Children and the Internet

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 For many generations, people look for different possibilities to educate their children and find ways to make children’s education more fun. Through the years many things have changed and education as evolved into opportunities for children to grow and excel in. The internet is the biggest networking system in the world and has proven to make many opportunities for children to learn, communicate, entertain, and improve their way of thinking. Billions of people use the internet in their daily routines, but how we use the internet is an important factor for all ages. A child’s ability to access the Internet has significantly grown as the Internet is frequently accessed by young people. Some children learn on the internet and others do not utilize the internet in a proper way. Children using the internet can be a break point to a new source of education but it may not be a secure source of information.

The internet is the most widely used source in the world. We use the internet for almost everything. From texting, calling, driving and now we can even use it to pay our bills. The internet is a remarkable creation. Nowadays our younger generation uses the internet more than ever. From our new inventions such as iPads, iPhone, Android tablets, Smart T.V’s and many more they can access the internet from just about everywhere. In the United States about 95% of school’s are now incorporating the internet for educational purposes. Even Obama himself quoted saying “I will connect 99% of America’s students to high-speed Wireless and broadband within five years”. Using this information I know that if we use the internet accordingly we can make our youth more educated at an early age.

Is the internet a safe place? The answer to this is no. There will always be some risk to be taken when using the internet especially for kids. It is reported that over 75% of internet crimes that happen to children are not reported to the police. But it is also reported that over 40% of parents do not supervise their children while using the internet. This is a very big problem as when using the internet as an educational tool, children can get easily distracted and turn towards various distractions .These can all be avoided with parental supervision. If children were to use the internet it should be used in moderation and it should definitely be supervised.

With the internet being so vast, there are many ways in which a child could easily pull something disturbing or inappropriate out of it. In fact, a child pulling up a gambling or pornography site unknowingly is relatively common. Without proper supervision or browsing security, this digital playground could become a nightmare for both parties – parents and kids. Watching inappropriate videos or browsing through horrific images can mentally scar a child who should not be toying with such things in the first place. It can cause temporary or permanent psychological damage in terms of nightmares and paranoia. It could affect their ability to learn and cause their educational environment to be toxic in their own eyes. Some children stay online for long periods of time and because of this, they are being less inclined to go out and socialize with real people. This affects their interaction, social, and communication skills. In light of all this, the internet has many ways to actually help a child. If proper supervision is in place, a child can grow and learn so much more online than they can in the real world. Sometimes, the safety and comfort of home learning can help young people more than an institutional learning environment. However, without the proper supervision, children are more exposed to awful things such as scams and false security offered by scamming websites.

Teaching children how to utilize the internet in the right order can benefit them in future references. We can show children how to open educational apps or programs and teach them how to use them. This will allow them to develop the knowledge at an early age. Children’s are most likely to go on the same website again to regain their knowledge on what they have done before. It is important to guide them in their search and assist them on what they should or should not be doing. It can make a great impact to the children and make adults more aware of what their children are doing.

The studies that I found were very surprising. Using a survey and doing my field research I found out that not many parents know about the benefits of using the internet to help with their children’s education. But with these studies I also found out that every one of their children had some access to the internet. Whether it is by phone, tablets, laptop or their game consoles. While interviewing one of the parents she said that “my child is on the internet all day but never for anything educational.” Knowing this I can say that if the time her daughter is using on the internet was for educational purposes it would be very beneficial to her and make her learn as she is using the internet.

I also proceeded to help this family by installing a few educational apps on their android device. The first app I installed was “Math learning games for kids” as kids like to play games I thought it would be a very useful app. This app is pretty much a game where you have to solve basic math problems in order to advance to the next level. It’s a basic concept but effective nonetheless. Another app I installed was “Read me Stories: Learn to Read”. This app was an app where it has over 140+ free stories that can be read or listen too. After showing her how to use it and how to get it to work she immediately started playing the game. To my surprise after 2 weekdays her mother called me and said she’s been playing this game nonstop since I showed it to her. She also said that it is her favorite game to play when she can use her device. It shows that children are more attracted to visual learning than educational books. Although it does consume time it is time not wasted as she is learning while playing video games.

Interview

Parent name: Shabir Shakir (Uncle)

Business/Company: Bali Fashion (Middle road, Gualo Rai)

Children/Children’s: Abbas Shakir (11 years old), Tahir Shakir (5 years old)

**Question 1**: **How often are your children on the internet?**

* *“My children are on the internet almost all day. When they get back from school their computer and PlayStation is the first thing they run too.”*

**Question 2: What types of content do your children consume while using their devices?**

* *“Mostly video games. My youngest one likes to watch YouTube and Netflix while my oldest loves to play NBA 2k14 on his PlayStation.”*

**Question 3: How often do you supervise your children when they are on the internet?**

* **“***Not at all, I usually let them do what they want but they are not allowed to use the internet without doing their homework first. They also have**a strict curfew of 9’o clock. When it strikes 9 no video games and no computer!”*

**Question 4: Do you think children using the internet will help them excel in their learning skills?**

* *“Going outside for me is a big part of being a kid. When I was younger I had a computer and I had a cell phone but I still wanted to go out and play. It’s surprising to see how much technology advanced since I was young. I think children nowadays have potential to learn while using this new technology but I’m not very good at using this so I can’t really help them. I think with this new technology they have the potential to learn new information and be smarter earlier than when I was their age.”*

 Interview

Parent Name: Ekaterina Zuikova (Single Mom)

Business/Company: Former owner of Paradise Hotel (Across CHC)

Children/Children’s: Anastasia Zuikova (6 years old)

 **Question 1**: **How often are your children on the internet?**

* *“My Daughter lives on her phone…”*

 **Question 2: What types of content do your children consume while using their devices?**

* **“***She likes to watch Russian dance videos, cooking videos, I like this because she helps me cook so I have a little helper!”*

 **Question 3: How often do you supervise your children when they are on the internet?**

* *“I don’t like to watch her because I am usually busy with work. I have a lot of papers to attend too but from what I know she doesn’t do anything bad on the internet.”*

 **Question 4: Do you think children using the internet will help them excel in their learning skills?**

* **“***Yes I think the internet will help them excel with their education. I have a lot of ebook (Online Book) application on her phone that she loves to read. This is her primary way of learning English. Without it it would be very troublesome for her to understand English. For myself I use a online study application called Rosetta Stone to help me understand and write English better.”*

Children are exposed to so many positive and negative things online and most of the times, it is only because they are unaware of what they are pressing or unknowingly clicking on a misleading ad. In light of the evidence mentioned as well as the supported work citations, everyone should choose to use the internet diligently and properly so as not to be forced into false security. Proper monitoring and supervising are the best ways to practice internet safety and because young people use the internet often, the dangers for them are great and could jeopardize them in terms of psychological and educational. This topic is important because the digital world grows every single day and children are getting less inclined to socialize with people outside of the screen. In light of the research obtained, there is room for more research to cover a more range of attributes. There are many positive aspects for young people online but not paying attention to the negative would be wrong and unethical. In fact, if children and young people practice internet safety with adult supervision, the internet would present great benefits for everyone.