

# 116-inconvenience-or-productivity-productivitycast

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

convenience, productivity, productive, smartphone, device, apps, phone, convenient, tools, people, question, application, task, carry, notes, email, argument, capabilities, talking, point

## SPEAKERS

Art Gelwicks, Voiceover Artist, Raymond Sidney-Smith, Francis Wade, Augusto Pinaud



Voiceover Artist 00:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place. ProductivityCast the weekly show about all things productivity, here are your host Ray Sidney-Smith and gousto been out with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks



Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:17

Welcome back, everybody to ProductivityCast the weekly show about all things personal productivity. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith.



Augusto Pinaud 00:22

I'm Augusto Pinaud.



Francis Wade 00:23

I'm Francis Wade.



Art Gelwicks 00:24

And I'm Art Gelwicks.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:25

Welcome, gentlemen, and welcome to our listeners to this episode of productivity cast. And in this episode, I'm going to turn it over to Francis to lead us into the conversation. Francis, you had a topic that you wanted us to talk about related to convenience. And so can you explain to listeners your experience and what we're going to talk about today?



Francis Wade 00:46

Sure. I'm a I was a late adopter to smartphones. I didn't have one for a long time. And everyone was raving about how great they were. And I asked the question, why do I need a smartphone. And my initial observation was that the smartphones at the time, which was the early 2000s, mid 2000s, I argued that they were no better than a knapsack of gadgets. So if I had a knapsack with me, and I carried it everywhere, and it had a phone, PDA, GPS, a recording device to record audio, and record and a video camera, the smartphone, which combined those elements into one, my argument was that that wasn't more productive than my knapsack of gadgets. It was more convenient. And just because they were no bundled into a single device, did not make people more productive against capital P productive, although the convenience could not be argued with. So all the time that the argument was resolved, because there were lots of apps that came out in doo, doo, doo doo time that that had multiple connections between the different functions that never existed before. So that that that question was settled, in my mind. But I still sort of retained this kind of Luddite point of view, which is just because you can do something in a in a place or a time that is new to you. Does that mean that you're more productive? And the example I use is texting with texting and driving? Just because you can text while you're driving? Does that mean that you're more productive? Clearly, it's a convenience. But I think that today, back then the question was kind of up for up for grabs, but today we settled it. texting while driving is a dangerous convenience. So if we have a dangerous convenience, then surely we must have conveniences that don't add productivity, if we can go all the way to danger. Well, we don't have to go that far to say are their apps are the capabilities are that technology is being created today, which are only really about a mile, the convenience, but they don't really add to our productivity. And in fact, they could take away Take away from it.



Augusto Pinaud 03:19

I think there is an important distinction to make in here, even before you can get to the discussion between productivity and convenience. And one is, is the activity that you're talking, putting in danger, you know, security or bring danger yourself but endanger others? And is this legal and legal or not. So after you pass that and I agree texting, we don't need any more proof how dangerous can be so so that that is not we cannot even get to the discussion, productivity convenience, because it will be a stop on the first filter that is is this putting you and others in danger? And the answer will be just that set. When you can pass those you know it's not illegal, it's not dangerous. Then now I want to quote there's a photographer called Chase Jarvis, who said something on the lines of the best camera is the one that you have with you. It's not about convenience, it's it or that's where the convenience and that productivity line gets really blurry. You know when you're discussing this You make me think on many months back before the first iPad was released and I carry with me, I really heavy bag I was traveling 80 90% of the time. So I carry with me among other things, I scanner to laptops, chargers, Wi Fi router cables and a bunch of other stuff again, in a really, really heavy bag and when The smartphone came, what produce for me was the ability to start leaving some of the things behind for, for a device that not only was going to be on my pocket, but that was going to make me even more productive. Why? Why more productive, because now I could act regardless where I was, you know, I, I remember having on my Palm Pilot, okay, so even before smartphones, the folding keyboard, why because that gave me the equivalent of a word processor and basic, I get it, it was a super basic spreadsheet, but that allow me to work basically anywhere that I could find some kind, some kind of flat surface, and I could work I could write, I could. And I was going to college in that time. So I could take notes there, typing the notes that that was the one of the first productivity things I remember, for me was that Palm Pilot with that keyboard, I went to law school, I was a paralegal. So getting into the court to take the notes, take the documents that I want to take the screenshots on a camera, I carry palmpilot on a camera and the keyboard and being able to type that directly instead of in a notebook, and allow me to get to the office and basically fire those notes, maybe do a quick review on fire those notes save me in average, comparing to the other paralegals of the firm between 45 minutes or an hour and a half. Because there was a limited access to computers, we tend to forget though things but I remember we were eight paralegals and two computers. So you need to sit in there and wait for the others to do that, while they were fighting for who was going to get that computer, I could do all that on my Palm Pilot and just ask them to synchronize and fire it was fantastic. So that I think it's really, really important. It was convenient, of course, it was convenient, but also make me incredibly more productive. As I begin to substitute things. With that technology, you know, came the first Palm Pilot didn't have a camera came the second one who finally had the camera, so or didn't have a front camera, they did have a camera. So I couldn't start taking all those pictures. So that means scanner out. Now I needed to find a software solution. So I could do those things. But although things were replaced, and there

is a video somebody make, and I'm happy to find the notes that something on the lines of 30 years of evolution of technology, and you start seeing a desk full of stuff, and you end up with one little device. Is that convenient? Of course it is convenient, is that making people more productive? Of course, it's making people more productive, because now Jude doesn't depend on that, you know, recently you, Francis wrote an article about our we need new context. And as I read that, it made me think on the old context, you know, our office at phone, you know, at phone is a context that unless identity, it's it's a context that die, why because all of us carry a phone in our pocket, the iPhone, you may need to record the Android, whatever, you may not want to make the phone call, you may want it to do it in your office for other reasons, but not because you now are tied up to okay when I get back to home or when I get back to the office. So those contexts, you know, are evolving, same thing with connected to the internet. If we go back to that time you were talking Yeah, connected to the internet had a bunch of conditions that need to be met for you to do it. Today, we are connected almost anywhere. It is convenient. Of course it is convenient. But it's that convenience that can can allows you to make more productive if you use it appropriately. The question is, are you getting the convenience? for which reason? And are you using that convenience to be more productive? I think

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Art Gelwicks 09:22

I'll agree with a gousto. On part of that. There is definitely the convenience and aspect of this. What I want to clarify a little bit at least in my mind, is there is a difference between the value of what I'm going to refer to as digital multi tools versus doing things in a I don't want to call it multitasking but that type of an idea or concept. So one of the things I do every morning when I get up is I literally I slip an actual multi tool in my pocket. It's got it's the equivalent of your Swiss Army knife, but it's got, you know, knife, pliers, screwdriver, all those things on it. And why I do that is very simple because at least once a day, there will be something I need to do, where one of the tools on there will solve that issue. Now, is it the optimal tool for doing that particular task? In every case? No. I mean, it is not a custom designed tool for that particular issue. But what it is, it's a productive and convenient way to solve that particular task and move on to the next one. So for my own purposes, in a physical environment, that makes things very easy, when we start to look at it in a digital environment. phones are the original PDA is like a gousto was talking about, were designed around that level of convenience. I mean, that was the core concept was to be able to integrate those applications together into a singular device, so that you always had it. And I've heard that statement before it goes to about the the best cameras, the one you have with you. And you can see how when smartphones really started to get traction, they basically killed the point and shoot digital camera market, because everybody had a camera in their pocket. So while I think there's an important understanding to come into play as to, is there direct value from applications that don't

have a singular purpose, but are designed to do many different things? That should be done, that evaluation should be done in parallel with? Am I using these tools in the right ways at the right times? And it? There's an old saying, if you're a woodworker that, you know, if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail? Well, if you've locked yourself into a specific application that does a whole bunch of things, but not exceptionally well on any of them, you're going to spend probably an exorbitant amount of time trying to shoehorn things into that application, because you married yourself to it. On the flip side, you may have 10 different applications that you know, they do their individual jobs extremely well. But now you have the digital equivalent of a gastos backpack where you have all these applications to manage. This is this eternal struggle that we have. It's that constant Bounce, bounce back and forth between finding the tool that will do everything and finding the tools that do things really well for everyone. I don't know that there's a clear definition within this. But I don't think this is a zero sum conversation either. I think there are absolutely some tools that you want to have available to you that can cover a good 40-50-60% of the types of things that you want to be able to do, you're going to have other tools that are very specialized and do their jobs exceptionally well. But that's all they do. It's really where you have to think about when do you use which that the convenience, productivity conversation comes into play.

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Francis Wade 13:18

But you're also making a decision as to what to carry with you. And I think this is where they This is one of the ways in which the contribution versus productivity question is useful. So can you imagine if Android and Apple had decided to bind social media apps, from their platforms, from the very beginning? Let's say they had a secret meeting and they said, okay, no, Facebook, no Twitter, no Instagram? No, there's no that they are the these are productivity tools. These are social networking tools. Imagine a different world we live in. If we didn't have 24 hour access to those networks. Imagine perhaps, how much more productive we would be going back to Augustus original, I think, our first our second Podcast, where he proposed that a smartphone should have four apps, and that's it, you know, phone, calendar, email, and text, I think it was but it should, they should focus on the core productivity tools that you need. And maybe nothing else, you know, back to the PDA days, because you knew what a PDA was for because it only had four tools on it. It could only do four things. But it did that really, really well. And because there were only four things you were focused on them. There were no none of the distractions that we have today, where every every software Maiko wants to have an app and wants you to put it on their phone. And are they concerned about your productivity. I suggest that Facebook isn't all about your productivity in the big sense of capital P productivity, they have other goals in mind. And I suspect the others do. And I suspect many of the app designers are, they just want to engage you there, whether you're productive doing it or

not, whether you're driving doing it or not, whether you're at the dinner table doing it or not, or in the middle of church, or in a wedding, or at a funeral, or in a meeting, or that's not their concern there, if it ruins your productivity that's on you.

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Art Gelwicks 15:27

But hold on, I'm gonna back you up a little bit on that. I don't think anyone confuses the, the concept that Facebook is a productivity app, or, you know, any number of Twitter is a productivity app, maybe borderline if it's if you're using it for business. But let's go all the way back, if you want to use that as the practical example and talk about PDA is I've got an entire shelf full of them. And every one of them, one of the first things that you did is you were able to start to load other programs onto those to get them to do more, you have to go all the way back to dedicated word processing systems, for example, to be able to get to something that had only a singular purpose. And that really wasn't the fact that that's what people wanted. It's that that's what the technology could deliver at the time. So let's let's not confuse the different uses for the tools with their value in the productivity scheme of things. Sure, you could go through and you could take him take a phone and put only, quote, productivity apps on it and exclude everything else. And that's totally your choice. And that's totally fine. The platform allows you to make that choice. Is that more productive for you? Well for you as an individual, probably. But if part of my productivity involves being aware of what's going on in the world, maybe I want that social media app on there. Maybe I want that chat app or telegram or something else on there. So the fact that it's an open platform for change and configuration means that the convenience is directly tied to productivity for me as an individual. And if you think about when Apple originally brought out the iPhone, Steve Jobs said, there doesn't need to be an app store. Why should there be an app store? I gave you everything you could ever need. And we see how long that lasted. So while I agree, there are many things that are not worth having, within your productivity scope, I think one of the things we have to remember is that productivity is not just about doing things. productivity is about mindset, and feeling and condition and energy levels, and all of the different things that we've talked about, either contribute or take away from those particular aspects. So I think you have to recognize the fact that these devices, these technologies are here to stay. We will always have multifaceted capabilities within these tools. The question is, how are you going to use those and in your evaluation of it? Is it the best tool for you to be using,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 18:28

so just want to make a quick correction. The first palm pilots, they came with calendar, contacts, tasks and notes, there was no Email button on those on those devices. This in the early days. as a as a booster has noted in the past, I wanted to provide a couple of pieces

here. One is that I fully agree with art in the sense that these devices can be Jack's of all trades and aces of none. And we need to be very conscious of the fact that if we have a bunch of apps on a device that limits its capabilities fully then for those people who are true Craftsman coming to arts analogy of the carpenter, then it becomes a limiter. But it can be a true productivity enabler if someone is a novice and just needs to get the job done. And can satisfies to that level basically good enough is good enough. And so that is the piece where is it more productive for you if you are a skilled videographer to have your you know, iPhone 12 Pro max out there in the field? Maybe but maybe not. And so what ends up being convenience can actually hold you back if you actually also need a lighting kit and external microphones and and and so that piece really always kind of jumps out at me. Right? It's it's very clarifying for me as to whether or not if I really want to do the job The way that I want to do the job, then a convergence device that shoves a whole bunch of things together into one is going to precipitate a natural limitation of the things that I want to do. And then of course, greater complexity or more moving parts always leads to more breakdowns. So this is one of the reasons why I think smartphones have done really well, in one sense and really bad in the other. In one sense, there, they are highly complex, and they have a lot of parts, but not many of them are actually moving as much anymore. And the moving parts, you know, your gyroscopes, your the the vibrator function within the phone, that buzzes when you, when you turn on vibrate mode, the cameras, those things fail, because they're moving parts. And so the more moving parts inside a device, the more likely there are for breakdowns. And that happens less like when's the last time your hammer broke, right, your hammer doesn't break. I mean, unless you snap it in half, you know, like your hammer lasts a while, the the more moving parts, the more likelihood of breakdown, and interchangeable parts in the industrial revolution obviously gave us the capability of replacing repairing, and moving on. And I don't see that as much today, the best I can say is that we have a lot of folks who use screen replacement as being kind of the one thing we do fix on more than often. But many times we break something that is a multifunction device for convenience, and then we discard it. And so there is this very throwaway culture that I think is is damaging both to our environment, but also to our productivity, because then we go without, for longer. Or we just get used to this idea that we can toss something away, replace it, but then that requires us to actually re integrate it into our system, especially if it's something complex, like a smartphone.

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Augusto Pinaud 22:02

So I wanted to bring, you know, an another example because I agree in park with art says, You know, I, my point is people need to learn, you know, those basics and understand really how to use that convenience, for productivity. So you can get the computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone, but if you don't know how to use all that convenience, for productivity, the productivity is going to be lost on you. You know, and one example and we were

discussing recently for the hour somebody was the use of service coding here in the United States called instacart. And instacart goes do the groceries for you and bring you for a fee. And it's a convenience, well can argue that it's cheaper or more expensive, we can argue that too. But for for certain people, that convenience can be used into productivity into saving money in the long term, even even in a service that is a little bit more expensive. And that was where the where the argument was, because what this person was saying was that they are using instacart. And they are looking at two benefits. Benefit number one, they're not going risking, you know, with the current COVID conditions, and this person comes amid what state where their rate right now is around 22%. Okay, so it's a really high rate. So, it that number one, number two, this person is saying I don't need to spend 15 minutes, get me there, 10 minutes apart in half an hour, 45 minutes in total hour and a half doing the groceries. Okay, because I can now use the service and wait at home. And the final point, this person was saying was not only that, over time, what I discover is my grocery bills coming down because I have removed all the temptation out of the grocery process, because now I go and buy based on what I'm going to cook instead of what I'm looking in the shelf to buy. So based on those three points on those three reasonings for this person, instacart is an incredible service. Okay, for other people, that fact of going to the grocery is to walk the different aisles, okay, it's relaxing enough that it's not worth it to do any of any of those to resolve and so, when we get this example and we move it that is the part of convenience, cut the service v convenient Of course, can that convenience lead for productivity? I don't know as Ray was saying, hey, if you need can the iPhone do the recording? Yes. Can the iPhone do the recording if you need to carry lights and two microphones? Functional Dad? I don't know. It's worth it. I don't know, you'll see. I've been using the iPad as my main machine to say I bought one came out is the perfect machine? No, it's a perfect machine for what I do right now. That can change tomorrow. And I think that's the important distinction to what that compliment what Art was saying that target between convenience and productivity is not a fixed target. Right now, are they saying that he is carrying this tool in his pocket, because the different tools allow him to solve a set of problems during the day. And that's marked that convenience instead of needed to go to the toolbox every time he need to fix one of those things that make him more productive. But if that change, because now he's starting to fly everywhere, okay, and that means he cannot carry the tool because he cannot pass it to security. Well, now, that's not saying, Okay, I'm not going to fly. And I'm going to drive everywhere I need to go may not. So I can carry my tool may not be productive nor convenient. So that one important thing in this discussion is to understand where that target move. And where are you in the move of that target?



Francis Wade 26:25

I think that companies advertise productivity tool, sorry, convenience tools as productivity



tools. And we have to be the ones to discern the difference, because even over time, those differences change. So I have a smartphone that is limited in its capability, it doesn't have a whole lot of storage space. And all these you know, all these apps want to use on Android, they want to use your device and not the SD card, they want to store everything on the device. So I've had to swap some in and swap some out. At the time that I put the one in I thought oh yeah, this is this should add to my productivity or convenience. And then something better came along. And then I'd have to sit and kind of think, okay, if I keep this app in, I have to get rid of something. What's the one that I can give up? That isn't really adding to my convenience? I'm sorry, productivity is just the convenience. And at the fit, don't actually think it through? Because I can't have it all. Now, if you gave me a smart, better smartphone with more memory, I wouldn't discriminate, I would just add everything in. But is that real productivity? Just because you can have every app under the sun on your smartphone? Because you have so much memory? Does that make you more productivity or those that? Are you just adding rather than choosing, choosing in the sense that you're seeing, here's the minimal number of apps, I need to be productive here the capabilities I need to carry with me at all times. I figured it out, I've thought it through, it may change over time, it probably will change as it goes to say it's not the same from person to person. But I need to think it through I think the thinking it through is what we're not doing. Part of why I wrote the original article and argued was that the original argument was that people were telling me, and because I bring my point up and I'd say Oh look, but I can do this strange thing or specific thing in this strange place. So because I can do this specific thing in this new strange place, therefore, I'm more productive. And I swear I scratched my head, I said, I think that's just convenience. Just because you can do this specific thing in this strange place, doesn't necessarily mean you're productive. So fast forward to today. Just because you can add an app onto your smartphone doesn't necessarily make you more productive. In fact, it could obscure the handful of activities that you really need to be focusing on, like social media apps on your phone. If we weren't allowed to have social media apps on our phone, we perhaps most of us probably would be more productive. You know, there was an argument I remember a few years ago, why don't smartphone you companies put in mechanisms that prevent you from texting while driving. Because apparently the argument was that that's a very simple capability for them to put in but they don't want to put it in because they want you to use your data and therefore accrue profits, the the phone companies that was the argument that we can as a whole episode on its own maybe. So that was that was a decent sort of line of reasoning. But now that we're where we are today, why don't we Why don't we have apps for example, that allow us to flip a smartphone into productive mode on a weekday, or between eight to five, where it just blocks off all of the other apps, and becomes a productivity device between eight and five, and then turns into a nother kind of device between on weekends or between five and eight. Why isn't that sort of inner thinking to begin with, but you can do that

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Art Gelwicks 30:27

that's, and this is, this is where I'm going to draw this back a little bit, we're putting the onus on the manufacturers of equipment, to limit their capabilities, when that's completely counterproductive to the purpose of having the platform because they can't build something that works for everyone. It has to be as open as possible to be able to reach the broadest audience. But to be able to do what you've just described, I'll admit, that's how my phone's set up, I have a launcher on mine, I happen to use nova launcher, and it has multiple home screens in it. And I have a home screen that I basically live off of between eight and five. And the only things on that home screen are things I need for the work day. They're just shortcuts to things like to do list and one note, and that's sort all the social media apps and everything else that I have on my phone, they're on a different page in the homescreen. And I just don't go to that page during the day because I don't need to, I need to use the other one. So you do have the ability to do it. Android has configurations where there's what's called a focus mode where you can go through and selectively say, look, I can't use this particular app, or even better, some of them, you can lock down to a certain amount of time as part of their new digital well being. So there's a lot of ways to do that, whether we count on the manufacturers of the devices to do it for us, or in my mind, what is better to do it for ourselves. Because we're making that conscious choice. I think that's really, really where this has to get to. And it's a discipline thing at that point. Because you're right, it is a convenience factor for me to be able to pull my phone out while I'm standing in line somewhere and do something in that spot. Just because I can I have that time. And we've encouraged people to do that before to take advantage of those little spots of time. But when we look at the the application list, I mean, if I look at the application list that's on my phone, it's close to 400 applications, do I use all those all the time? Absolutely not. But I'll go back to my toolbox analogy. In my shop, I have a great big red toolbox. And there are tools in there that I may use once a year. But when I use them, they are exactly designed for the purpose that they are getting used for. And there are applications that I have that are do that, that do that now keeping them here on my phone is the equivalent of removing them from my phone would be the equivalent of going to my toolbox, taking it out and throwing it away. And every time I needed to use that specific tool, I'd have to go out and buy it again. And re quote, re install it into my toolbox. So there's a give and take, there should be a constant evaluation to the tools that you're using that you have, you know, are they really contributing to your overall productivity, but I don't think we can go through and say, you know, there's, there's, we should be expecting somebody else to do this for us. We have to take individual responsibility for these devices that we have, how they're being used and be critical about it and say, You know what, this app that I have on here, I've got four different video editing editing apps on my phone, do I really need for or is there one that does the job?



Augusto Pinaud 33:58

I think you made a great point in which you know as I was saying that target change but also you are the responsible you know, years ago, there was a site called minimal Matt can they had a podcast call enough that was tied to the bread and Patrick run one of these one of his tests that are questions he did to the interviewers was if you got right now a MacBook with only 64 gigabytes what you will do because that basically when you put the Mac OS on everything didn't give you a lot of a lot of space and and that question applies to your tablet to your phone, and everything else. But the question is that is understand what you need. And when and I agree with you, you can put that responsibility into the manufacturer because basically then manufacturers need to produce a million of device to sell one unit so it will never work. But it works into understanding as technology has evolved. get cheaper and better. That also gives you the chance to say, Hey, I'm going to get this device for this task. And this other device for others. You know, Ray is, has said in this show many times he had a Kindle just to read he, can he read on his phone or his tablet or any other device? Yes. But he choose to have that additional device just for reading, just so he can have focus. And same thing with any other device, you can go and get, you know, I, I have discussed that. I don't check email on my phone. There's no emails on my phone, God that cause trouble? Yes, once in a while I'm outside and somebody wants to send an email, and I can't, I don't have faxes. Sorry, you need to wait until I come back. But if I carry the iPad, my iPad can connect it to the web and then send an email. So why I choose not to collect email or not to review email on my phone, it's convenient to receive it, we can argue that is productive for me. No, it is not. So even when I can may have the convenience factor of have the email, you know, beeping on my phone, on my pocket. It's not productive for me. So I agree with Art. On that point. Do everyone need to go and do that assessment into what he what he needs. And as a coach, sometimes I work with clients into helping clarifying that into helping define in candidate five devices, I have access, what should I do with all devices? Should I access everything equally? Or should I use devices for certain things and leave you know, the multi device lifestyle and see what works better not only based on the device, the activities and the software you use, but also what is your own style that will make you more or less productive.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 37:02

So I want to bring up a couple of things and define a few things as well. So going flipping back to earlier in the discussion, Art had noted something about Facebook and Francis's arguments around the social media apps that are allowed onto platforms. And we have to remember that platforms are by themselves a convenience, we are sometimes unaware of the fact that an operating system, even the kernel on a motherboard, right, like when

we think about these pieces, they are allowing for the convenience of different types of software to be running on top of the systems. And we could take this in the analog world, right, like having a motor an engine with different brands that support the same parts, configurations of the engine, give us the convenience, to be able to have an operating engine that breaks and then is repaired locally, and not having to be shipped to its original manufacturer in order to be fixed and you know, brought back to us. So the idea behind say Facebook being allowed on Apple iOS, or the Google Play slash Android ecosystem is is not just a good to have, in some regions of the world. Facebook is the internet. And I know that seems to be obtuse to some folks. But remember that if you are in certain countries around the world, the way that people access the internet is by virtue of Facebook providing their application baked into the smartphones that they have. And that's how they're accessing news. You know, connecting with friends and family doing business, all of that is in there. So in in that sense, it can be a productivity app in Wolf's clothing, but it is a productivity hub. And, and then kind of a tangent to that none of these are really necessarily founded, well founded arguments, but more just kind of giving context that social media apps are not required on any of these phones. While they may be pre installed by some OEMs. The reality is, is that you can disable and turn off akin to what artists talking about with regard to installing an additional launcher like the Nova Launcher onto his phone, you can manifest the organization of your phone in order to be more productive. And I think it's really important for us all to remember that it is up to us, not up to the OEMs. It's not up to the operating system developers. It's not up to the individual app developers to manifest our productivity systems at that's up to us. But on the flip side, as we've talked about in past episodes, it is really important that we impress upon software developers and to those people in the hardware and software space generally product managers and otherwise to be making good productivity decisions for those who are unaware, right you're you're listening to this podcast because you're aware Those not listening to this podcast, heaven forbid they not find out about it by you telling someone you know, like the the reality is, is that there are vast numbers of people on the planet who go about their life, never being aware of their productivity enablers and disabling and they don't develop a system, and they just float through life and they don't feel fulfilled. And that's unfortunate. And, and so like those people producing the products, and the software that runs on those products really do have a responsibility to those people. For us, the more aware, we have a responsibility to ourselves to utilize that software in the best way. This takes me to my definition, which is earlier, we were talking about the idea of convenience in the context of productivity apps, and being able to get multiple things done. For example, if you're standing in the grocery store line, and basically wasting time, the idea of being in a queue just generally, for me seems like a waste of time. And so having your smartphone be able to do a marginal task, something that you wouldn't otherwise always do is really important. So I always take kind of these two principles in mind, one, can I met a task, which is can I layer one task on top of

another. And this means that I'm toggling between two different things is slow enough, that I can actually make meaningful progress on both of them. So for example, if I'm standing in a queue, in a line, you know, waiting to board the plane, and we're just standing there while I'm doing one thing. But now if I open up my phone, and I catch up on a couple of email messages, while I'm doing another thing, and I can actually do both of those, well, if the email isn't too involved, and it just takes a minute to do that, I can maybe get through 510 emails, if I'm standing in that line for 510 minutes. So that's meta tasking. And that's, that's being more productive. On the flip side of that, then we also have to think about the notion of, Okay, if this is convenience for the sake of it, and we are lacking our ability to actually get things done, because we are switch tasking, and therefore reducing our overall effectiveness, the overall quality of output, then that's a real issue. Second, is marginal features. And marginal features, for me really means that we're thinking about the choices we're making to our detriment. So for example, if I look at a productivity app, so your task manager, and it has everything I want, except for these two or three features, and those two, three features are not core, they're not my necessity, but it's just not, quote unquote, pretty enough. Or if it's not, you know, it doesn't have this doodad that all the other cool task managers have, then I shouldn't switch to that application, because it's not going to be productive. For me, that's a, that's a wrong message to send to yourself. The reality is, is that if it covers the 80%, that set of core features that you need, or let's say, in good pray to principle perspective, it covers the core 20%, that's going to give you 80% of the results. Who cares about the marginal features, we keep going for the latest and greatest and cool and trendy and aesthetically pleasing items, when in reality, those are not gonna actually make us more productive. And while there is an importance to form, aesthetics, beauty, and otherwise, I tend to find that the idea of cool or trendy tends to get conflated with those things is even I did earlier when I was describing this right. And that becomes a problem for us, because we then make choices based on marginal features. And that ends up hurting us. And this leads me to my question for you all, as we come to the close of our conversation, what is ultimately conveniences relationship to personal productivity? What is inconveniences relationship to personal productivity? And what are what are the one or two things that listeners should do to make themselves more, both convenient and productive, or maybe inconvenient, and more productive

F

Francis Wade 44:20

as well, but not one, the relationship between convenience and productivity is habits, habitual behavior, that if you keep adding conveniences, the thing we have to be very careful about in this this time This world is that as we add conveniences or don't remove them, we end up with habits that end up killing our productivity without even knowing it. You know, we all know people who you can hardly have a 10 minute conversation with

them in person before they automatically their hand drifts over to their phone. And they start checking social media while you're talking. We all know people like that. I don't even necessarily even know what they're doing. I think that they're just responding to the their, their lack of understanding of how the conveniences built into the phone, are no driving their behavior and therefore affecting their productivity. So for me, the invisible glue are these habits, that we if we're not conscious, we're usually not conscious of them. Instead, our behavior just changes. And then all of a sudden, we're texting and driving. And we don't know what happened. How do we get here? We're not even sure. But that, to me is a bit of the answer.

A

Art Gelwicks 45:40

I've been trying to define, when is something convenient, but not productive? And I keep struggling with coming up with examples. Because every time I do something, and it's convenient for me to do it, I'm getting something done. Now, I can temper that with, is it the optimal way of doing it? And that's, that becomes a whole different conversation, because in the majority of cases, doing something conveniently, is not the optimal way to do it. But ultimately, if we think about this, trying to get things done, not to not to use the branded term, but if we're trying to get crap accomplished. We've got to say, is it enough? Does it tick the box does it allow me to move forward to the next thing, and for me, Augusta, you were talking about the email and having email on your phone, I have email on my phone specifically for a reason because it gives me freedom to get away from my other devices to go do what I need to do be where I need to be work, be where I want to be. And know, I have the convenience of being able to interact with whatever comes across the transom. should it happen? So, like I said, I struggle with this idea of non productive convenient things. I guess the only thing I could think of in the real world equivalent would be like fast food. It's convenient. But is it good for you? Well, no. But you're not going to starve. So I know I still struggle with that.

A

Augusto Pinaud 47:27

Let's do it during the email bag. It's it's what it works for, for everybody. And do I have put email back temporarily on my phone? As I'm traveling on all data? I don't want to carry. Yes, I have. But by general rule is the activated is it doesn't bring the payout for me between convenience and productivity and and it's something that is going to change. As we discussed multiple times today, from person to person, the important part is to slow down or stop for a moment and understand what are those needs for you? And where is that line between convenience and productivity that you can use more or less?



## Raymond Sidney-Smith 48:16

I'll close by saying that I think that there is a strong argument to understanding what enables or disables productivity. And convenience is certainly one of those factors, as we've been talking about in this conversation. And it's imperative upon you, as you make your way through deciding on what is going to be within and without your personal productivity system, what is going to actually create friction, or increase or decrease friction in order to allow you to be more productive, and convenience. And inconvenience is one of those levers that you have, right it's a it's it's a fulcrum of some kind, that allows you to be able to determine whether or not you're going to be more or less effective and efficient in any given environment. And I've recognized that having a camera on my smartphone, and a video camera built into the smartphone is convenient for some things. But it is also inconvenient for others. It's a security risk if I have to go into a very secure government building. Right that that is that is a an inconvenience now because I need to give up what would be my computing device while I'm meeting with x&y clients in that facility. And at the same time though, the benefit to me is vast outside of that environment, right? I take pictures of all kinds of things, I scan all kinds of things with my phone, you know, I really utilize the camera on my phone all day every day. So and it's not to take selfies. And so, you know, it's really important for us to recognize that there is inconvenience in this positive way that either When it's inconvenient, and hurts our productivity, there's an optimal space where the inconvenience and lack of productivity for something can also be beneficial. So this has been a really interesting conversation. And thank you, gentlemen, for joining me in it. For those of you who are listening, we are at the end of our discussion, but the conversation doesn't have to end there. If you have a question or a comment about what we discussed during this cast, you can go ahead and visit our episode page on productivity cast dot net. There in the episode page, you can go ahead at the bottom of that episode, you can leave a comment or question and let us know your thoughts or questions. as well. For those of you who aren't aware, we do have a quote unquote channel inside of our personal productivity community personal productivity club. So if you go to WWW dot personal productivity club, you can find us and join and it's free, and it's easy, and you can go ahead and ask us questions on the episodes that are posted within that channel as well. Also, on each episode page, you'll find show notes that are both on the page, just click the Read More link and or below that there's a download link to download it as a PDF so you can take it away and review it while you're listening. That allows you to be able to also find links to anything we discussed on the episode page, and as well as any other show notes that we might have. Those also include links to Augusto Pinaud, Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks. So if you want to learn more about them and their work, you can go ahead and visit any episode page, and then click on one of the links to find out more about them. If you have a topic about personal productivity you'd like us to discuss on a future discuss on a future cast, visit

productivity cast dotnet forward slash contact, you can leave a voice recorded message or type of a message good old fashioned fingers on screen, and maybe we'll feature that on a future episode. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith and on behalf of all of us here at ProductivityCast here's to productive life.



#### Voiceover Artist 52:00

That's it for this productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.