

PUBLIC LECTURE EVALUATION

Masaryk University

Faculty

Faculty of Social Studies

Procedure field

Psychology

Applicant

Mgr. David Lacko, Ph.D.

Lecture date

14th April 2026, 12:00 p.m.

Lecture topic

Rethinking Digital Risk: Are Technologies Indeed Harmful for Adolescents?

Persons present

(number)

44

Designated evaluators

(board members)

prof. Mgr. Tomáš Řiháček, Ph.D.

prof. PhDr. Petr Macek, CSc.

doc. Mgr. Kateřina Lukavská, Ph.D.

doc. PhDr. Bc. Iva Poláčková Šolcová, Ph.D.

The author addresses a timely issue of both academic and social significance. He reflects on the current polarized debate regarding the impact of digital technologies on adolescents and replaces a simplistic view with a nuanced, empirically grounded approach.

The lecture is well-structured and progresses from defining the problem to analyzing it at the level of specific research areas. In the introduction, the author convincingly highlights the specific characteristics of adolescence as a sensitive developmental period and emphasizes the ambiguous role of digital technologies in the psychosocial development of adolescents.

The candidate appropriately emphasizes that the question of the impacts of technology is not binary but depends on context, mode of use, and individual characteristics.

The section devoted to the methodological pitfalls of research can be considered a key part of the lecture. The candidate systematically identifies the limitations of the current literature, particularly the problem of causality, the limitations of self-report data, and the failure to distinguish between intra- and inter-individual effects. Here, he highlights the importance of the practical significance of empirical results. At the same time, he convincingly demonstrates how these limitations can be overcome using advanced research designs. This section attests to the candidate's high level of methodological expertise.

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The empirical section is based on the presentation of the candidate's own studies focused on various aspects of digital technology use. The candidate demonstrates that the average effects of the relationship between technology and well-being are generally small, though not necessarily insignificant, particularly in the context of long-term exposure or among specific at-risk groups.

We appreciate the emphasis on the heterogeneity of effects and the effort to identify moderating factors. When interpreting research results, the candidate is precise, critical, and factually accurate. He avoids both alarmism and downplaying the problem, emphasizing the complex nature of the relationship between technology and adolescents' psychological functioning. Also valuable is his critical reflection on meta-analytic studies and his warning about the risks of misinterpreting population trends and in the conclusion of his presentation, he was able to formulate practical recommendations for practice and further research in this area. He reiterated the importance of interpreting practical significance and reflecting on the true nature of the effect of interest. The candidate demonstrated his teaching skills. His presentation was convincing and authentic, and during the lively discussion, he answered all questions competently.

Conclusion

The lecture delivered by Mgr. David Lacko, Ph.D., entitled *Rethinking Digital Risk: Are Technologies Indeed Harmful for Adolescents?* and delivered as part of the habilitation procedure, **demonstrated** sufficient scholarly qualifications and pedagogical capabilities expected of applicants participating in a habilitation procedure in the field of Psychology.

Date: 14th April 2026

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