Jacques Yves Cousteau, a thin man, a dreamer and one of a very unconventional sort...

A man of the last century.

Since when I was a kid I found myself many times in front of the tv, mouth and eyes wide open, imagining to swim into those deep waters displayed frames by frames on a film in front of my eyes for minuets which looked like ages to me.

Suddenly everything stops, the advert is on, reminding what should be added on to the shopping list....

It was the end of the eighties...What was It like after such a dream for a child?

Normally, and I am talking about myself, I rushed to finish my afternoon snack and go to the corner in my house to carry on my dream with colored crayons, glue, scissors and the ever-present music on, in the background.

I created like a forge furnace.

Even the white spot formed on the tv screen when It was turned off would have stopped me from exploring the sea abysses, flying with hang-gliders or running after statues like Indiana Jones.

Milan, eighties...my life in a flat, a childhood between concrete and a playground full of syringes and therefore off-limit, public parks and the typical Milan new-built prefabricated and "beautiful" schools of the early eighties.

I am proud of my past; a degree in physic recycled and turned into a job as a system analyst (a "pc-colf"). A low-cost, colored and joyful technology word accessible to anyone.

My 20 years in the tech world made me feel every sensation you can think of.

The enthusiasm for the first technology device that made me turn into the first scientist who could make up formulas to explore the word followed, in the years later, by a faked professionalism in

high school where the computer (an Olivetti with green phosphorous monitor) was the means for us to show people we could actually program and elaborate analysis curves on a pre-punched paper and printed out on a dot-matrix printer (obviously It would have been easier and quicker using a pencil and a ruler on graph paper but far less smart!!). The Comodor time and all its games which later evolved into a real pc, with its ugly graphic and the windows system along with It.

How much time spent on playing Tetris and using "write" for making up stories.

From those moments on It is present time with the tablets and new devices taking place.

I am still sitting and writing in front of my PC, surrounded by two small creatures of mine who are competing to reach my mobile first and play the games (rigorously educational, I keep on repeating to myself) so that they can feel grown up just like their mum who works on the touchscreen.

I stand up from my desk, take the mobile and place It in the "area 51" of my office room intimating them not to touch it because It is not a toy.

As if I pressed the "anger bottom" they ask me in disapproval what is the difference between my mobile and the one of their friends' mum that instead can be used freely.

Doesn't It have the same shape and the same features? They ask me.

I decide to close my lap-top and try to give all the explanations necessary for a clear understanding.

To start with I explain that every mobile contains an aerial transceiver that receives and transfers data continuously and therefore It is not very safe to keep It too close to our bodies.

(when the first mobile was in commerce It was said to keep It out from children's reach because the waves were very damaging. What has changed so far?)

I then told them that the mobile is a device that can be useful under certain circumstances but It is not necessary at all time .

(I lived until 1998 without having one and when I was forced to, I had It just left hanging from the charger at home).
Technology is helpful but does not create anything!
The ideas, the dreams and the explorers are
inside us and not inside the PC.
Cousteau did not have any underwater binocular: he invented It and the technology only helped him to materialize the idea but did not have one on its own. It does not create ideas It just processes ours.
I realize that in this virtual world our children are convinced of being super heroes lost inside the powerful meanderings of their mind but what do I actually see when I watch them?
I see small creatures lying down on a carpet or curled up somewhere in our home...they are still and voraciously absorbed into a few centimeters wide screen. They follow things do not exist and only god knows how upset they can get if you just try to take them away from that cyber seen being convinced of their incapacity to carry on that dream otherwise...without mun's mobile!

Technology should be a means to help us achieving a target and therefore needs to be considered as the birth of an idea and the accomplishment of It.
Just something in the middle...that's all and nothing more!!
From my point of view It has to be studied in deep , examined but then used, squeezed and pitiless exploited. Technology must be recognized as such from our children and therefore turned-on and off on demand… their demand!!!
I cannot accept children's anxiety for mobiles and adults inability to turn them off either!!

Technology has to be used by us not the other way round.
Children must turn off the mobile without fear of losing imagination. Instead they should carry on a dream in a world that makes you smell, taste and feel for real because senses are not

virtual.

Nowadays I can see a huge whole, getting bigger every day, between the self-consciousness of a child and the physical reality that surrounds him and this scares me a lot.

We all have been working with fantasy since ever but the borders with reality were clearer in the past than today.

Today It is almost untouchable.. "I am a super smart baby with two joysticks thumbs such as big" but when the "off button" is pressed they are not children anymore and their imagination seems to turn off too making them the timorous and fearful students again, covetous to go back to that screen in order to feel at their ease and supermen again.

What should I do as a child in order to feel a real hero? Technology can only provide models to be followed but cannot replace the desire of what we are willing to turn into!(What am I going to be that can be better than a video game hero? Nothing!!!! And that is a real threat for their self-esteem).

As a citizen I have also learned one thing: the reality has smell that can be more or less pleasant, virtuality
doesn't!

I often repeat myself that I installed educative games in my mobile and It is true and useful too because they make more fascinating the learning process but they definitely don't give off any smell.

There are applications concerning games about taking care of a horse for example…you can feed, clean and groom him an then there is the real horse, the one you can actually touch the one that does not fit in in your house. He needs to eat and drink too but he also have another need which is to produce something that has an unpleasant smell but which is essential for feeding vegetables and making them grow in order to feed us too. Well, he simply needs to poo. That is nature that's real !!!!

Certainly also the most virtual amusing super hero smells too ...It certainly does after a strained battle but I wouldn't be excited to breathe that smell in and wouldn't recommend It to any of you either!

I am convinced that technology has to be used step by step on a fundamental basis which are: knowing how to turn It "on and off".
The natural approach to technology should be: understand, shape, put into action, follow through and try real experiments which means: I dream of becoming a very cool explorer, I study all the techniques in order to achieve It and I start exploring.

...and then, after an exhausting day
I will turn out thinking that taking a shower wouldn't be such a bad idea!

Benn