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Time for some smartphone etiquette



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A movie theatre in London uses 'Cinema Ninjas' to keep people off their smartphones, but maybe all we need is some smartphone etiquette. (Fotolia)

How often does a cellphone interrupt your conversation with someone?

Well, cellphones don't interrupt. People do.

So how can we initiate cellphone-control – in a way that may have even gotten the late Charlton Heston on board?

With ninjas.

And it's already working at a movie theatre in London.

The initiative came about last month when London's Prince Charles Cinema teamed up with Morphsuits.

Perhaps more art marshal than martial artist, volunteers dress in black bodysuits and hide in shadows to protect the sacred movie-going experience in exchange for free movie experiences. Though they aren't skilled in Ninjutsu, their ability to scare the shitsurei out of texters with a "Shh!" and restore order amongst patrons is weapon enough.

Paul Vickery, the head of public relations for the theatre, told Time, "The 'Cinema Ninjas' may sound ludicrous, but they have been a real success in clamping down on those ruining films for everyone else with inconsiderate behavior."

Today this behaviour isn't always seen as inconsiderate, because the social media scene is making it socially acceptable.

At this year's CinemaCon in Las Vegas, Jeff Blake, CEO of Sony Pictures Entertainment, tabled a discussion about texting in movie theatres. Regal Entertainment's CEO, Amy Miles, even spoke about allowing cellphone use (save talking) during movies that appealed to a younger demographic.

Sure. Nothing like a braggy update to your friends: Watching Batman. Some dude keeps coughing. How distracting.

What next? Will we allow everyone to sing and dance "Gangnam Style" in the library?

Jesse Jones is a pop culture branding expert and the founder and chief innovation officer at TEN81 Lifestyle Inc. He says, “We’re now in a very share-savvy and share-driven world. Uploading, tweeting, posting, this is the culture we’re a part of, and I don’t think it’s going anywhere anytime soon.”

While Jones notes that this digital age has had great positive impact on our lives, he reminds us that balance is still key.

“Cause when it comes to the moment, in a haste to tweet about it, we may just miss its beauty.”

You know who have incredible balance? Ninjas. So let’s imagine what it would be like if we gave them the power to enforce our balance.

For instance, a recent Pew study found that about 40% of American teens say they have been in a car with someone who used a phone in a way that put them in danger. Why not have ninja passengers? Passinjas! More effective than airbags and cheaper than car insurance.

Think about all of those people who hold you up while at the cashier in the checkout line talking on the phone about their annoying day, or the individual who’s trying to kill that last angry bird while paying for his coffee, and especially that person who uses a phone in the bathroom stall. Wouldn’t it be grand if the assassins could swoop in from the ceiling in a feat of humiliation to highlight this conduct?

For those who use speakerphone in public, type while crossing the street or talk louder on the phone than they would to someone in person, social media mercenaries could secretly strike with “kick me” signs to post on assailants’ backs. Just instead of “kick me,” the signs would read “unfriend me” or “unfollow me.”

And were you to violate a date or dinner table etiquette with a smartphone, ninjas would serve up a stealthy dose of embarrassing Facebook-hack so quickly that you’d be trending online with the hashtag #LowerClassThanHoneyBooBoo, before you could even text “sorry.”

Remember, no one knew that the “Cinema Ninjas” were set to infiltrate. You’ve been warned.

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