

# Impact of technology on everyday life



The use of technology in our life has increased tenfold in the past 30 years. According to a study with the 1984 U. S. Census Bureau eight percent of households had a computer in their home. As of 2016 households with a computer in their home, jumped to an astounding 89%. (US Census Bureau, 2016) Keyboarding is taught more consistently than cursive in our schools. Kids have smartwatches instead of their good' olé' trusty Timex pieces we used to wear. Elementary kids are being required to have laptops but do not truly understand the power of the internet. Do people really know how to balance their checkbook? I know they can find an app for that! Families are now using automated assistants, like Alexa and Siri to make grocery lists and schedule appointments. Our SMART refrigerators can tell us if food is going bad! These few examples help us understand how common it is for anyone to have access to a computer or electronic device. We all rely on technology for everyday things. Popular American opinion states that our growing dependency on technology is harmful to youth. We want to collect data and promote policy that will help families and communities understand how to educate our youth on incorporating technology into a healthy lifestyle.

As adults, we need to understand the data that shows the need for education on the impact of technology on our lives. We cannot simply ban youth from using technology because we fear the negative consequences. On the contrary, our educational systems are including more and more technology each year. Kids need to learn how to use technology at a young age so that they can maintain and create in new technology for our future. If we are going to remain competitive in the world, our youth needs technology education from the start. One example of a program that promotes youth

understanding computers comes from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). MIT has created a completely free online program that introduces kids from kindergarten through 12th grade, age appropriate coding and programming lessons. These lessons bring mathematical concepts to life and really help kids understand how computers and animation work. Another positive example of tech use in schools is moving to online textbooks and apps. Schools with 1: 1 device program, where every student has an electronic device, are challenging kids to keep their work on a digital platform. They are teaching youth how to collaborate in programs like Google Docs, utilize digital calendars, and communicate through email. This is preparing students for the high-tech workforce. Teachers can use technology to bring lessons to life. It is now possible for schools to connect with foreign schools to teach cultural lessons. Research is made easier due to the ability to access any information in a matter of seconds. Technology can be used as a bridge to further their concept knowledge, playing games that reinforce lessons in coding or graphic design. Encouraging teachers to facilitate an engaging learning environment, giving our youth a more efficient way to learn.

On the negative side of the spectrum, there is more to consider. How does “screen time” affect brain development, overall health, and social skills? Our brain will develop based on how it is used. Surfing the web and email will use different parts of the brain than speaking or reading. Researchers at the Chinese Academy of Science in Beijing are showing that there are changes in the way the prefrontal cortex, cerebellum and parietal lobe mature. (Machos, 2016). Located within the frontal lobe, the prefrontal cortex controls

cognition, personality, and social behavior. The cerebellum coordinates and regulates muscular activation including those linked to language. The parietal lobe helps with interpreting language and words. (Zachos, 2016). Too much technology usage can have an effect on the frontal lobe by shrinking the outermost part of the brain, this can make it difficult to process information. It will affect how we interact with people. Overtime, too much technology may have an impact on our overall health. For instance, there have been cases where people develop blood clots from sitting at their desk for too long. Overall chronic disease such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease could increase because we become less physically active. Individuals can develop technology addiction or Internet Addiction Disorder, poor social skills, decline in grades, and poor health due to the inability to control their urge to be online.

Another study done in 2014, shows a decline in preteen skills interpreting nonverbal emotional cues improving with less screen time. In this study, preteens spent five days in a nature camp without access to technology or screens. The children were given the test before camp and after. They were compared to another group of preteens that practiced their usual media usage, amounting to about 4.5 hours a day including texting, watching television and playing games. ((Science Direct, 2014). After five days interacting face to face without the use of any screen-based media, they were asked to describe the emotion or facial expression in a videotaped scene. These teens had a significant improvement in recognizing the nonverbal emotional cues from pretest to posttest as compared to the

controlled group. (Science Direct, 2014). With these results, it looks to be a great reason to limit screen time for your child.

With technology being introduced into the school this may become more important. We want to understand how much screen time they are all receiving during their education. Face to face interaction decreases because we all have tablets in school. That will understandably change how we communicate with each other in the future. Individuals may not understand the consequences that are involved with increased screen time and may become angry or upset when access is limited.

These negative effects have led to increased bullying. Among some teen groups, it has become popular to film themselves jumping or fighting other teens or groups of teens. It seems that our youth will film almost anything to gain approval from their peers. Probably the most disturbing aspect of youth having access to the internet are the real-life cases of teens and even pre-teens committing suicide on the live camera feed. Media has covered these situations and a debate has heightened to the possibility of copy-cat suicide attempts. While freedom of speech is essential, the need for Facebook Live by youth is questionable.

To help with bullying the US government and other national organizations have created websites to showcase their national efforts. Stompoutbullying.org was created to help block out bullying on the internet. The goal is to change the online culture for all students. They quote “ It works to reduce and prevent bullying, cyberbullying, sexting and other digital abuse, educates against homophobia, LGBTQ discrimination, racism, and hatred,

and deters violence in schools, online and in communities across the country. In this diverse world, STOMP Out Bullying promotes civility, inclusion, and equality. It teaches effective solutions on how to respond to all forms of bullying, as well as educating kids and teens in school and online. It provides help for those in need and at risk of suicide, it raises awareness through peer mentoring programs in schools, public service announcements by noted celebrities, and social media campaigns.” (REFERENCE QUOTE 4). They created a “ National Block It Out Day”, November 7th. This day is geared towards stopping cyber-bullying by empowering teens to block out cyberbullies or other kids who they know are cyberbullies online. Their goal is to create a ripple effect across the nation which would make the bullies feel excluded from their peers in their online communities.

One of the more impressive features of [www. stopbullying. gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov) is a state by state breakdown of legislation created to prevent bullying of kids.

Specifically, Florida laws have been created to reduce cyber bullying. People who are found guilty of online harassment can be criminally prosecuted.

Defining what actions individuals define criminal activity is a very significant step the government has taken. They address our society’s growing concerns about the harmful ways technology is impacting our youth.

After some further research, I have come across some apps and strategies parents can use at home to help youth understand technology. Recently an article titled “ A Guide to Parental Controls for Kids’ Tech Use”, written by ANYA KAMENETZ was published on the National Public Radio(NPR) website. She talks about a variety of options for monitoring or controlling children’s tech use. It begins by introducing a 9-year-old who is quite tech savvy. His

<https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-technology-on-everyday-life/>

father used a Google service called “ Family Link” to limit his son’s time on entertainment apps. The 9-year-old figured out a way around the software. She also discusses different types of software but emphasizes that the best parental control is understanding how your child is using technology and being involved in teaching them best practices. In other words, on an individual level an app or hardware is not the main solution for preventing kids from misusing technology, active parenting is.

As parents, we have several different options available to help our kids. For parents trying to monitor their children’s use of tablets or phones, there is Apple’s Screen Time and for Android its call Parental Controls. These options are best for mobile devices or tablets and not a home computer. For a home computer Net Nanny and Qustodio are offered as monitoring solutions. The most intriguing options for parental monitoring are “ Circle, torch and UnGlue”. These options work with the WIFI router. This means that they can reach all devices in the home and extensions to mobile devices outside of the home. These options are said to be more powerful but more complicated. As someone who calls them self, a tech guy this route may be the most appropriate for my family. As I would appreciate a local program that can reach all devices.

After listing several options for monitoring children’s internet use AMYA KAMENETZ explains that virtually all options will allow parents to set time limits on WIFI use. Programs can filter types of internet users and sort sites by category. With all the growing options for concerned parents, current research is highlighting the value of a monitoring program working work best if executed with the child. Research states that parents should give a child a

<https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-technology-on-everyday-life/>

chance to respond to apps that reward positive behavior. The most effective programs should encourage children to develop goal-setting skills for their own internet use. Apps can be used to show kids how much screen time they are getting while they are on their device. Kids can then be encouraged to make their own positive decision based on seeing their data.

Kids should be informed about why parents are interested in limiting their screen time. When parents just place the restrictions, kids often figure out a way around the restriction. Parents should promote a future focused on the positive use of technology such as learning coding or video editing. To summarize, on a micro level, families have a responsibility to know what options are available to monitor youth tech use, only implementing apps and programs to is not enough. Kids need to hear from their parents why technology use needs to be limited. Giving our kids the knowledge and understanding encourages them to monitor their own use and develop a sense of their own responsibility for their own health and social development.

Furthermore, understanding what we can do about helping and educating ourselves is important. Resources and the government are a good place to start. We have federal, state and county programs currently in place to educate kids on the appropriate use of technology. Currently for Manatee county, our child only brings home a form saying they will follow what the teacher says and not to do anything inappropriate. This form is a just a stop gap to keep schools or teachers from being sued for a child's misconduct. Schools in manatee county are also blocking websites like, Facebook and YouTube on campus but as new websites spring up that are similar we must



be vigilant in teaching our children safe practices. We are not able to constantly monitor our children's behavior. Counties need to implement programs that helps children understand the ethics of using the internet and what is an appropriate use of search engines. Children also need to have a plan of action when they find something inappropriate.

The government has created some awesome campaigns to prevent cyberbullying. State governments now have the right to prosecute online activity. Private companies have created apps and programs to help parents monitor their youth. How do we bring all these efforts together into one comprehensive strategy for our kids? I propose that each states' department of education create a committee that's sole purpose is to create a comprehensive program that can be launched at the beginning of every school year. Parents should be taught how to use suggested apps to monitor screen time. I am suggesting a program that would be required for parents and children to attend together. Programs such as Apple screen time and Unglue should be taught. Technology professionals should be available to provide a handout with steps to install and use suggested monitoring programs. A workshop for parents and kids on positive goals setting and online time management would be held.

Finally, all the positive educational programs and games should be promoted so that it is clear using technology is in our best interest for a never-ending need for technology strong work force. The Scratch game previously mentioned should be promoted, not has an academic requirement but as a positive technological hobby. At the start of each school year, schools should hold a tech conference or meeting. It would start with the positive uses of

<https://assignbuster.com/impact-of-technology-on-everyday-life/>

technology in education. It would briefly discuss the harmful aspects of tech use. The majority of the time would be focused on how families can work together to safeguard their children. Most importantly how families and communities can unite to instill a deep understanding of the moral responsibility all tech users have, so that the younger generation is brought up with an inherent sense that tech is great and needs to be protected from misuse and preserved for positive progress.

Technology has taken over just about every aspect of American life. We are all more efficient and connected because of our advancements. There have been some alarming side effects, particularly evident in our youth. The government has recognized the negative consequences and created wonderful websites and programs to address needs. Private companies have made apps and programs to help families. Research has shown that children can benefit from a personal goal setting with tech. Lastly, one comprehensive program needs to be created to bring all the pieces together. A formal committee should be created that can take this cultural change seriously and provide our families the support they need. With the right support, America will adapt and strive with our awesome technological advances.

## References

- Kamenetz, A. (2018, June 18). A Guide to Parental Controls for Kids' Tech-Use. Retrieved October 13, 2018, from <https://www.npr.org/2018/06/18/620005246/a-guide-to-parental-controls-for-kids-tech-use>

- US Census Bureau.(2016, August 25). Computer and Internet Use Tables. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/computer-internet/data/tables.html>
- STOMP Out Bullying. (n. d.). Retrieved from <https://www.stompoutbullying.org/>
- Zachos, E. (2016, June 12). Technology is changing the Millennial brain. Retrieved from <https://www.publicsource.org/technology-is-changing-the-millennial-brain/>
- Five days at outdoor education camp without screens improves preteen skills with nonverbal emotion cues. (2014, August 15). Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563214003227>

#### References rough draft

1. <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/computer-internet/data/tables.html>
2. <https://www.publicsource.org/technology-is-changing-the-millennial-brain/>
3. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0747563214003227>