

How Distraction Hurts Creativity by Leo Babauta

It's fairly difficult to create when you're reading a blog or forum or tweeting or sending an email or chatting. In fact, it's almost impossible to do these things and create at the same time. Sure, you can switch back and forth, so that you're creating and engaging in any of these activities of consuming and communicating. We've all done that.	15 29 45 56 61
But how effective is that? When we switch between creating and communicating through email, say, we lose a little bit of our creative time, a little bit of our creative attention, each time we switch. Our mind must switch between modes, and that takes time. As a result, our creative processes are slowed and hurt, just a little, each time we switch.	72 86 100 113 123
Here's the catch: creating is a completely separate process from consuming and communicating. They don't happen at the same time. We can switch between them, but again, we're hurting both processes as we do that. All the reading and consumption of information we do, all the communicating we do, and all the switching between modes we do — it all takes away from the time we have to create.	135 147 162 175 190
We should note that communicating and consuming information aren't necessarily evil to the person who creates: they actually help. We shouldn't throw them out completely. Communicating with others allows us to collaborate, and that actually multiplies our creative power, in my experience. When you communicate and collaborate, you bounce ideas off people, get ideas from things they say, learn from each other, combine ideas in new and exciting ways, build things that couldn't be possible from one person.	200 212 222 233 245 259 269
When you consume information you're helping your creativity as well – you find inspiration in what others have done, you get ideas, you gather the raw materials for creating. But consuming and communicating aren't creating. They aid creating, they lay the groundwork, but at some point we need to actually sit down and create. Or stand up and create. But create.	280 294 304 319 329
If the problem is that these separate processes of creating, consuming and communicating get in the way of each other, the solution is obvious: we need to separate the processes. We need to create at different times than we consume and communicate.	341 356 369 371
I know, easier said than done. But it's important to learn how to separate these processes. Because in the end, when you separate them, you'll free up your time and mind for creating, and create better and more prodigiously than ever before.	386 400 413
Separate your day: a time for creating, and a time for consuming and communicating. And never the twain shall meet. You can split your day into many different combinations of the two, but don't put them all together. Or if you do, just be aware that you're hurting your creativity. That's OK sometimes, as there isn't a need to be uber-productive, as long as you're doing something you enjoy. But if your interest is in creating, separate your day.	426 439 453 466 480 492