

# Technology, Social Media, and Video Games

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# Framing the Problem

- “Video games are replacing children’s imaginations.” (Clement and Miles, 2018)
- “Since Google can give us information about everything, why should we bother learning anything?” (Clement and Miles, 2018)
- “Video games are digital heroin for the mind that makes the gamer feel good, but also helps them escape from reality.” - Andrew Doan, *Hooked on Games*

# Statistics...

- Out of 7.7 billion people in the world, 3.2 billion people have access to the internet
- 95% of adolescents have access or own a smartphone
- Teens in the U.S. are averaging 9 hours per day on entertainment media, and children ages 8-12 average 6 hours per day
- In 2015, 4.5 billion people have access to mobile phones, while only 3 billion people have access to running water (Tolentino, 2016)
- The average age of first porn exposure is 8
- 25% of all age groups have been called offensive names (YouTube 85%, Instagram 72%, and Snapchat 69%)
- 64% of US parents believe technology helps to bring their family closer together

# Correlated Findings

- Since the introduction of the iPhone in 2006, ER visits have doubled
- The favorite mode of communication in 2018 is texting, compared to face to face interaction in 2012
- The increase in children's screen focus is implicated for the exploding rate of ADHD.
  - ADHD diagnosis has risen 66% between 2000 and 2010, in 2013 the rate has increased 4%
  - 1 in 5 high school boys have received a diagnosis of ADHD (Freeman, 2015)

# Signs of Technology Addiction

- Unsuccessful attempts to reduce or stop
- Loss of interest in previous hobbies
- Continuation despite problems
- Jeopardized or lost a relationship, job, or opportunity
- Preoccupation (being absorbed by gaming)
- Withdrawal (irritability, restlessness, and sadness)
- Tolerance (increased playing to feel satisfied)
- Escape from reality
- Deceiving others (lying or sneaking around)

\*\*Must have 3 of those symptoms

(Social Media, 2019) (Kersting, 2016)

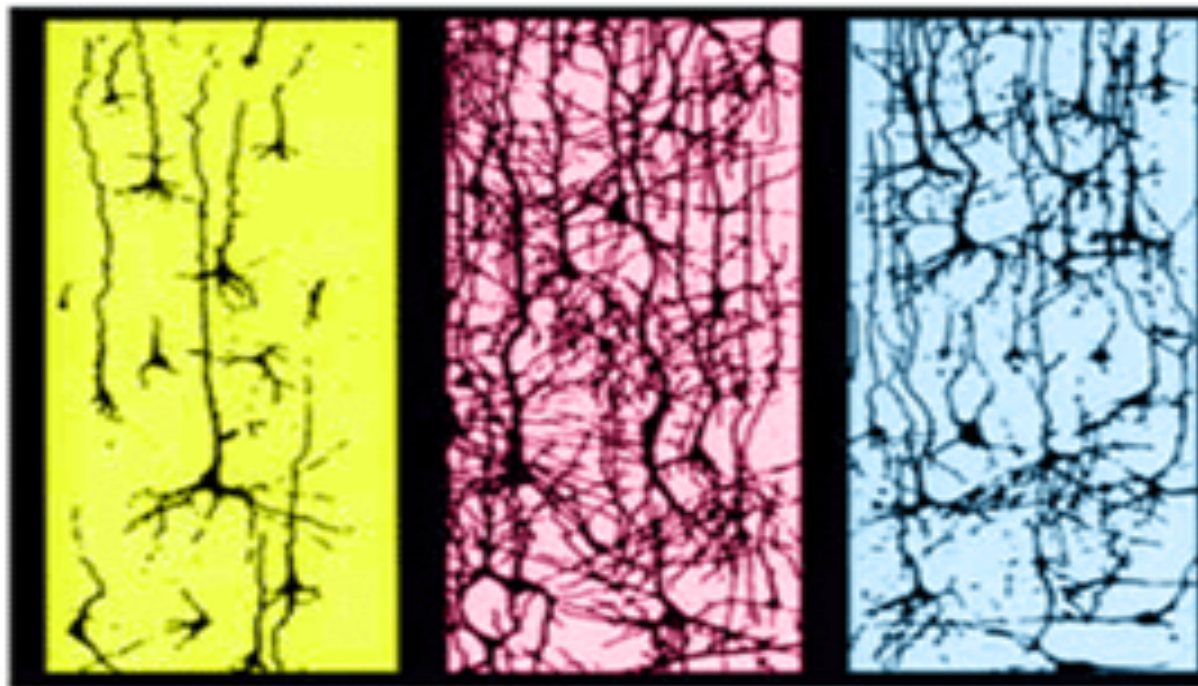
# Understanding the Science...

- Neuropathways
  - Electrical impulses of the brain (look like tree branches) that are responsible for how we communicate, cope, focus, concentrate, and socialize.
  - It takes 3 hours or more per day of consistent stimulating activity to change the wiring of the brain
- Neural Pruning
  - The natural process during adolescence where the brain's way of weeding out pathways that are used less often.

(Kersting, 2016)

# Neural Development

Center on the Developing Child  HARVARD UNIVERSITY



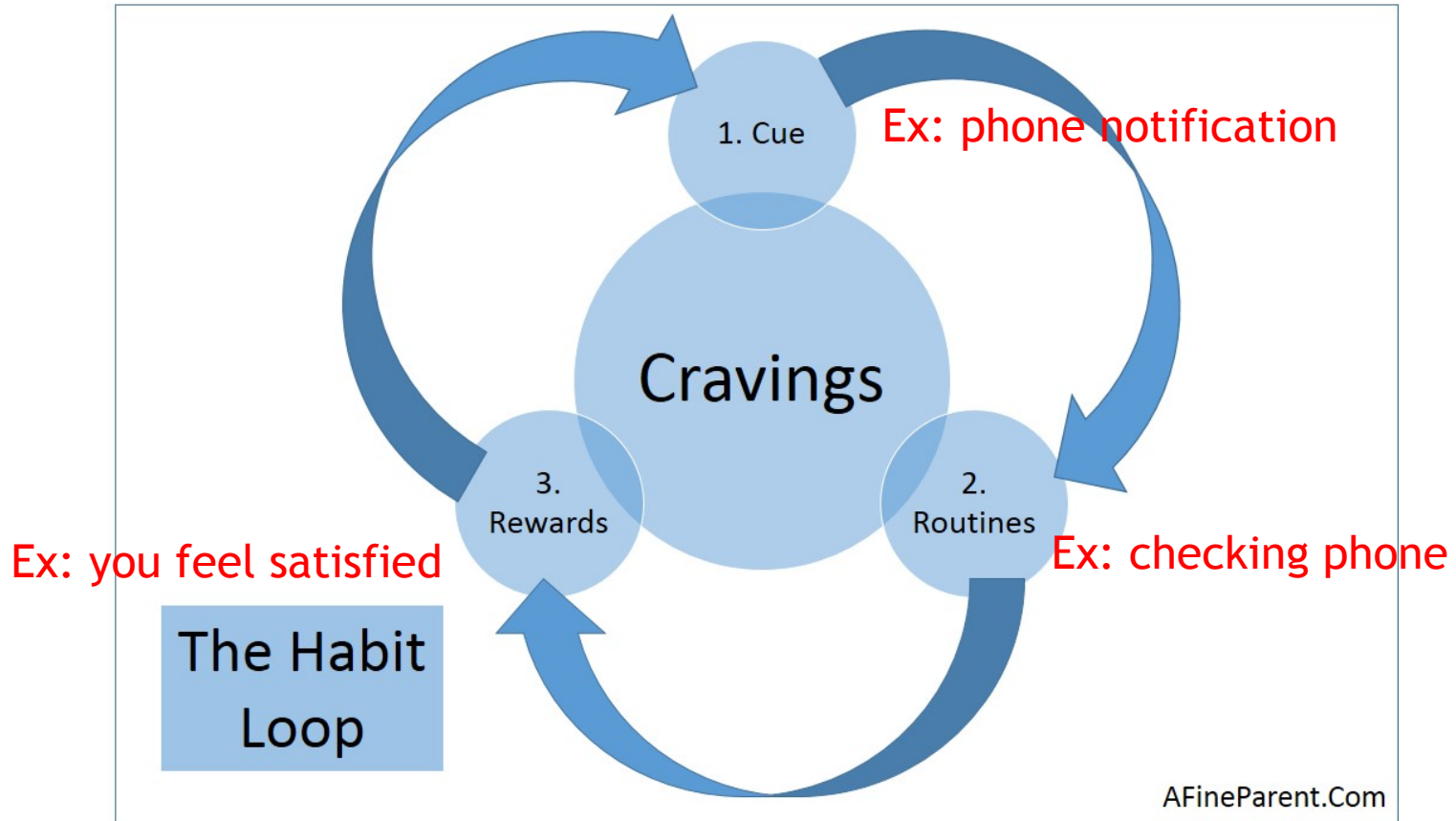
**birth**

**6 years**

**14 years**

Source: Shonkoff, J. P. (2008) \*\*

# Cravings





# Understanding the Science continued...

- Limbic center (emotion and pleasure center) develops at a much faster pace by the time a child is in college than the front cortex (the judgment/reasoning)
  - The impulse control part of the brain is not fully functioning yet. (Hempe, 2018)
- Quality family time spent, triggers the release of dopamine and oxytocin which further facilitates your child's attachment to you. (Freeman, 2015)
- Video gaming triggers the release of high levels of dopamine. The amount of dopamine that is produced by emotionally-engaging video games can lead kids' brains to prioritize gaming memories over other experiences. (Freeman, 2015)

# Screen Time



# What to Know...

- Unplugged downtime allows time to process and think deeply about hard issues, which is necessary for creativity and innovation to occur.
  - Children who constantly check their phones are apt to be more bored. They become helpless when they try to do things offline, losing the ability to innovate and imagine. (Hempe, 2018)
- The distraction of a phone can hurt teens the most because it sets the stage for a lifelong dependence on technology.
  - It robs teens of the gift of being present. (Hempe, 2018)
- On average, a person touches their phone 2,617 times a day and spends an average of 10.5 hours a day on technology (TV, chrome book, computer/laptop, smartphone, etc.). (Naftulin, 2016)

# Communication

- Healthy conversation and empathy are valuable life skills that are important for teen's emotional development and future successes. (Hempe, 2018)
- Hiding behind a smartphone keeps teens from doing the hard work of face-to-face interaction, which causes teens to lose the ability to read emotions. (Hempe, 2018)

# Emotional Intelligence

- Defined as the ability to understand the emotions of others as well as the ability to understand and regulate one's own emotions. (Kersting, 2016)
- Having a phone in sight can stifle closeness, trust, and empathy. (Mateo, 2019)
- This is learned through observing voices, body postures, and facial expressions (face-to-face interaction). (Kersting, 2016)

# Effects of Screen Time

- “Brain Drain”
  - The brain’s ability to hold and process data is reduced when a smartphone is present, even if it is turned off.
  - If a smartphone is on, cognitive capacity decreases.
  - The brain is no longer storing memories because we are so busy taking pictures.
  - The average attention span for an individual is 6 seconds (the average attention span for a goldfish is 9 seconds)
- Unnecessary Temptations
  - Teens brains crave novelty and forbidden content.
    - Easier access to pornography
- Weakened parental and family attachment
  - Peer orientation undermines healthy development. Peer oriented kids fail to grow up.
  - The more hours teens spend in front of a screen, the more lonely and less attached they will be to their family.

(Hempe, 2018)

# Screen Time and Sleep

- Lack of sleep
  - Elevated levels of cortisol which increase health problem
    - Teens are not getting the required 9 hours of sleep because phones are keeping them up at night, which creates an overproduction of cortisol (stress hormone) (Hempe, 2019)
- Technology emits blue light.
  - Blue light goes through eyelids, and the brain continues to process when this happens. Light leads to more arousal, which leads to less deep sleep.
- Over a four year period, 100% of adults will have experienced, acute, short-term insomnia.
  - It should take 10-20 minutes to drift into sleep.

(Sleep Handout, 2019)

# The Effects of Not Enough Sleep

- Increase in hyperactivity
- Consume 10-15% more calories, which leads to obesity
- Decrease in attention
- Higher irritability
- Increase in anxiety and depression
- Decreased immune system
- Increase cortisol (stress hormone)
- Lower empathy

(Sleep Handout, 2019)



# Technology and Driving



# What To Know...

- 21% of teen drivers involved in fatal accidents are distracted by a cell phone
- 11 teens die every day in accidents caused by texting while driving
- Teen drivers are 4 times more likely than adults to get into car crashes when talking on the phone or driving

(Social Media, 2019)

# Setting the Stage for Addictions

- Cortisol (the stress hormone) causes the feeling of wanting to check your phone.
- Smartphones are designed to stimulate a chemical response in the brain, delivering dopamine every time the user responds to a notification
  - This is similar to drug use, releasing dopamine to get the “feel good” effect.
- Teens are at a higher risk for addiction because it changes the way their brains regulate the release of dopamine and their emotions.
- The release of dopamine is enhanced in teen’s brains, giving them a higher sense of reward.
  - Frontal cortex has not fully developed and neurons fire at a higher rate than those of adults, causing teens to take more risks and become addicted faster.

(Hempe, 2018)

# Social Media



# Dating Apps

- Scout 
  - A free social dating app that is supposed to prohibit people under 17 from sharing private photos. However, kids can easily create an account with a different age. Negative reviews have reported harassment on the app.
- Badoo 
  - An adult only dating and social media app that allows users to chat, share photos and videos based on location. However, kids have created fake accounts.
- Hot or Not 
  - A rating site that allows users to rate the attractiveness of photos that are being submitted by others. The purpose of the app is to hook up.
- Grindr 
  - It is a social dating app that is rated 17+ for gay and bisexual men.
  - This app can result in bullying if someone is outed but does not want to be. Graphic content and language is possible.
- MeetMe 
  - A dating social media app that allows people to connect based on location. Users are encouraged to meet in person.
- Bumble 
  - A dating app that requires women to make the first contact for people who are looking for romantic or sexual relationships. Teens can create fake accounts and falsify their age.

# Video Apps

- TikTok



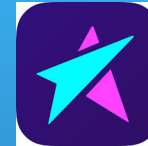
- A new popular app that allows users to create and share short videos. The app has very limited privacy controls and users can be exposed to cyberbullying.

- Holla



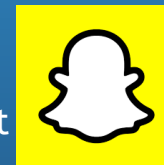
- This self-proclaimed “addicting” video chat lets users meet people in seconds throughout the world. Law enforcement said users have seen racial slurs and explicit content broadcasted to underage kids.
- Calculator+
- A free vault app that hides private files behind a functioning calculator. It allows individuals to take photos and videos directly within the app that will be hidden and password protected.

- Live.Me



- Live video streaming app that is rated 17+ and allows anyone to follow you while you live stream. It can pinpoint location within ten feet of where you are standing. Videos were being recorded and sold as child porn.

- SnapChat



- One of the most popular social media apps in the world that allows users to take and share photos/videos to their friends. Teens are able to send inappropriate content to each other and have it disappear in 24 hours.

# Texting Apps

- WhatsApp



- A messaging app that allows text messaging, video calls, and photosharing with users worldwide.

- Ask.FM



- An app where you can ask and answer controversially questions anonymously. It can be viewed by anyone and is known for cyberbullying.

- Kik



- An instant messenger app that is used by teens and young adult to chat with strangers.

- Whisper



- A free social app that allows its users to share personal secrets and confessions without being identified.

# How Teens Feel About Social Media

## Negative

- 45% feel overwhelmed by the drama
- 43% feel pressure to only post content that makes them look good to others
- 37% feel pressure to post content that will get a lot of likes and comments
  - Instagram is getting rid of the “likes” aspect to promote anti-bullying.

## Positive

- 81% feel more connected to their friends
- 69% think it helps teens interact with a more diverse group
- 68% feel as if they have people who will support them through tough times

(Social Media, 2019)



# Anxiety

- Today's teens are part of the “most anxious” generation.
- Anxiety occurs when teens fear not being adequate, not fitting in, or not measuring up to the expectations of their peers.
- Nomophobia
  - The fear and anxiety of being away from your phone.  
(Mateo, 2019)

(Hempe 2018),(Social Media, 2019)

# Depression

- Depression in teenage girls increased 50%, in boys 21% from 2012 to 2015.
- Studies show that people who spend large amounts of time scrolling through social media are more likely to suffer from depression
- Since 2000, teen suicides have gone up 30%
- Suicide is second the leading cause of death among teens (Accidents are #1)
- 90% of depressed/anxious teens seek help online
- 34% experience cyber bullying of which 30% have suicidal thoughts
- Young adults who spent more time on social media felt more isolated.

(Hempe 2018), (Social Media, 2019) (Mateo, 2019)

# Self-Respect and Self-Control

- Adolescents who spend more time on social media than non-screen activities and interpersonal activities have more psychological problems
- Teens do not have the emotional tools, experience, or tools to handle the constant demands of personal-brand (identity) building and the negative content of social media.
- Teens have a difficult time holding back when it comes to exposing personal information due to an underdeveloped frontal cortex (reasoning).
- Teens are heavily influenced by the “all-about likes” culture that can lead to disappointing, life-altering decisions.

(Hempe, 2018)

# Video Games



# Don't Retire Kid



# Statistics

- 211 million Americans are playing video games
- In 2018, it was a 43.8 billion dollar industry (the movie industry made 41.7 billion)
- 84% of boys ages 13-17 play video games
- 40% less men than women apply to college
- Men are less likely than women to find employment
- On average, 2.13 hours a day are spent on video games
- College aged males who play video games more than 4 hours/day (2.40 GPA), 30 minutes or less (3.55 GPA)
- South Korea has a government mental health program for video game addiction (25% of men are addicted to video games in South Korea)

(Video Games, 2019)

# Gaming Addiction

- Characterized by the lack of control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interest and daily activities, and escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences. (Hempe, 2018)
- Gaming habits have to impact social, education, and occupational lives for about a year to be classified as an addiction (Hempe, 2018)
- According to the World Health Organization, gaming addiction is now considered a mental health diagnosis

# Video Games and Sleep

- Screens affect sleep patterns. Melatonin levels decrease and the suppression of REM sleep prevents the brain from doing its job of “cleaning house.”
- Delayed Sleep Phase Syndrome (DSPS)
  - Where people shift their sleep schedule to accommodate their habits. The effects can disturb normal sleep biology and have social and professional consequences.

(Hempe, 2018)



# Assess the Situation

- Casual
  - Tends to live a balanced life. Enjoys gaming but has no problem with excessive play. Has good communication skills and close [real life] relationships with friends and family.
- At Risk
  - Increasing time spent playing video games and away from other activities. Gaming is close to the top of the list of hobbies. Gaming has become a regular activity. Relationships are starting to become distant but can still engage in family activities without too much protest. Thinks and talks about gaming a lot with presence of anger outbursts associating with gaming.
- Addicted
  - The gamer is playing everyday with gaming as the number one hobby. Gaming has control of moods and is depending on it for social outlet. Gets angry or withdrawals when limits are set. Life revolves around gaming. Poor personal hygiene is a sign.

(Hempe, 2018)

# Taking Action

- Take the lead
  - Set strict time limits or take away gaming completely
- Replace video games before college
  - Go to college game-free. This allows time to rediscover old hobbies and create new interests.
- Consider a gap year
  - Set structure to avoid gaming and temptations. Get a job, internship, or another life experience.

(Hempe, 2018)
- Focus on strengthening family attachment
  - Create routines and traditions like special family time that require face-to-face interaction. For example, eating together during dinner time, sharing family stories, reading together, etc. (Freeman, 2015))

# Building Up Protective Factors

- Create a strong bond between with immediate and extended family
  - Set clear limits and consistent enforcement rules by parents
  - Increase parental involvement in child's life
  - Practice face to face communication and relationships
  - Increase strong involvement with community
  - Model healthy tech use by parents, teachers, and coaches
  - Create clear consistent technology-use policies in home and at school
  - Cultivate emotional stability
  - Develop social skills (sharing perspective, reciprocal communication, and empathy)
  - Foster academic competence
- (Hempe, 2018)

# What Parents Can Do

- Help teens develop life skills
- Limit the time they spend on their devices
- Increase in-person social interactions with their friend groups
- Help them find new non-tech hobbies and extracurricular interests
- Make exercise a priority
- Know exactly what they are doing on their screens for homework and entertainment
- Go the extra mile to draw them into your family, even when you are tired or they are moody
- Help them get more sleep
- Spend time with them
- Have a technology free day

(Hempe, 2018)

# Parents Remember...

- We think it is the norm that kids spend time on their phone. However, this is not normal. We are social creatures who crave interaction. It is not normal to isolate.



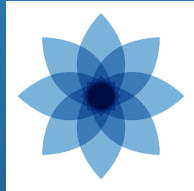
# Want To Unplug From Your Smartphone?

- Forest



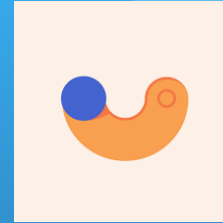
- Open the app, set a time, and put down your phone. The app “plants” a tree that grows until you pick it up (if you pick up your phone early, it dies). You earn coins for the trees you grow and can use them to have trees planted.

- Moment



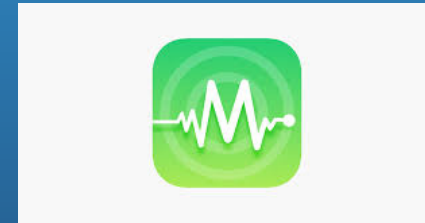
- This app tracks your usage and provides “boot camp” challenges like “stop sleeping with your phone” and “simplify your home screen” to help you develop healthier habits.

- Flipd



- Engage “full lock” mode and your smartphone turns into a dumb phone with all the apps hidden until the set time is up.

- Mute



- The app sends you motivational messages when you manage to go without picking up your device for a certain amount of time.

(Mateo, 2019)

# Rules to Follow...

- Keep child's room screen free
- Your child's phone is your phone
- No electronics during dinner
- Limit screen time for entertainment (TV included)
- Be a role model

(Kersting, 2016)

# Quotes to Remember...

- “We no longer have downtime, no longer have to wonder about things, no longer have to be bored. Downtime is necessary for the human brain. Wonder is what results in human achievement. Bored results in creativity.”
- “Although technology can give them the answers, without any context they will struggle to understand and internalize what they’re saying. Simply handing them a tool that gives them all the correct answers doesn’t make them smarter.”
- “Teenagers are awkward for a reason. They’re experimenting with different ways of interacting with others. Without face-to-face interaction, they can’t learn what works.”

(Clement and Miles, 2018)



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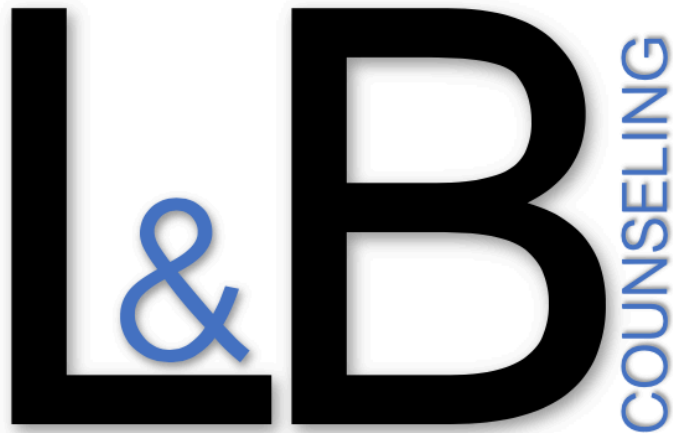
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# Questions?



# Thank You!



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