
  - You can easily add websites you want to block.
  - If you visit the blocked site, you receive an inspiring quote to motivate you to finish your work.

- **Be Focused – Focus Timer** (only available on Apple products)
  - This does not block any websites, but it allows you to customize how long you want to work and sets up breaks.
  - This helps with knowing how much time you have focused on a task.

These small actions can improve your reading and help you finish faster so you can continue to snap your friends on Snapchat (don’t forget to add the dog filter!) or edit some artsy photos for your Instagram.