Technology and your Child

Mr Phillip Wilson and Dr Stephanie Jarratt

Wagga Wagga Christian College

Technology and social media

► Technology is everywhere. Just take a look around and think about it. Actually, take a look at what is in your pocket… Technology has brought many great things to us! Most of the time, technology helps us to complete things easier and more quickly.

► Smartphones, tablets, personal computers, video games and so on… **our life is surrounded by technology** and our children are also using it **at home, at school, everywhere**. Our children will learn many things we have not even dreamt about right now. We know this is an important positive impact of technology – and as is often the case, technology has some downsides …

Downside to everything... including technology

▶ There are **some negative impacts from technology overuse too**, having serious consequences in our children's life. To get the best of digital devices, parents have to consider its downsides and prevent or at least minimise them.

Is Your Child Safe?

Kindera

1.Relationships and Social Skills Issues

- **1. Relationships and Social Skills Issues**

- Children and young people are using mobile devices more and more, and they can become addicted to them, **not spending enough time face to face with their family and/or friends.** They are more likely to be **virtually connected** with friends, sharing photos and texting online rather than actually meeting them in person.

- The **new generation** is growing up **playing games on-line**, accessing websites (sometimes negative websites), **chatting on-line** on Facebook and other social media sites, **sharing photos** on Instagram and Snapchat and so on. It doesn't mean that spending time on-line is a bad thing, but spending too much time on-line can really weaken the bond between the parents and the child, and also deprive the child of the opportunity to **improve social skills in the real world.** Also all this on-line world can be a big time waster and can lead at times, to cyber bullying and addictive behaviours.

2. Health Problems

- **2. Health Problems**

- The **overuse of mobile devices** can be harmful to children's health. The more they use mobile devices, the **less physical activities** they do. The problem is that playing games online is combined with snacking and can lead to increased weight. As children spend more time in front of those screens, most of the time on the couch, less time they spend outside playing, running and burning off calories. Over time, **those habits can lead to a significant weight gain and poor muscle control and posture**.

- To prevent it from becoming a habit, parents can talk with their children about parental controls and use things like **ScreenGuide App to balance screen time**. Remember: it's important to balance the **quality and quantity** of the time they spend on digital devices.

3. Browsing Online Can Be Dangerous

- **3. Browsing Online Can Be Dangerous**

- While **browsing on-line we often face harmful things** such as phishing, virus and other dangers disguised as advertising. Most of the adults know it and can usually avoid them, but what about children?

- Children and young people can go on-line and search for anything. But with the right **monitoring and parental boundaries**, they will less likely access dangerous websites, avoiding meeting with unsafe people. Keep in mind that you can always guide your children to avoid those dangers through communication, supervision and monitoring- sometimes **taking away the computer for violating trust** and boundaries is a necessary learning tool for our children.

- One way to help children to be safe on-line is to use parental controls and **internet filtering tools** to select the content they are able to access or even **block browsers for as long as you consider it is appropriate**.

4. Mobile Device Overuse Reduces Sleep Quality

▶ **4. Mobile Device Overuse Reduces Sleep Quality**

▶ According to the article from JAMA Paediatrics "Kids Are Being Kept Awake by Their Phones Even When They're Not Using Them" over 72% of all children have at least one device in their bedroom. JAMA Paediatrics published a study with the big question: Is there an association between **screen-based media device access or use** in the sleep environment, and **sleep quantity and quality**?

▶ They found out that there is a strong and consistent evidence of a link between **mobile devices overuse** and **reduced sleep quality. Our children are sleeping less than they should** and are now having trouble getting to sleep because of the devices and the light that they emit.

4. Mobile Device Overuse Reduces Sleep Quality

▶ A lack of sleep can have **serious consequences on our brain**. During sleep, the brain does some "housekeeping" tasks, clearing things that aren't important and restoring the nerve networks to wake up again ready for a brand new day. Sleep is important for growth and health. Teenagers need around **9hrs sleep a day.** But **sleeping less** means that we are depriving our brain of its essential needs and we will struggle in our activities during the day including emotional regulation.

▶ To help your children get a better sleep, you can talk to them about the problems that come with sleep deprivation. Also, work on reducing the screen time balancing it with **ScreenGuide Parental Control App**. All technology needs to be put away 1.5hrs before sleep/bedtime, otherwise it can disrupt the sleep cycle and also getting to sleep.

5.Online gaming addictions

- With high-speed internet and online savviness, children and teens have greater access to pornography, violent and online gaming sites than ever before. Teens are more vulnerable to becoming **addicted** and experiencing **psychological damage** because of pornography and violent images than adults are. Children and **teens have brains that are still developing**, and this can be **interrupted and skewed by the porn and online gaming.**

   HOW ON-LINE ADDICTIONS CAUSES HARM

- Teens and children with so much exposure to pornography and violent images are likely getting their earliest sexual experiences through porn. Instead of learning about sexuality in real situations as consenting adults in an equal relationships face to face, they are gleaning it from the screen and the **fantasy world of porn**. It gives these young people a **distorted idea of what sex**, intimacy and love are really like in real-world relationships.

5.Online gaming addictions

- Teens who are spending so much time on-line and not in **real life social** settings are often experiencing **more social difficulties** that can even lead to social phobias such as not wanting to leave the house because they are addicted to the on-line gaming and the **real world** has nothing to offer them, including face to face relationships. Their reward is going to a higher level within the game - similar to the reward mechanism in the brain that rewards people addicted to the pokies.

- Some have dropped out of school through the addiction to on-line gaming as they game through the night - sleep through the day often not leaving their bedrooms.

5.Online gaming addictions

▶ The teens say it is 'social' as they are playing with others, but that is just a excuse to continue to withdraw from the real world, as the gaming world offers rewards, pleasure and the possibility to be powerful in your 'own world'.

▶ Why can it become so addictive and interfere with life and relationships? It is because certain pathways in the frontal lobe where dopamine is the neurotransmitter, become active when people are playing video games/pokies etc. However we need to be mindful that we don't leave out the fact that everything that is pleasurable activates these brain pathways as well.

▶ **Netflix, YouTube, Google Play** all have questionable images and values/messages feeding our children. Do you as the parent want **Netflix to** bring up your child? The iPad is also a cheap babysitter but at what cost?

On-line gaming promoting violence and power without responsibility

Former online gaming addict - Cam Adair talks about his addiction to gaming as a teenager Ted talk 2013

▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHmC2D0_Hdg

▶ Insight, SBS, 2018- on line gaming teen addicts, see clip below

▶ https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/1294331971824/insight-game-on-gaming-addiction

So as parents what can we do? Strategies to help

▶ **1. Communicate.** Talk with your children about the risks associated with getting involved in games.

▶ **2. Monitor apps.** Know what apps your children have on their mobile devices. Download the same apps that they use so that you understand them and what they do. This will also allow you to see with whom your child is communicating.

▶ **3. Be in the know about social media sites.** Know what social media sites and tools they use and "friend" them so that you can monitor their pages for potential signs of trouble.

Strategies to help

- **4. Gain access.** If your child is social media savvy (which most are), have them give you their password, just in case they are posting and blocking you from seeing their posts.

- **5. For younger kids, install a monitoring system**, such as Skydog, which allows you to set access controls on your computer for each household member. It also lets you see what each member is doing, thereby allowing you to be able to see what your child is up to and who they are talking with.

Strategies to help

▶ Monitoring our children's on-line activities is a sticky issue, but having boundaries with technology and not letting it rule the house will help. **IT WILL RULE YOU IF YOU DO NOT RULE IT!**

▶ Monitor our own technology use as parents, are we 'checked out' on Netflix and eBay ourselves?

▶ Remember you are not your child's friend you are the **parent** and it's your job to keep your child safe from on-line dangers, addictions and predators. You would not let a bad man into your physical home, but unsupervised children can let them in through the internet. Predator grooming can occur through on-line chat rooms, social media, Facebook etc. Be alert but not alarmed!

Strategies to help

- Think about having all technology off at the dinner table including phones, so **face to face** real life **conversations** can occur and get the devices out of the bedrooms by evening, this will help in giving your children **boundaries** to help prevent **addictions** to **technology/gaming/porn** and also talk to your children/teen about what they are posting up on the internet or sending to their friends.

- Have technology such as the computer in a **common space** like the dining room or lounge room or office can help, so parents can keep an eye on what websites their children are on.

- It is okay to put **time limits on technology** and **use technology as a reward-** technology is not a right.

- Keep communication open and without condemnation, remember to come from a position that as parents our role is to love our children and to keep them safe.

Resources

- http://resources.uknowkids.com/blog/5-tips-to-protect-your-children-from-dangerous-games-on-social-media

- http://www.techaddiction.ca/index.html

- http://screen.guide/

- Headspace
- https://headspace.org.au/
- Beyond blue
- https://www.beyondblue.org.au/
- Accessline
- https://www.mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/our-services/mental-health-services

Resources

- If concerned about anything that has been presented, please do not hesitate to contact the school counsellor or your local health care professional for more information and assistance.