



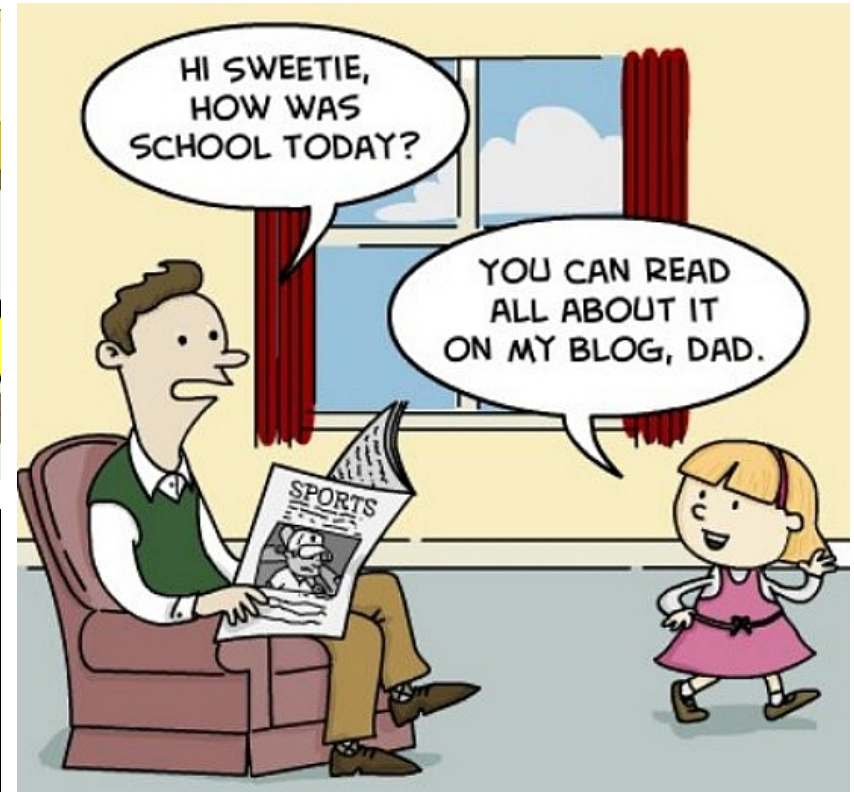
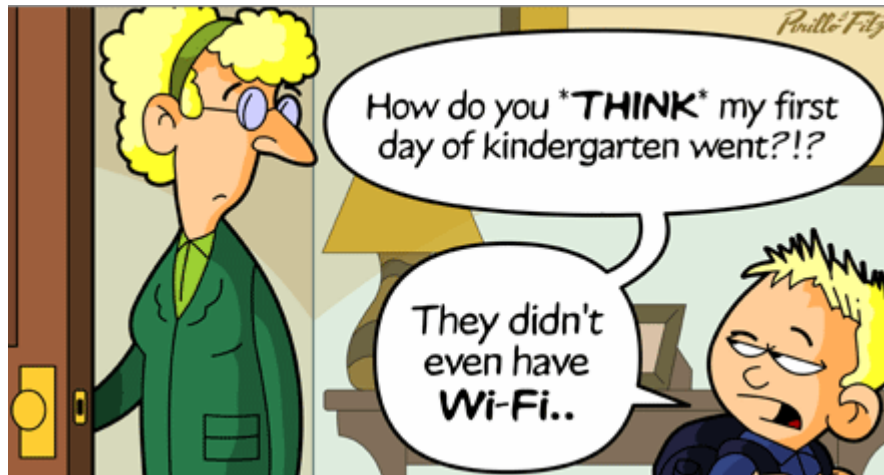
Device Use with Kids: Parenting the Digital Natives

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Laughter is the best medicine . . .





Sign of the times . . .



**“Children learn as they play.
Most importantly,
in play
children learn how to learn.”**

O. Fred Donaldson

The Disclaimer . . .

There are over 25 schools of thought in the neurosciences, and as of 2022, my profession cannot agree upon a universal definition of what is an “addiction.”

This presentation will have more **relative truth** than **absolute truth** regarding the good, the bad and the ugly about technology (Zoom learning, internet, video games, social media, smart phones, streaming, etc) and how technology impacts the child and teenager brains (*and* adults) in both positive and negative ways.

Technology is here to stay, it will continue to change and increase its presence in our daily school, work and home lives. I must admit I have a close relationship with my personal – virtual assistant *Siri*, but you won’t find me anytime soon on a Cathay flight that is flown by a *Siri*!

Hence, it is a cliché but I encourage all parents to remain “lifelong learners” about the expanding use of technology in learning, play, and socializing for the safety and well-being of our lovely little darlings!



The typical kid . . .

Entertainment brain:

this kid will be talking with others and participating with others in usually the online gaming world to have
FUN



Relationship brain:

this kid will converse with others (classmates and friends) and share with others to
SOCIALIZE

Rating brain:

this kid will participate with others to publish online for the digital world to see what they
THINK

Content brain:

this kid will put things up on the web and often times share things like photos and life stories to
LEARN



From drop out to now check out . . .

There were several key reasons why students before technology came into the world **dropped out of school**; the primary reason being *academic failure* and the second being “staying in school” was *not always seen as the golden key to getting a job*. If I may, back in the day finding a job working with your hands (construction, factory work) or standing on your feet all day (service industry) was seen as a realistic option for surviving and thriving (work) for many.

Today there are two main reasons why students **check out of school** (mentally and physically): the first being some kids find school “not interesting” or “boring,” the second reason being some find traditional learning and classroom teaching “non-motivating.”

Today’s technology – interconnected social media world has many kids seeking the interesting (or fun) in their daily lives including school, forcing education to expand their message to kids that learning ***can be interesting as well as important***.



Tutor and Entertainer . . .

Parents and teachers are encouraged to expand their skill set in being both a tutor (this is important) and now being an entertainer (let's make this interesting) when engaging with children and their education.

Back when I was growing up, I heard from parents and teachers that learning is "important," but today growing number of kids want to be in an educational setting that is more "interesting" than important (don't get me wrong, many kids and adults still see learning as important).

Important: Get the best grade (outcome)

Interesting: Keep trying to learn more about math's (effort)

Important: Your GPA is the golden key (IQ)

Interesting: "I can," not IQ, gets you further in life (EQ)

Important: Law and medicine will be a better career (good life)

Interesting: Pursue a craft that gives you meaning and purpose *and pays the bills* (happy life)

Important: Studying, not playing, is the only way you will get into college (motivation by fear)

Interesting: Let's find games that challenge your critical thinking and strengthen your decision-making skills (motivation by engagement)

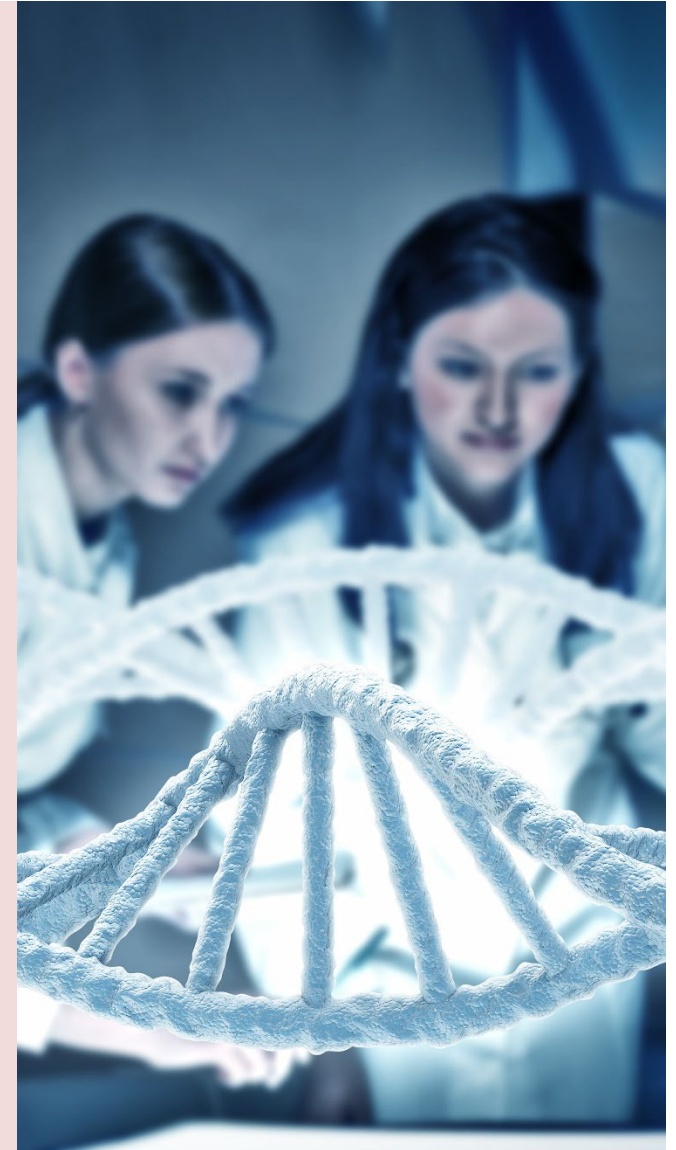
Predisposition factors . . .

The study of genetics remains an exciting field in medicine and health. In one area, we continue to better understand how our family's medical history has a direct influence on what disease or disorders are at risk of being passed down from generation to generation.

Risk factors embedded in our genes range from the physiological (diabetes) to the psychological (depression). However, we also know that certain risk factors in the environment are required to occur (sometimes just once, sometimes many times) for many predisposition factors for a disease or disorder to *become active (or not)*.

With children and "internet addiction" we need to pay careful attention to family medical history of substance abuse, gambling disorders, anxiety and depression, OCD – ADHD, sleep disorders, impulsivity and compulsive buying when assessing a child for addiction.

Concurrently with the child specifically, we need to be mindful of their sleep, exercise, diet, socializing behaviors, academic challenges and parent – child relationship among many other risk factors to ensure internet addiction does not arise.





Questions parents often ask. . .

What age should our children start sleeping in their room alone?

How often should we pick up a crying child?

What second language should my child learn?

How many hours should a child sleep each night?

What hobbies should they do regularly?

How often should we have family time?

Why does my teenager only grunt or sigh when I try to talk to her?

When can my daughter or son start dating?

And many many others . . .

But the most frequent question I get asked these days is:



What are the rules of engagement where my child can learn with Zoom schooling and school-website learning (homework, etc), be safe and have fun with online gaming, develop social skills with others while texting, and not become harmed or bullied in their digital native world?

Which begs these three key questions . . .

At *what age* can my child start using technology, Especially since more and more schools use laptops and online learning (homework, group work, school projects, etc)?

How many hours a day can my child use a cell phone or a laptop or any device for school?

How many hours a day can my child use a cell phone or a laptop or any device for play?



Back then . . .

1960's:

*Don't play outside too late -
come home on time and do
your chores and homework!*

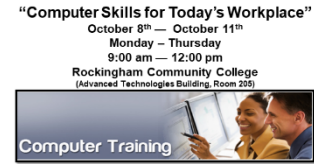


1980's:

*Don't watch too much television -
it's bad for your eyes!*



Back then . . .



Early 1990's:
Learn computer skills
to get ahead in life!

Early 2000's:
You need more than
one device!

Gamechangers . . .

Gamechanger #1:

Online - Distance Learning

Universities and training centres started delivering more and more of degree courses and certificate programs online without having to attend a course on campus.

Gamechanger #2:

Wireless

Once we “cut the chord” and access became wireless for all our communication - work - home devices, the world has never been the same.



And then . . .

Mid 2000's:

From parents

“You need to get off that thing and
go outside more -
it's good for your health!”

(*from kids*: first you want me home more, now
you want me outside more - what gives??)



Mid 2000's:

From doctors

“Don't be on the computer
all the time-
it's bad for your brain!”

(*from kids*: first you want me to
study more, now you want me to be
online less - what gives??)



And now . . .

2020 onward:

From classmates

Instead of let's go play outside, it's now "Hey! Are you online?"



2020 onward:

From schools

"Don't forget to log on to your computer at 8:45 when class starts."



Many (good) things happen online . . .

Creating: online world can inspire new ideas

Thinking: online world can highlight new perspectives

Navigating: online world can teach one how to persevere

Experiencing: online world allows us to share experiences globally

Connecting: online world provides us new ways and places to socialize

Learning: online world enriches all type of academic experiences

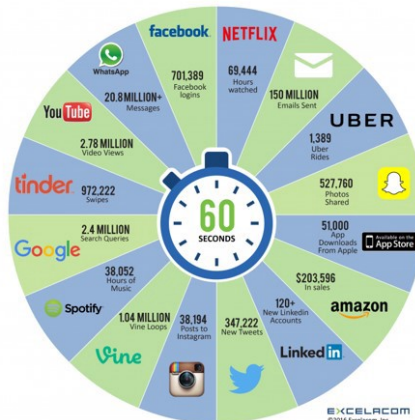
Writing: online world provides you with a place to publish and be seen

Feeling: online world allows you to share and express your feelings

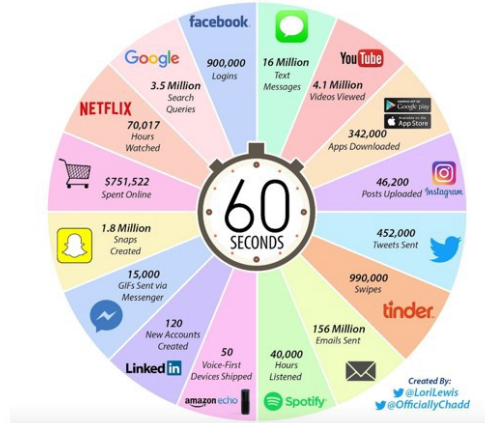


These things happen in a minute . . .

2016 What happens in an INTERNET MINUTE?



2017 This Is What Happens In An Internet Minute



2018 This Is What Happens In An Internet Minute



2019 This Is What Happens In An Internet Minute



2020 This Is What Happens In An Internet Minute



2021 This Is What Happens In An Internet Minute



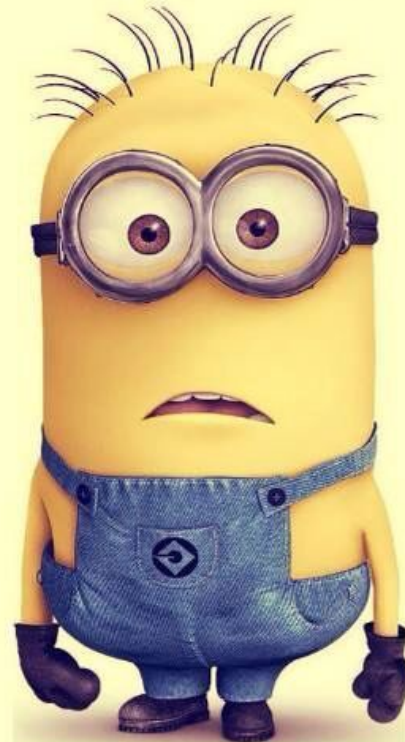


Our children, the digital natives . . .

- Males tend to spend more time with gaming, females with social media
- We have gone from “let’s meet up after school” to “ping you later when I’m free”
- The device is part of the bed, is seen at the dinner table
- Technology/devices are used to develop their self-identity and public image
- Required for most education settings
- Prefer to text before talk
- The child learns to say “wi-fi” before “mommy” or “daddy” (little humor here)
- We didn’t worry back in the day if our child played all day with their toys, we now worry though if our kids are online all day
- Back in the day we took pictures with others, today is more about selfie’s
- They get bored with the apps before the device
- It’s their generation’s Swiss pocketknife
- And more . . .

Oh my . . .

Wi-Fi went down for five minutes, so i had to talk to my family. They seem like nice people.

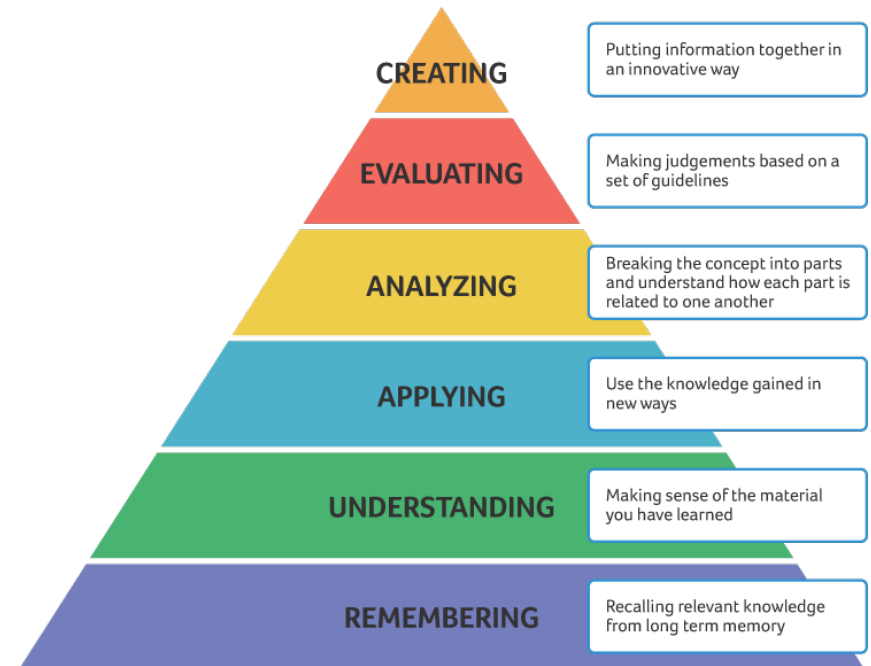


The following slides are a small sample of the “good, bad and ugly” aspects of children using technology.

If there are real concerns about your child’s use and its impact on his or her emotional and physical well-being, please make sure you see a professional for age-based and child specific advice.



The “good” about technology . . .



Bloom's Six Different Levels of Learning

Before we can **understand** a concept, we must be able to **remember** it.

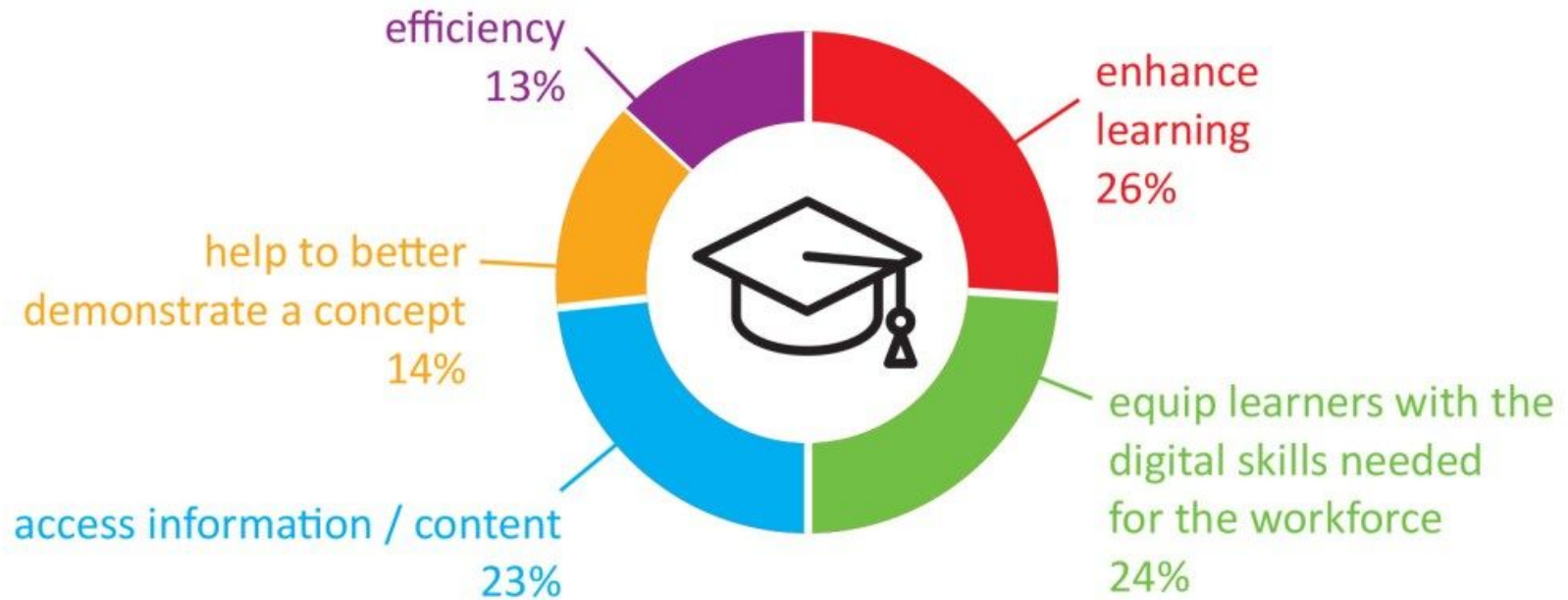
Before we can **apply** the concept, we must be able to **understand and remember** it.

Before we **analyse** it, we must first be able to **apply** it in a real setting.

Before we can **evaluate** its impact, we must have **analysed** it in a real setting.

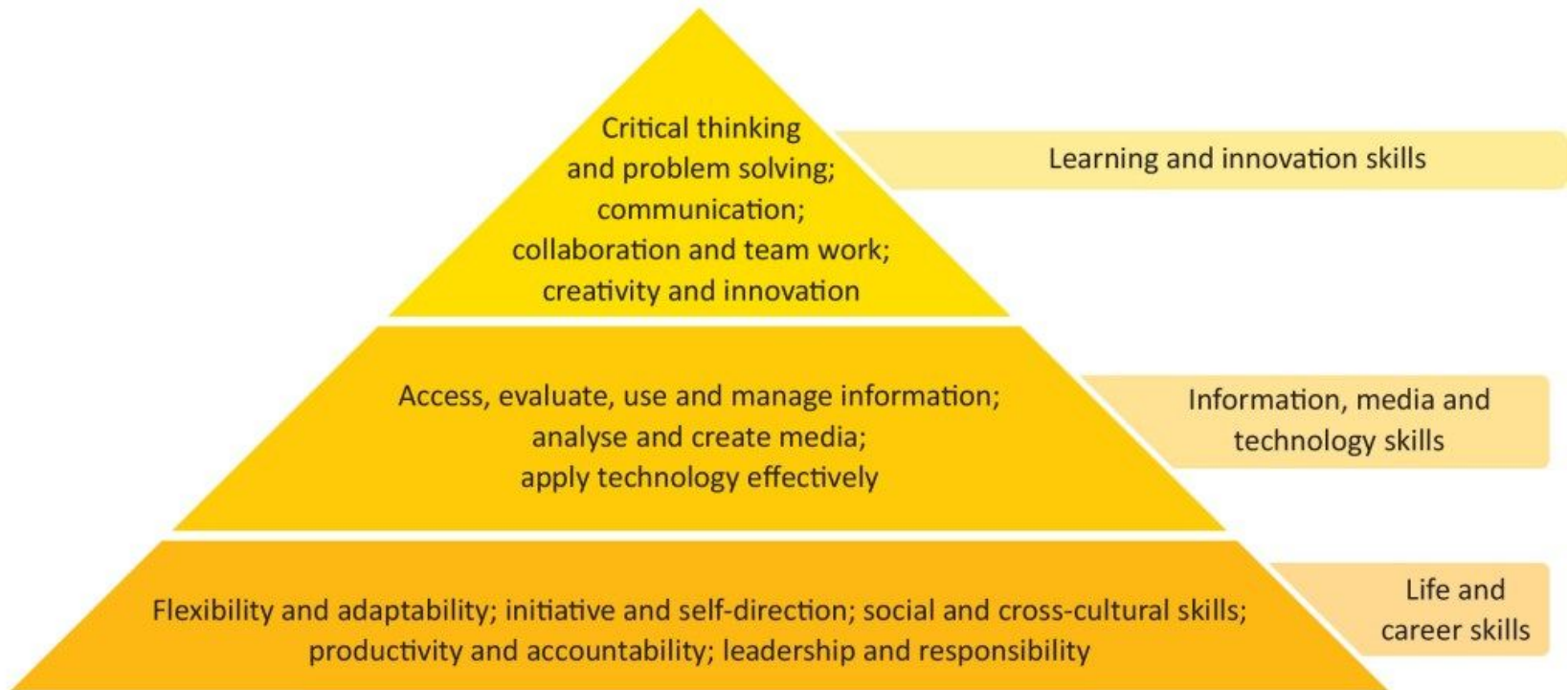
Before we can **create** something, we must have **remembered, understood, applied, analysed and evaluated** the new knowledge.

The “good” about technology . . .



The “good” about technology . . .

Skills for the 21st Century



An example of the “good”

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Creating	Find web sites about a topic and create a Google doc or a PowerPoint slide						Day off Family time Be tech free for a day Learn to connect with people, places and things outside of the device! Exercise, play sport, take a hike
Evaluating		Discuss what has been gathered, lofty ideas or real science					
Analyzing			See how many parts of the topic there are and how are they related				
Applying				How can we use this or tell a story about this differently			
Understanding					The child shares how this makes sense		
Remembering						Make a presentation (teach) on what you learned	

Caveat: When our child starts using a computer for the first time, teach your child how the internet and the computer can be interesting, fun and builds life-skills.

A bit of the “bad” . . .

More and more children are learning about *sexuality* from porn sites than from their parents

Children sometimes *believe Dr Google* instead of believing their mom and dad

There are hundreds of million web sites that teach and/or encourage children and teens (what I call *the outlaws*) on how to self-harm, do drugs, buy drugs, make bombs, buy weapons, purchase fake ID's and watch violent porn

More kids will first post on their Facebook when they have been *bullied* before they tell their parents

And the digital world has redefined the meaning of *peer pressure* like never before!



Where the “bad” hangs out . . .

SEX

- Cybersex
- Online porn
- Sexting
- Sex Addiction
- Sexual Dysfunctionality

PLAY

- Gaming Addiction
- Gambling Addiction
- Musco-skeletal disorders
- Aggression and violent behaviors


SOCIAL MEDIA

- Identity theft
- Stalking
- Cyber-bullying
- Digital footprint
- Grooming
- Increase in risky behaviors

SURFING

- Wrong and bad advice
- Searching instead of deep learning
- Scan instead of reflect
- Skimming instead of reading





And the “ugly” . . .

“Flaming”:

- online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language

“Harassment”:

- repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages

“Cyber stalking”:

- repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating.
- engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety

“Denigration”:

- ‘dissing’ someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships

Some more of the “ugly” . . .

“Impersonation”:

- Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes that person look bad, gets that person in trouble or danger, or damages that person’s reputation or friendships

“Outing and Trickery”:

- Sharing someone’s secret or embarrassing information online
- Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information which is then shared online

“Exclusion”:

- Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a ‘buddy list’

“Gaslighting”

- A person or a group of people try to use psychological bullying to undermine another person’s reality by disputing the facts, their feelings or their environment

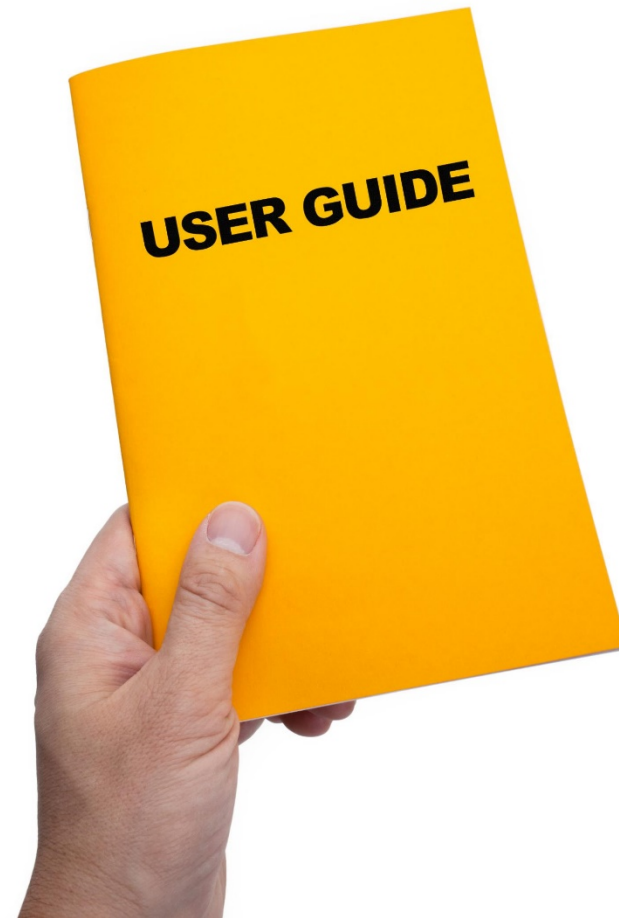


That's it honey – today please cancel the Wi-Fi, hide the laptop, never mention iPhone in this house again, and let's go old school – read books, play sports outside and get out our Scrabble, checkers, chess and Monopoly games quickly!!



User manual . . .

1. NO devices in the bedroom when a child goes to sleep (unless he is a cardiac surgeon on call)
2. ALWAYS know the passwords and accounts your kids have (I prefer safety over privacy any day of the week when it comes to my kids)
3. ONE DAY a week with no technology (two days would be the perfect world but we don't live in that perfect world)
4. KNOW your kid's friends online (old school we always knew who our kids played with down the street)
5. STAND UP after 20 minutes of use, move around for 8 minutes and hydrate for another 2 minutes before you get back on a computer
6. NO DEVICES when eating, be mindful of the food and people at the table



User manual . . .

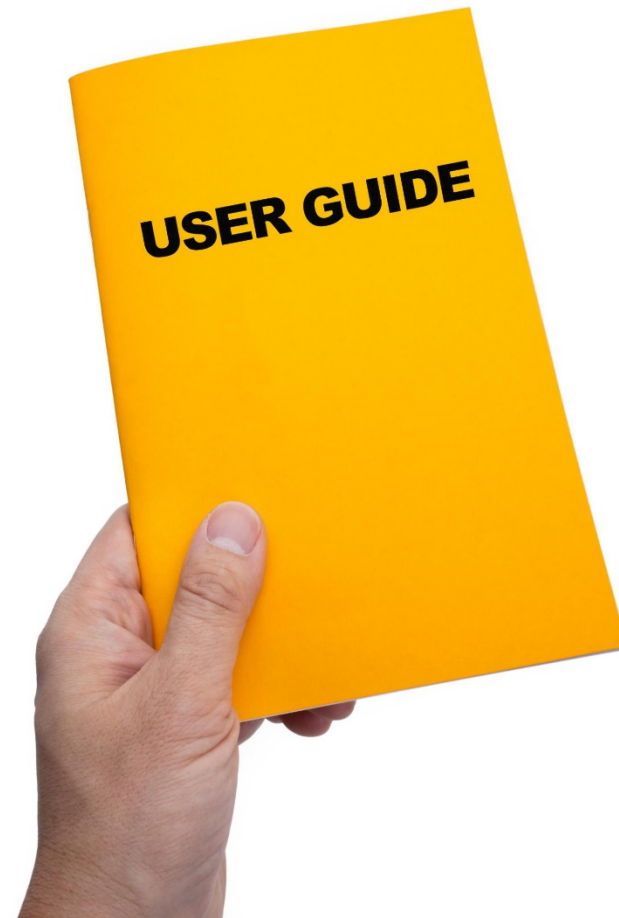
7. ONCE A WEEK sit with your kids and see where they hang-out online – get to know where they socialize

8. NO MULTI-TASKING when doing schoolwork with the online world (digital natives can download a MP3, update their Facebook, send a YouTube link, rip off a text and somehow do the homework)

9. CELL PHONE last time I checked was not sold as a pacifier to soothe a child (let kids learn how to play with real toys – where's my Teddy by the way!??)

10. WALK YOUR TALK adults, adults are online more than kids, we as well have more issues with technology abuse and addiction than kids

11. ONCE AGAIN no devices in the bedroom, it is the number one reason why kids get poor sleep, perform poorly in school and have mood swings



User manual . . .

Chatting (communicating with others)

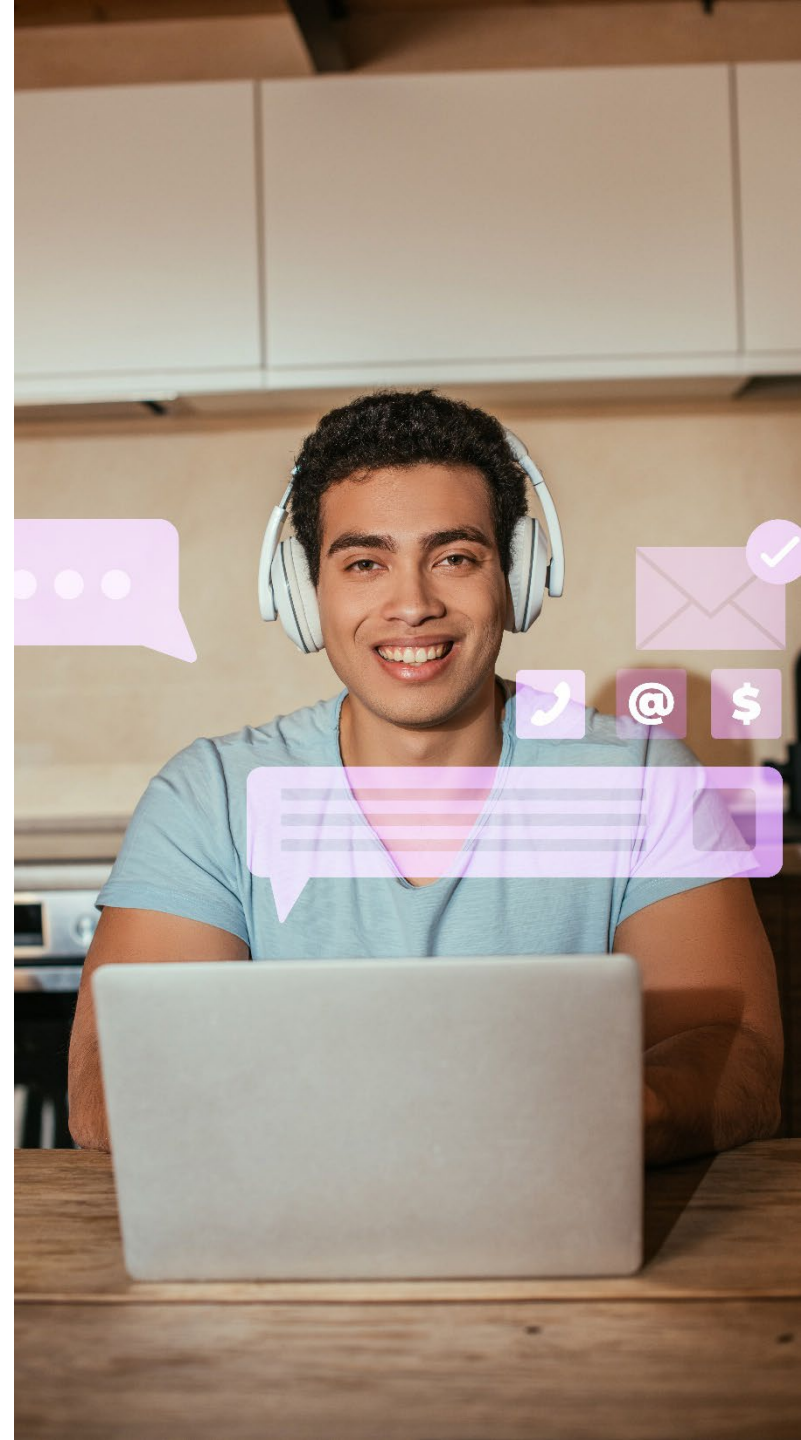
7 years old and younger: parents with the child at all times, 30 minutes per day, no slang or violence

8 years – 13 years: parents approve BEFORE they chat with others, 1 - 2 hours per day, be aware of inappropriate slang, done in open area of home

14 – 18 years: inquire who are their friends they know in person and those they only know by online, 2 hours per day, set rules on slang, bullying, gossiping and no sexting

Adults: a very high area of debate

Caveat: this is only a general recommendation, each child will need to have a specific user plan based upon many factors





User manual . . .

Sharing (networking – group chats with others)

7 years old and younger: parents with the child at all times, sharing only with family and known friends by the parents

8 years – 13 years: parents approve BEFORE they share with others, can only share with known friends approved by parents, child's personal contact details and photos private

14 – 18 years: inquire who are friends they know in person and those they only know by online, set rules on what is uploaded, review web pages, SAFETY over privacy

Adults: a very high area of debate

Caveat: this is only a general recommendation, each child will need to have a specific user plan based upon many factors

User manual . . .

Gaming (communicating with others)

7 years old and younger: parents with the child at all times, age appropriate games, no violence or aggression

8 years – 13 years: parents approve BEFORE they game with others, have majority of games focus on puzzles and creativity, minimal to no violence and aggression

14 – 18 years: avoid games that are narcissistic and violent, set rules on adult nudity, no credit card or money involved games

Adults: a very high area of debate

Caveat: this is only a general recommendation, each child will need to have a specific user plan based upon many factors



THE EVOLUTION OF MAN

LOS ANGELES
TIMES ©2012
HORSEY

Final thoughts . . .

At what age should our digital native child be allowed to have a digital device for:

- Play and fun?
- Academics?



THE EVOLUTION OF MAN

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Final thoughts . . .

At what age should our digital native child be allowed to have a digital device for:

Play and fun (socializing)?

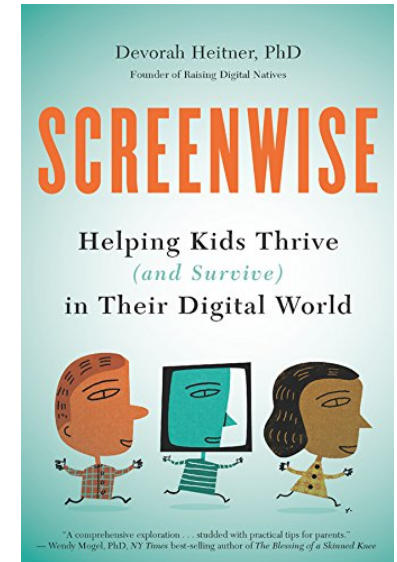
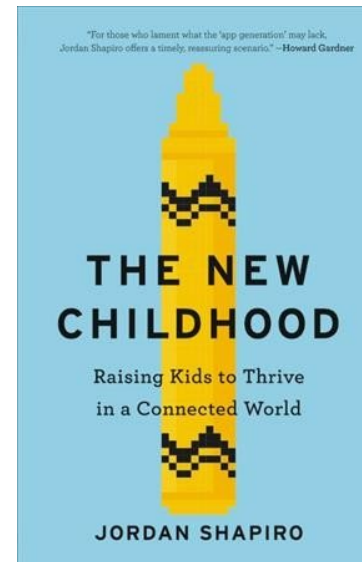
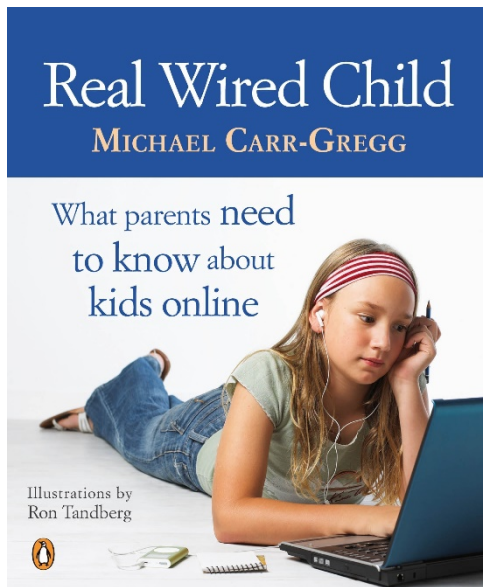
Age 3 with very detailed guidelines

Academics (learning)?

Age 3 with very detailed guidelines



Extra Reading . . .





Closing comment . . .

Dr Mark has been presenting workshops to schools (students, teachers, parents and PTA's), assessing and providing counseling to children, teens and parents, and consulting with workplaces and schools on technology well-being practices for over 26 years in Hong Kong.

Feel free to drop me a line for further support and advice:

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