Social Media, Video Games and American Youth

WITH PROF. KAREN DUNN AND THE STUDENTS FROM WINGATE UNIVERSITY
Let’s start with Social Media
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<th>Social Media Sites</th>
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<td>LinkedIn: 2002</td>
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<td>Facebook: February 4, 2004</td>
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<td>YouTube: February 14, 2005</td>
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<td>Tumblr: February of 2007</td>
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<td>Instagram: October 6, 2010</td>
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<td>Snapchat: September of 2011</td>
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Top Social Networking Sites of teens

- Snapchat: 79%
- Facebook: 76%
- Instagram: 73%
- Twitter: 40%
- Pinterest: 31%
- Tumblr: 16%
- WhatsApp: 15%
- Musical.ly: 11%
- LinkedIn: 9%
- 22% of teenagers log onto their favorite SNS more than 10 times per day.
- 18% of 8 to 10-year-olds use an SNS daily.
- 62% of teens use the Internet to get information about current events online.
- 74% of all 7th to 12th grader have at least one profile on a social networking site.
- 98% of college students have a Facebook profile.
Culture of “Likes”

- 35% are worried about people tagging them in unattractive photos.
- 27% feel stressed about how they look in posted photos.
- 22% felt bad about themselves if their photos were ignored.
The number of followers, likes, and emojis kids can collect gets competitive, with users often begging for them.

Numerical scores display the total number of sent and received chats.

Am I pretty or ugly? Kids -- mostly girls -- post videos of themselves asking if other users think they're pretty or ugly. These videos are typically public, allowing anyone - from kids at school to random strangers - to post a comment.
UCLA brain mapping center watched via MRI as teens used social media

- Reward circuitry lit up when they believed they were getting “likes”

- Teens were more likely to “like” photos already with large amounts of likes
  - Regardless of the content of the photo

Social Learning Theory

- Teens seeking external validation become intoxicated by sensationalist engagement which may lead to more risky posting
New research found that teens who spend five or more hours per day on their devices are 71 percent more likely to have one risk factor for suicide.

Social media use and unhappiness are age-related
- 8th graders are more affected versus 10th or especially 12th graders

While teen drug and alcohol experimentation is down and teen pregnancy is down, teen and pre-teen depression is at all-time high
- Report feeling more anxious and lower self esteem
“Beautiful depression”

Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live.

Norman Cousins

I want to die a lovely death
But there’s hope...

- Even though 86% of teens say they’ve received general advice around online use from their parents, researchers at Common Sense Media found that 30% of teens who are online believe their parents know “a little” or “nothing” about what social media apps and sites they use.

- And yet, teens still say that their parents have the biggest influence on determining what is appropriate and inappropriate online.
Rinsta vs. Finsta

- Do your kids have a finsta account?
  - fake + Instagram = finsta
  - Real + Instagram = rinsta
Finsta

- Don’t get too nervous yet! Most kids use their finsta to share with a smaller group of close friends.
- Their rinsta is their “presentational self”
Filters and Reality
Have conversations…

- Help your kids understand what is appropriate and inappropriate to post online
- Talk with kids about how getting likes, comments, hearts, etc. makes them feel and talk with them about other things that can make them happy
- Help your kids develop their own personal identity outside of social media
- Encourage kids to understand that social media does not reflect reality. If they are posting their best “presentational self” aren’t others too?
  - Under hashtags such as "#UglySelfie" and "#NoMakeup" girls post photos of their unadorned selves, funny faces, un-retouched images, and "epic fails" (attempts at perfect selfies that went wrong.)
Media and Health
Effects on health

- More time on screens = less time outdoor play with exercise
- Kids snack significantly more while engaging with media
- Childhood obesity and diabetes on the rise
- Sleep deprivation
- Distorted body image giving rise to more eating disorders
  - Research has found that social media has more impact than traditional media on body image
Sending inappropriate "pics"

- **Disseminating Obscenity**, is a Class I felony committed by intentionally disseminating obscenity or creating, procuring, or possessing obscene material with the intent to disseminate it.

- **Preparing Obscene Photographs**, is a Class 1 misdemeanor committed by one who models, poses for, or photographs oneself or any other person for the purpose of making an obscene photograph to disseminate.

- **Disseminating Material Harmful to Minors**, is a Class 1 misdemeanor committed when a person knowingly presents or distributes to a child under 18 material that is harmful to minors.

- **First, Second and Third-Degree Sexual Exploitation**, is a Class E felony committed by one who records, photographs, duplicates, or receives material that depicts a minor (someone under the age of 18) nude or in any stage of undress. Receiving a text message containing inappropriate images of a minor or duplicating such material would subject a minor to prosecution for this offense.

- In North Carolina, 16 and 17-year-olds are prosecuted as adults. So, in NC, a 16-year-old that send an inappropriate (nude or semi-nude) picture of him/herself, could be convicted of exploiting themselves. In 2015 two Cumberland County teens (boyfriend and girlfriend) were sending these pictures to each other and both had to face charges as adults.
Cyberbullying
Cyberbullying Vs. Traditional Bullying

Cyberbullying:
- Occurs 24/7 at any time of day.
- Occurs strictly through technology
- Usually seen as joking

Traditional:
- Occurs face to face
- Occurs only when the person is near the bully
- Aggressive behavior
- A need to feel powerful
How bad is it?

According to Cyberbullying statistics from the i-SAFE Foundation:

- Over half of adolescents and teens have been bullied online, and about the same number have engaged in cyberbullying.
- More than 1 in 3 young people have experienced cyberthreats online.
- Over 25 percent of adolescents and teens have been bullied repeatedly through their cell phones or the Internet.
- Well over half of young people do not tell their parents when cyber bullying occurs.
Ways to Recognize Cyberbullying as the Victim

- Knowing the difference between joking and harassment.
- Noticing multiple mean or negative comments on a post.
- People are sharing screenshots of personal messages or pictures.
- If this treatment is constantly occurring.
Ways Parents can recognize Cyberbullying

- Become withdrawn or unsocial
- Quick to close web pages if someone comes near.
- Starts to avoiding school or group gatherings
- Slipping grades and "acting out" in anger at home
- Being nervous or jumpy when getting an instant message, text, or email
Talk to your kids about prevention

- Acknowledge that cyberbullying is occurring.
- Do not be a bystander, Speak up!
- Be familiar with what is bullying and what is not
- Review photos before posting online
- Set up privacy controls
- Do not open messages from someone you do not know
- Always log out of accounts on public computers
Prevention tips for Parents

- Help build their child’s self-confidence by encouraging them to do what they love, and developing a skill for it
- Know when your children are online and what sites they are going to
- Monitor who they are friends with online, and who is in their social circle at school
- Teach kids to never give out their passwords.
- Know which social media apps their children are using, and know how to use them
- Teach children to how to block and report cyberbullies
Video Games
Who plays and why?

Gender: Mostly males

Age: 29% of gamers are under 18 years old

27% of gamers are 18-35 years old

Motivations to play:

- Entertainment
- Competition, excitement, something to do when bored.
- Social interaction, challenge/competence, control, fantasy
Ratings

ESRB

EARLY CHILDHOOD
Titles rated EC - (Early Childhood) have content that may be suitable for ages 3 and older. Contains no material that parents would find inappropriate.

EVERYONE 10+
Titles rated E 10+ (Everyone 10 and older) have content that may be suitable for ages 10 and older. Titles in this category may contain more cartoon, fantasy or mild violence, mild language, and/or minimal suggestive themes.

EVERYONE
Titles rated E (Everyone) have content that may be suitable for ages 6 and older. Titles in this category may contain minimal cartoon, fantasy or mild violence and/or infrequent use of mild language.

TEEN
Titles rated T (Teen) have content that may be suitable for ages 13 and older. Titles in this category may contain violence, suggestive themes, crude humor, minimal blood and/or infrequent use of strong language.

MATURE
Titles rated M (Mature) have content that may be suitable for persons ages 17 and older. Titles in this category may contain intense violence, blood and gore, sexual content, and/or strong language.

ADULTS ONLY
Titles rated AO (Adults Only) have content that should only be played by persons 18 years and older. Titles in this category may include prolonged scenes of intense violence and/or graphic sexual content and nudity.
- **Alcohol Reference** - Reference to and/or images of alcoholic beverages
- **Animated Blood** - Discolored and/or unrealistic depictions of blood
- **Blood** - Depictions of blood
- **Blood and Gore** - Depictions of blood or the mutilation of body parts
- **Cartoon Violence** - Violent actions involving cartoon-like situations and characters. May include violence where a character is unharmed after the action has been inflicted
- **Comic Mischief** - Depictions or dialogue involving slapstick or suggestive humor
- **Crude Humor** - Depictions or dialogue involving vulgar antics, including “bathroom” humor
- **Drug Reference** - Reference to and/or images of illegal drugs
- **Fantasy Violence** - Violent actions of a fantasy nature, involving human or non-human characters in situations easily distinguishable from real life
- **Intense Violence** - Graphic and realistic-looking depictions of physical conflict. May involve extreme and/or realistic blood, gore, weapons and depictions of human injury and death
- **Language** - Mild to moderate use of profanity
- **Mild Violence** - Mild scenes depicting characters in unsafe and/or violent situations
- **Nudity** - Graphic or prolonged depictions of nudity
- **Partial Nudity** - Brief and/or mild depictions of nudity
- **Real Gambling** - Player can gamble, including betting or wagering real cash or currency
- **Sexual Themes** - Mild to moderate sexual references and/or depictions. May include partial nudity
- **Sexual Violence** - Depictions of rape or other violent sexual acts
- **Violence** - Scenes involving aggressive conflict
Effects of violent video games

Does it cause real life violent behavior has long been the controversy.

- 60% of boys and 40% of middle school girls who played at least one M-rated game showed some sort of physical aggression, compared to the 39% of boys and 14% of girls who did not play M-rated games.
- Some peer-reviewed studies have shown that kids who play M-rated games have increased, long term, aggressive behavior. (physical fights, arguing with teachers, bullying, etc.)
- Playing violent video games leads to more aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behavior 24 hours later in college men. (Bushman & Gibson, 2011).
Gentile and Anderson studies

- In a large, prospective, longitudinal cohort study, Professors Craig Anderson and Doug Gentile found that boys playing violent M-rated games – particularly games such as Grand Theft Auto which deploy a “moral inversion” – exhibited changes in personality over a period of 3 or more years. They become more selfish, more hostile, and less patient.

- Impaired their ability to resolve conflict through negotiation and effective communication

- Studies show that violent video games discourage players from exercising self-control.
Effect of violent video games

- Does playing M-rated violent games create a “Mean World Syndrome?”
- Does playing M-rated violent games link violence with masculinity?
- Are only “high risk” players affected?
  - Players that have the trait of aggressiveness, high in neuroticism, low in agreeableness, or low in conscientiousness may be more susceptible to the negative effects of violent video games.
What can parents do?

- **Just Say NO**
  - Ban violent video games because they don’t want to support or encourage violent entertainment, and explain to your child the reasons behind your decision.

- **Let it Go**
  - If your home and neighborhood are reasonably peaceful, and you have a generally happy, kind, empathic child, who does at least fairly well in school, is able to think critically, has other interests, and good friends, then the effects of playing violent video games are likely to be minimal.

- **Monitor your child’s video game playing**
  - First, parents can influence the content of video games that their children play by avoiding games with realistic violence of “M” games.
  - Second, parents can limit the amount of time that kids spend playing video games, including violent video games.
  - Finally, parents can also influence the impact of violent video games by playing them with their children and/or by talking about them. Try asking questions to help your child think things through, such as:
    - What do you think is or isn’t realistic about this game?
    - Why do you think this game got the rating it did?
    - Is the violence depicted as fun or funny?
    - What are the real world consequences of violence like this?
Especially for the parents
Look for these apps on your kids devices

These apps are used to hide secret photos, apps and content on your device. Only those with password can open.
What else can parents do?

- Learn how to set the restrictions and controls on all your kids apps and devices.
  - There are several helpful tutorials on YouTube
- Become familiar with websites like Common Sense Media to look up and read about tv shows, movies, games and apps before letting kids view or play them.
- Talk to kids about rating systems and encourage them to follow those guidelines.
- Consider purchasing a commercial service to assist in monitoring and controlling children’s media use.
Circle with Disney

A box that hooks up to the WiFi router and monitors the activity of every device connected to the home network.

Set daily time limits for each family member on any app or category
Set individual filters for kids at preset age levels (Pre-K, Kid, Teen, Adult)
Provides rewards option like bumping up daily time limits, extend bedtime, disable offtime

Requires the box and the MyCircle companion app to be installed. The costs for the app is $9.95 per month and covers up to 10 devices.
Others

**Our Pact**  $6.99 per month
Provides parental control, app blocker, and family locator. Schedules screen time throughout the week or day, allows parent to see what apps their child has installed.

**Family Time**  $1.99 per month
Allows for customization of control options for precise content. Gives parents tools to set homework and bedtimes, and limits time on screen. Also blocks app-by-app basis and monitors texts.

**Qustodio**  $55 per year (includes Kindle and Nook)
Good for parents who are short on time. Offers a dashboard that shows all the recent activity for any device connected, including how much time is spent on each app. $55/ year for 5 device plans.

**Kidslox**  $39.99 per year
Disable disruptive apps individually, switch between parent mode and child mode, provide PIN to prevent kids from changing settings.
The goal is media literacy!
Multiple conversations with your kids teaching them self regulation and to become a critical receiver of the media they consume.