

Internet use and child development



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Rapid changes in technology nowadays is painting a message of cyber advantage for all ages of the human beings be it in the business, work, home and even in school. When the basics of communications has proliferated in 1970s with the initial introduction of television, the people did not opt to have this technology of entertainment, rather it was a huge market for all ages as programs being air suits several audiences in the populace. Many programs were catered for entertainment like movies, news and even children programs such as cartoons and educational episodes. Throughout the time that television has been in the ages since it was in the users, the development of enhanced communications as well developed over time. This communication development caters the voice and video signals that can be aired via networks of communications structures established and for the purpose repeating signals in order to reach farthest its customers. Among the development of this data signal will be utilized in the world wide web called internet. In this internet, it was necessary that interface between person and machine interaction is catered through computer. The computer now has its historical roots that it was like, the trend when television was first introduced, that it was almost necessary for each household to have computers. Computers then become one of the most important gadgets in the lives of the family as it can be useful in several ways like news locally and internationally, communications in the social media where barriers like distant boundaries is no longer a hindrance, and interactive programs that help education as learning tool through interactive design websites in the internet. Internet is defined according to this research will focus on the

advantage of internet bombarded with educational and informative materials and most are interactive that supports child development in terms of their social development, cognitive enhancement and improve mathematics and improved communication skills. Concepts and study research results published in the internet will be utilized to provided evidences on the advantage of internet for child development.

Internet interactive programs that supports social development of the children

Interactive programs are those sites that provides educational information that would need the reaction from the persons like clicking a choice or if the media screen is a touch screen. Accordingly, interactive in the internet sites mean “ clicking a link and accessing text,” (Sessoms, 2008, p. 90). In this research article, Sessoms (2008) provided a comparison for the differences between traditional and new technology enhanced instruction. Accordingly, the traditional is called Web 1. 0 which are teacher-centered instruction, single-sense stimulation, single-path progression, single-media, isolated work, information delivery, passive learning, reactive response and isolated, artificial context. On the other hand, the New called Web 2. 0 are student-centered instruction/learning, multisensory stimulutation, multipath, multimedia, collaborative work, informative exchange, active/exploratory/inquiry-based learning, proactive/planned response and authentic, real-world context (Sessoms, 2008, p. 90).

The interactive portion of the learning process, it was the position of the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 1999 stating that

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“ used appropriately, technology can enhance children’s cognitive and social abilities” and that “ developmentally appropriate software offers opportunities for collaborative play, learning and creation,” (Children Now, 2007, p. 5). Further, the Children Now (2007) included in its claim that the National Parents Teacher’s Association (PTA) also has the position stated in 1983, “... computer technology increasingly is a prerequisite to effective participation in an information-oriented society... as computer technology will be an integral part of their lives as well as of their careers, (p. 6).

It is basic that in every home, computer connected to the world wide web or internet is necessity. With this, Subrahmayan, Kraut, Greenfield and Gross (2001), shared their report findings that “... majority of the homes (68. 3%) had both a television and a computer,” (p. 12) In the research earlier of Subrahmayan, Kraut, Greenfield and Gross (2000), they recognized the effects on social development and relationships that “ home computers not only can influence children’s cognitive and academic skills, but can also shape children’s social interactions and development,” (p. 131). In these social interactions and development, Subrahmanyam et al (2001) found out in their research that “ frequent game players actually meet friends outside school more often than less frequent players according to Coldwell, Grad & Rhaiti in 1995),” (p. 17).

From all those research that supports social development of internet among children, Jackson, vo Eye, & Biocca (2003) reported that there is “ few studies and inconsistent findings render uncertain whether using internet has any influence on children’s social outcomes.” However, this was refuted by Johnsons (2010) in its discussion that stated in the findings “ various use

of Internet in various contexts were positively related to social development,” (p. 40).

Internet and cognitive enhancement and improve mathematics

Cognitive development in the child is an impressive phenomenon according to Guavin (1998) that “.. relies on some inherent human ability to develop intellectual and social skills adapted to the circumstances...” (p. 84). The ability to develop intellectual and social skills usually occurs during the childhood days of the human being, particularly during the early childhood. Children with exposure to internet as a form of education has an academic performance higher contrary to those children which are not exposed to internet (Subrahmanyam et al, 2001, p. 16). From this point of view, Bostrom & Roache (2009) defined cognitive enhancement as the “ amplification or extension of core capacities of the mind through improvement or augmentation of internal or external information processing systems,” (p. 1). This is related to the article published in Virginia Department of Education on Children and the Internet in June 2007. According to the article written after the interview conducted by Dr. Zheng Yan the relative advantage of internet on cognitive enhancement is that “ a text-rich environment .. that can facilitate a game-like learning environment, which is highly motivating and interesting to student...” which will encourage learning. Though internet is rich-text environment, Dr. Yan further informed that the “ students increasingly use visualization, which can relate to mathematics and science as much as creative writing.” With this information, the children absorbed those information in an interactive way like in a game. “ Gaming has the

potential to have a different kind of cognitive impact than traditional learning,” Dr. Yan informed additionally.

Internet improved communication skills among children

Since the internet is full of text floating on a desktop, the children are forced to familiarize with those words on the screen. Familiarizing those words will help the children's learning of the ability to communicate but not only on the words themselves but as well as the ability to manipulate the words' appearance in order to make it better to understand to one's audience like putting and highlighting colours are some of the improved communication skills on the internet. According to Hatch (2011), computers have been specifically useful... text can be made larger so it can be seen easier, and also read aloud for deaf students,” (p. 7). This statement is one of the relative advantages of internet for communication skill development among its users – the children. As it offers a lot of things to be manipulated like inserting some emoticons which is a picture of a mood of the children like happy, sad and angry. The absence of sounds in this communication sometimes are positively understood because the diction of saying it does not affect the gravity of words being said. This is evident in the research article of Hatch (2011) as stated, “ estimated that approximately 95% of students with disabilities between the ages of six and eleven are able to receive their education in regular classrooms (ATTO),” (p. 7). Further, there are other relative advantages that the internet improved the communication skills of the children as informed in Hatch (2011) article, “ communicating with and navigating through social media sites is exposing them to an array of skills ... allows for these children to be just as technology proficient as their more

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wealthy counterparts (thaindian. com),” (p. 12). The internet has become the equal playing field for both poor and wealthier children because they both access the same sites and thus this do not make the poor child left behind in terms of technology becaues everything can be surfed in the internet.

Looking further in the communication skills development of children brought about by the internet, the increased in learning and relative academic performance as stated by Subrahmanyam et al (2000) now is accessible and will not prevent anyone from reading it and reflect it in academics.

Conclusion

It is evident that technology anywhere else in the world can be found in the internet. The internet then is the avenue that can be utilized in order to develop the childrens ability and relative advantage to develop social interactions, cognitive and mathematic learning and improve communication skills. These relative benefits of the internet available to the children has been proven to be positively improving them in these areas and not only in these areas but as well as their capability to know more and do more.

Knowing more will eventually help children to effectively address some issues in life that may have been found sometimes prior to internet was imposible to access.

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