



As Jimi Famurewa of The Guardian puts it.....

?.....?Ultimately, coffee shops are social environments,? explains Jack Hesketh, owner of Store Street Espresso, which limits Wi-Fi in its two London outlets and has blocked the sockets in its Bloomsbury branch. ?We were finding that you?d go into the cafe and it would be 15 people sat at 15 different tables and you could hear a pin drop.? Fighting this mausoleum vibe ? as much as the chancers who make a mint tea last all afternoon ? seems to be the prime motivation of a lot of the proprietors making a stand.

And sometimes the laptop brigade kill the mood in other ways. ?The thing I hate the most is the people who come in and unplug lamps to charge up their laptops,? says Liam Casey, owner of the Pacific Social Club in east London, where laptop and tablet users are exiled to a back room. It?s not just the lone nomads either. ?People use cafes for business meetings, which is fine,? says Casey. ?But if I?m hungover and just want a breakfast, I don?t really want to get drawn into somebody?s professional networking.?

We all love our mobile phones, some more than others, but being in contact 24 hours a day is a feature of society which we are unlikely to abandon any time soon. But there is a right and wrong place, a 'phoniquette' if you will, which has evolved alongside the integration of mobile technology into our daily lives. Pubs and restaurants often encourage customers to 'Check In' on Facebook, to Tweet a picture of their meal as part of a promotion or ?Tag? 8 friends who should be with you, for a free drink etc. They are generally less impressed when guesses turn up, rearrange the table setting to accommodate their mobile devices and then spend the evening in silence snapping pictures of every course and tapping away at their screens.

In early 2017 one restaurateur took the unusual step of installing a Faraday Cage in his restaurant, effectively blocking all mobile signals from outdoors. This might have been a publicity stunt, perhaps. But it does highlight another less than sociable social trend.

So if you are up in the Dales and drop in at The Slaughtered Lamb would you now expect to find the Wi-Fi logo emblazoned of the front door?

