

Teens and Technology:

Helpful information that can minimize risks

Important Facts

- **The order of teens' daily preferences for using technology is: (1) texting, (2) cell phone calls, (3) landline calls, (4) face-to-face conversations, (5) social network websites, (6) instant messaging, and (7) email.**
- Four out of five teens (17 million) carry a wireless device (a 40% increase since 2004)
- With more than 1 billion text messages sent each day, it is no surprise that 42% of teens say they can text blindfolded, the study found.
- A majority (57%) of teens view their cell phone as the key to their social life.
- **Second only to clothing, teens say, a person's cell phone tells the most about their social status or popularity, outranking jewelry, watches and shoes.**
- If texting were no longer an option on cell phones, 47% of teens say their social life would end or be worsened - that's especially so among females (54% vs. 40%).
- The top 6 cell phones in the U.S. for all ages in summer, 2008, were: Motorola RAZR V3 series (9.3% of all subscribers, Motorola MotoKRZR series (2.0%), LG VX8300 series (1.6%), Apple iPhone (1.5%), LGVX8500 series (1.2%), and Blackberry 8100 series (1.2%).
- The top 10 social network sites as of October, 2009, are: Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, Yahoo, MSN/Windows Live/Bing, Flickr, LinkedIn, Blogger, and MocoSpace.
- 87% of university students are having sex over webcams, instant messenger or the telephone. *Reuters, Ontario Canada, February 16, 2006.*
- **71% of teens owned cell phones in 2008, 77% of teens owned a game console like an Xbox or a PlayStation, 74% of teens owned an iPod or mp3 player, 60% of teens "owned" a desktop or laptop computer, and 55% of teens owned a portable gaming device.**
- The average teenager spends three to four hours per day watching television and 83% of the programming most frequently watched by adolescents contains some sexual content. *Gary Rose, CEO of The Medical Institute, as reported by Focus on the Family 7/8/2005*
- 47% percent of families said pornography is a problem in their home. *Focus on the Family Poll, October 1, 2003.*
- **17% of all women struggle with porn addiction, 1 of 3 visitors to all adult websites are women, 9.4 million women access adult websites every month** *Internet Filter Review*
- April 6, 2007: 70% of Christians admitted to struggling with porn in their daily lives. *From a non-scientific poll taken by XXXChurch, as reported by CNN.*
- In 2004, a tiny number of teens use their mobile devices to use the internet. At that point in time, 45% of teens had a cell phone and 10% of them said they used it to go online. That same year 7% of teens had a PDA (Palm Pilot, Blackberry, and Sidekick) and just two percent of them used it to go online.
- **The top 10 websites accessed via mobile phones in October, 2008, were: Yahoo Mail, Google Search, Gmail, Weather Channel, ESPN, MSN Hotmail, Google Maps, AOL Email, CNN News, and Facebook.**
- The top 10 websites in the U.S. between January and October, 2008, were: Google, Yahoo!, MSN/Windows Live, Microsoft, AOL Media Network, YouTube, Fox Interactive Media, eBay, Wikipedia, and Apple.
- The average number of texts sent per month by 18-24 year old is 740 (yet, teens will outpace young adults)

The Risks

- Cell phones:
 - Call and texting logs that aren't reviewed by an adult
 - Language is cruder and emotions are shared without a reasonable filter
- Smart phones:
 - "Primary user" filter options are not used or not set properly
 - Teens will always be more aware of the "shortcuts" that are available
- iPhone and Equivalent:
 - Not all apps are created equal
 - The amount of space available for saving data (and also junk) is immense
- Internet:
 - Filters and accountability software are not put in place
 - Pornography is always looking for new customers - the younger the better
- Social networking:
 - Lack of monitoring of updates and contacts
 - Teens can communicate "way too much information" carelessly

Helpful Safeguards

- Cell phones:
 - Random inspections of logs, times calls were made, contact list, etc...
 - Don't be afraid to invoke your status as the owner of the subscription
- Smart phones:
 - Parental filters need to be in place and the history or bookmarks reviewed
 - Having the same phone can help with any kind of "learning curve"
- iPhone and Equivalent:
 - Added software is possible to prevent unauthorized use of websites
 - Controlling any apps can help - as well as using the right apps, too
- Internet:
 - Minimize solitary computer usage and set a structure and limits for your teen
 - Would you let your kids wander the streets alone?
- Social networking:
 - Passwords should be shared with parents – you can go in their room, can't you?
 - Apply the same concerns you have with their "face-to-face" friends

Summary

- Teens follow the examples of their parents – both good and bad
- The "diary issues" of your generation have now been hidden behind online passwords
- No piece of technology should allow questionable media to enter your home unfiltered
- Parents need to learn about every new option as best they can or ask for help from others

Helpful Websites

- **www.timesupkidz.com** – Software that helps you set up individual accounts for only certain people to be on the Internet at set times and for predetermined amounts of time
- **www.covenanteyes.com** - Internet accountability service (fee-based) that tracks every site someone visits on a particular computer and emails the report to a specific person
- **www.xxxchurch.com** – A “cutting edge” organization that works to fight the spread of porn within the Christian community and confronts the culture at large as well
- **www.afa.net** – The American Family Association’s website that helps people stay informed of cultural issues affecting parents, marriages, and children
- **www.moralityinmedia.org** – An organization that helps track and fight obscenity on the digital airwaves and attempts to get enforcement of current local, state, or federal laws
- **www.family.org** – Focus on the Family’s website with many additional links associated with the main one; all of which can help with many relevant issues
- **www.cleanhotels.com** – A website that tracks which hotel chains offer rooms without pay per view services; can be used on a state and city level, too
- **www.filterreview.com** – A website that helps parents choose which software will work best for their family and/or budget
- **www.nationalcoalition.org** – The National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families’ website; it also helps connect visitors to additional helpful sites
- **www.homeword.com** – Jim Burns’ radio ministry / website (as heard on 89Q) that offers many “tip sheets” for parents to download
- **www.parentingtodaysteens.com** – Mark Gregston’s radio ministry / website (as heard on 89Q) that offers a daily blog to help answer key parenting questions
- **www.blazinggrace.org** – A Christian site that helps people of all ages overcome the effects of pornography in their lives; also useful for up-to-date statistics about porn
- **www.oneplace.com** – A “clearinghouse” website has access to free downloads of sermons and other audio to strengthen peoples’ faiths
- **www.x3pure.com** – “Pure Online’s” website that offers an online accountability and recovery program for men and women
- **www.totalintegrity.org** – Steve Johnson’s website that describes his counseling ministry and the various ways to contact him or inquire about any of his services
- **www.icarecoalition.org/icare.asp** - The site where to get the “Sex and Cell Phones” pdf
 - **www.harrisinteractive.com** – A site used to find many facts and articles about teens
 - **http://en-us.nielsen.com/** - An international organization that tracks usage of all media
 - **www.pewinternet.org** – A research organization specifically for how the Internet is used
 - **www.marketingcharts.com** – A site used to find information that affect teens’ lives
 - **www.childtrendsdatabank.org** – A site used to identify trends in culture that affect kids
 - **www.toptenreviews.com** – A helpful site for research for “just about anything”

