

# Should Parents Monitor the Websites accessed by their kids?

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**ABSTRACT:** *The use of computer technology, whether online or playing video games, will pose serious and intrinsic threats to children and adolescents in terms of mental wellbeing. Parents are in the strongest place to influence and regulate the computer interactions and behaviors of their infant, and so it is the responsibility of providers of mental health to warn parents about these risks and how they can be mitigated. This paper reviews media consumption and mental health patterns and discusses different actions that parents should take to reduce negative aspects of such use. There is a discussion of realistic problems and remedies. Many parents do not know what their kids are doing online and the action they should take to help keep them safe. Kids, while this is always a source of friction, respond favorably to parental supervision. It is effective to use all external approaches, such as putting restrictions on mobile devices and controlling access, and engaging with children about the secure and balanced use of electronic media. Parents should track the quantity and content of computer usage in which their children participate and regulate it when appropriate. Parents should teach internet etiquette to their children and warn them about online dangers, including sexting and cyber bullying, and look for signs of those issues.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Monitoring Content, Sexting, Online Predators, Data connectivity, Parenting, Caution, Freedom.*

## INTRODUCTION

Technology is changing, and although these developments cannot be regulated, people can adapt to the new technology. For parents and Internet technologies, this is extremely vital. Generally, relative to their children, most parents are not technological pioneers, but they play a significant role in guiding their children and making sure they use the Internet favorably. Internet technology has a wide array of beneficial applications and resources for youth. The Internet has been likened to "an ocean of information where everyone can fish" in metaphorical concepts. Data connectivity, schooling, networking and entertainment have been significantly influenced by the Internet. The Internet will enhance school-based learning for children, act as a vehicle for sharing artistic and intellectual work with others, encourage children to interact with people around the world, and provide a potentially useful pastime as well [2].

How can we say which type of Internet use can support children positively and encourage them to access opportunities? In terms of what can help them, kids, like adults, are hard to foresee. Much depends on the interpretative contexts in usage, which for children are as heterogeneous as for any other group. The hopes and concerns of digital technologies have raised some pressing

questions for parents about how to enable children to make the best of the possibilities provided by the Internet, whether they use it at home, at school or elsewhere. The bulk of longitudinal research on parental mediation linked to the use of the Internet by children concentrate on avoiding online threats [1][2]. Parents should prepare appropriate mediation techniques to improve the beneficial use of the Internet by children instead of stressing about online threats and placing strict limits on children's Internet use.

The beneficial use of the Internet for children applies to the maximization of the gains of their use of the Internet. Scholars have provided multiple classifications about the constructive use of the Internet, most of which include information/learning, networking, entertainment, engagement, imagination and language [3][4]. Six common positive uses of the Internet are the subject of this study: information, networking, entertainment, engagement, innovation and language. Meanwhile, this research focuses on four mediations in relation to parental mediation that have been expressly developed to mediate the internet usage of children [5], which are: successful co-use, limitation of contact, technological restriction and surveillance. In ensuring that kids use the Internet positively, parents play a critical role. Parents need to practice mediation techniques to control the Internet utilization of their children in order to do so. Parental mediation is generally described as parental control of the interaction between children and the media; it expands the parental function to include conversational and interpretive techniques and parental supervision practices beyond basic constraints [5].

## WHAT PARENTS SHOULD DO?

### 1. *Monitoring Content*

Inadequate television consumption may be harmful or even upsetting for youngsters, which means parents still have an important responsibility to minimize objectionable imagery in video games and web usage. While the Electronic Product Ratings Board (ESRB) operates the most robust rating system, which scores most commercially released video games for consoles, laptops, and mobile devices, both for video games from Google and Apple. Diverse elements of objectionable contents (from rough comedy, drug use, to sexual abuse) were defined by the ESRB, and a general rating was given to the game which implied the age limit of the game. The most widely used findings include EC, early childhood E (all 6 years and up) and E10+ (all 10 years and up), adolescent (all 13 years and older) and mature (appropriate for people aged 17 and older). Content descriptors and scores show prominently on the back of all packets of video games.

An ESRB app for smartphones is also available. Though blamed for ESRB scores, they are the best tools for parents to assess if a given video game is suitable. However, a 2013 study of more than 2000 American adults showed that 78% do not truly grasp the importance of ESRB ratings and 33% of children's parents said it permits their children to play any games their children

choose, regardless of their content. The system of ratings should be familiarized and used by the parents of children playing video games, including 97 percent of young children aged 11-17 years of age, to shield their children from what the parent thinks is insufficient content[6]. Controls on video game consoles are available which limit the playback of certain ESRB sizes. The controls are identical to those mentioned above. These controls can be accessed.

## ***2. Keeping computers at public areas inside home***

Parents must be able to watch their teen at all moment while engaging in this task to properly track a child's video game play and internet use. Both computers and video game consoles should stay in public areas of the household at all times in order for daily surveillance to exist, never to be taken to the bedroom of the infant or teenager. Sleep-onset insomnia may be induced or led to by participating in interactive devices in bed [7]. Playing video games will delay and disturb sleep in the hours before bedtime, so it is extremely crucial that kids and teens should not play video games in bed, especially while they should be sleeping. Parents should advise teenagers not to play computer games until bedtime, and if sleep issues arise, they should be willing to minimize game-play at this time[8].

When they have access to mobile phones and portable video gaming machines in their homes, young people are often unable to fight the urge to engage in video game play and Internet use in bed or at night, which may result in insomnia and decreased functioning the next day. Parents of certain teenagers who own these machines need to confiscate them at bedtime and return them in the morning in order to eliminate such a lure. To further ensure compliance, the device's battery should be stored in the parents' bedroom. It should be remembered that children and teenagers are sometimes inclined to limit their use of electronic media at night or its effect on parents and clinicians' sleep for fear of just such a limitation on media technology. For a parent and child too frequently play these games together are another way to find out more about the video games a kid has been watching. This helps a parent to learn more about something important to the child, enjoy a pleasurable moment together, and ensure that the parent has understanding of the appropriateness of the content of the game. Similarly, parents need to track their kids' visiting websites and restrict kids from going to unsafe websites. This might include websites containing abuse, crime, or those encouraging harmful habits, including opioid usage, disordered eating, or cutting conduct. To detect online activities, tracking tools may be used, but parents can still keep an eye on their children whilst they are on the internet.

## **PARENT-TEEN DISCUSSION TOPICS**

- ***Sexting***

Specifically, parents should speak to teenagers about sexting and its possible implications. First, parents should try to explain what their teenagers feel about the subject already, and then add an

age-appropriate clarification. Parents should explain how letters, messages and tweets should never include images of persons without their clothing on or touching each other in unacceptable ways for younger children who do not know about sex. The word sexting should be used by older adolescents and more information should be explored. Adolescents need to realize that sexts meant to be confidential are frequently made public later, which for participants can be a terribly humiliating experience. Teens will need to realize that sexting can have serious legal implications and that there are other threats, such as being excluded from school or suspended. Because some teenagers may feel pressure to sext to make or sustain peer relationships, it may help to minimize the urge to collect mobile phones at teen gatherings. Finally, as with most screens, in private areas, such as a child's bedroom, mobile phones should not be permitted.

- **Online Predators**

Pedophilic sexual abusers, while luckily uncommon, may use social media sites to locate possible victims. In order to establish an online friendship, they may pose as other young people; sometimes ask for a sexual photograph or personal information, maybe even finally set up a meeting. Kids and teenagers may not know that their "friend" online is simply seeking to take advantage of them, and may be an adult impostor. Parents need to explore this possibility with their online children to clarify the risks of uploading or exchanging personal information in a manner that might become public, like emails, phone numbers, the name of their school, or where they expect to be at a certain time[9]. It should be recommended that children and teenagers never send a photo or give stranger personal information, even if that individual wishes to "friend" them online. If improperly requested online, children need to know that, if possible, they must automatically block the communication and inform their parents without fear of retribution.

## CONCLUSION

As mental health advocates for children and teenagers, it is up to mental health providers who handle children to better explain what they should do to parents to help protect their children and adolescents from the emerging threats involved with computer entertainment for mental health. There is a lack of guidelines for how to counsel parents in this regard, given that these devices are developing so quickly and their use by young people has raised so much in recent years. There are precautions, however, that parents should take to protect their kids. The most critical aspect, and always crucial to prevent a multitude of harmful effects associated with overuse, is putting limits on the amount of time young people spend on laptops, mobile phones, and video games. Monitoring the usage of sports, internet and social networking platforms directly by a young child is daunting but often critical in defending against a range of objectionable material, like exposure to overly violent or pornographic media, involvement in websites that encourage unsafe habits, risky sexting practices, or victimization by a variety of

online bullying behaviors. Parents ought to teach their children about correct internet etiquette and protection and the dangers of deviating from these rules in an age-appropriate way, as well as what to do in case they are harassed online or asked to partake in unsafe conduct. Without resolving these concerns, teaching our patients and their family about the dangers involved with electronic usage and the actions they should take to defend themselves from them, mental health care of young adults is also not complete.

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