The Effect of Technology on the Development of Children

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October 8, 2010

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Introduction: Technology in the Present Time

Nowadays, it is hard to find someone who has not been affected by the technology revolution. Technology plays an important role in our everyday lives, many times without us even realizing. While technology such as computers and the Internet has affected industries such as the medical field and business world, it has also drastically affected the world that children are raised. The effect of technology on children has been immense, from video games, to the Internet, all the way to the classroom; technology plays an important role in the development of children in our society.

The Video Game Effect

To most children today, video games are just another toy, another way to have fun between school and other various duties. It wasn’t always like this though; in the not too distant past, on rainy weekends children played board games, watched the Saturday cartoons, and probably nagged their parents about being bored. This generation of children was not concerned about becoming tech-savvy, learning all the cheat codes in their favorite video game, or battling it out with their friends over an online video game. For these children, if they learned their basic subjects in school such as English, math, science, and history, they were more or less a good contender for a job when they graduated from school. The same cannot be said for the new generation of children. In fact, in a recent book by David Williamson Shaffer, he wrote: “Young
people today need to be able to use their learning muscles to innovate and create, and ultimately to adapt and transform themselves several times over in one lifetime. They need to be tech-savvy if they are going to have any hope of a secure future.” (Shaffer, 2006, forward) While some argue video games are degrading and harm children, David Shaffer argues differently: “many young children today are learning more about art, design, and technology from their video games and other digital technologies than they are from our technologically impoverished schools.” (Shaffer, 2006, forward)

The Internet and Children

The Internet has revolutionized the classroom equally as much as computers, now teachers and students alike have instant access to virtually any information. Since the arrival of the Internet in the modern classroom, students are now able to be exposed to information from all over the world. This migration from the standard textbook and lecture style of learning has opened the students to new information that no one textbook or teacher could have ever taught them. This new style of learning opens the students up to new ways of interpreting information, and thus new ways of learning.

While the Internet can be a source of amazing information, it can also be equally as dangerous for teens and other young children. Recent findings from the PEW Internet & American Life Project suggest that 55% of all online teens have a social networking profile, and of these teens 32% of them have been contacted by strangers online, and 21% have actively interacted with them. Even more frightening information from the study states that most teen profile creators suspect that a motivated person could eventually identify them and find where they live. They also think strangers are more likely to contact them online than offline.
Another fear of many parents is the exposure of indecent material to their children. Websites are constantly becoming stealthier with how they hide their information from the cursory eye. The United States Department of Justice has recently conducted a Youth Internet Safety Survey, and the statistics are astounding. One in four children reported having unwanted exposure in the past year to pictures of naked people or people having sex, and one in five received a sexual approach or solicitation over the Internet in the past year. This early exposure to explicit material could even affect the social life of the child who accessed it. A study conducted by The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation found that seventy percent of people ages fifteen to seventeen have stumbled across pornography online, twenty three percent “very” or “somewhat” often. Of the people exposed to pornography, fifty five percent said they were “not too” or “not at all” upset by it, while forty five were “very” or “somewhat” upset. This mass exposure to explicit material online could ultimately lead to young people having sexual intercourse before they are ready.

Television Violence

According to the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, American children spend an average of three to five hours watching television per a day. While there are many programs on TV that are appropriate for small children, there are many more programs that are inappropriate and violent. Many studies have tested the effect of violent TV shows on the development of children and have come to the conclusion that violence on TV can lead to a variety of health problems. Many studies have also concluded that extensive viewing of violent shows can lead to a child becoming desensitized to violence, and because of this some children resort to violence to solve their problems. Other children think it is “cool” to pretend kill others.
and shoot guns; this negative perspective on weapons could ultimately affect the child when they are older. Other programs could depict people performing risky behavior such as smoking and drinking. Similarly to violence, these shows that regularly present this negative behavior to its viewers could become desensitized to this kind of behavior and in turn, be more likely to participate in these kinds of behaviors when they are older.

Conclusion

Technology has also had a profound effect in the classroom. The age of the chalk board and the overhead projector has passed, and in their place, new technology such as digital projectors and touch screen boards. As we move forward and technology is constantly evolving, we should look back on all we have accomplished: the Internet, personal computing, online classrooms, social networking, screen reading technology to aid the blind, and countless others. And because the world of technology is constantly changing, we should be careful not to abuse the resources that are so open and available to us today, so that the dignity of our youth is retained.
References


Accessed on 9/24/2010

This reference contains information relative to my topic because it includes statistics and information about the habits of children while watching television.


Accessed on 9/25/2010

This web page is appropriate for my research because it includes statistics and other information about children on the Internet.


Accessed on 9/27/2010

The information contained in this article is suitable for my research paper because it contains statistics and information about the nature of children online.
Pew Internet & American Life Project website:
Accessed on 9/21/2010
This source contains statistics and other information about how teens manage their personal information online.

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation website:
Accessed on 9/20/2010
This resource contains information relative to my research paper because it contains information about how young children use the Internet.

Accessed on 9/19/2010

This online book contains information relative to my research paper because it contains information about past and current generations of children and how they used video games.


Accessed on 9/25/2010

This article contains information relative to my research paper in the form of statistics and other information about the habits children online.