

Parenting in the Internet Age

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Parents have the responsibility to prevent adolescents from internet addiction disorder despite the immense benefits, its excessive use has potential for leading to pathological/ problematic negative consequences with addiction. Children are “digital natives” while parents are usually not. Children are growing up online. Digital media is the air they breathe. For many parents, the Internet is a thing of utility. For their kids, the Internet is a place for community. The Internet provides a cloak of secrecy for kids to see or seek out all kinds of inappropriate material (Chou et al, 2005). We live in an age where cyber-stalking, online predators and identity theft have become legitimate threats. Law enforcement officers at all levels, Internet crime experts, child psychologists, and other authority figures are increasingly urging parents to monitor the online activities of their children as well as communicate to them the importance of safeguarding their online presence (Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

Experiences in the Internet cyberspace have expanded in daily life, especially among adolescents and young adults. The usage, speed, interactivity, and access to internet over the past decade have a tremendous increase. An ASSOCHAM survey suggested that 73 percent kids between the ages of 8 - 13 years use social media in India. The India Teens and Technology 2014 report by Internet security firm McAfee showed that 52 percent of respondents accessed social media accounts at school, even though most schools ban the use of mobile phones (Maqsood, 2015).

Every parent feels that kids need to learn computer technology. And the fact is that children do need to learn using computers and be comfortable with the ever changing and emerging forms that the technology develops. In their world, educational and career opportunities will be strongly linked to the ability to navigate through layers of technology. But if you, as a parent, don't even know how to turn on a computer or have never received or sent an e-mail message, you are in the dark about the workings of the Internet and how your child is being introduced to and interacting with it. You might feel that he / she is doing

something educational in internet rather than wasting time in front of the television. So you don't get involved, don't ask many questions and don't monitor on-line time and activities. You shrug your shoulders and say to yourself: “My kid knows more about this stuff than I do.”

“A young girl with learning disability had disclosed to a stranger online that her parents were on vacation. Three days later, four men robbed the house. Safety and health are two very important things which might be exposed to abuse on social media,” said by a child psychiatrist (Social Media Usage, 2014).

I know one teenager who tells me that he knows, when and all, his father monitors him with this monitoring software. That shows if the kid is very tech-literate, he will figure out works around. There are ways for kids to get around monitoring, or they may go to a friend's house where rules are more relaxed. So we cannot totally rely on these monitoring apps. It's really better to communicate with them and help them develop their own critical thinking, because what we can do with technology is very limited. There is no technology that can really help us parent, and there is no law that is really going to help us protect our kids. Our kids have to protect themselves first and foremost, and we can help them. We can really be their best backup, but they're the ones who are protecting themselves. Counselors and child psychologist warn that tools should not replace the human touch. “Parents are so busy tracking and checking electronic devices that there is no time left for conversations. These devices, however advanced, keep the kids indoors and take away the joys of running in the park and playing in the colony compound, which are an important part of the child's physical and social development (Maqsood, 2015)

Parents can play an important role in managing the adolescence leisure activities to avoid the Internet addiction. Parents can alter maladaptive behaviours of adolescents; parents can play a central role in family management (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Chou et al, 2005) Today's parents face two common obstacles to teaching their children about Internet safety: (1) they don't feel like they know enough about the subject, and (2) they're not sure

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how to best communicate their concerns to their children, so they remain silent.

Parents know that if stranger calls their house on the phone, your kid shouldn't talk to them on the phone for two hours. This common sense could be made as cyber sense. Things we already know — don't talk to strangers; don't tell secrets to strangers; don't take candy from strangers - all of these things apply exactly online. They don't need a class on this stuff. They just need to stop panicking, talk to their kids, and be in charge. In today's day a child knows more about the digital world than the parents. They are exposed to new ways online through friends or other acquaintances. Therefore, it is necessary that you are as updated as your child is.

Parenting Styles

Diana Baumrind broadly created four parenting styles:

1. Authoritative Parents so called 'assertive democratic' or 'balanced': who are both demanding and responsive. They provide rules and guidance without being overbearing.
2. Authoritarian Parents: who are demanding but less or not responsive. They tell their children exactly what to do.
3. Permissive or Non-directive Parents, so called indulgent. Responsive but less or not demanding. They allow their children to do whatever they wish.
4. Rejecting- negligent Parents: who are neither demanding nor responsive. They disregard the children, and focusing on other interests (Maccoby & Martin, 1983)

With authoritative and permissive parenting on opposite sides of the spectrum, most conventional and modern models of parenting fall somewhere in between (Holt et al, 2009). The parenting style is one of the factors in childhood and adolescence that can have a great deal with the life stylish habitual behaviours in the life spans. Indeed, those parents low in kindness while being highly controlling (authoritarian), provided little supportive and appropriate structure. This result is consistent with the findings of Maccoby & Martin, and also supports the self-determination theory, which states that in autonomy-supportive families, children are more self-determined and motivated than those in controlling families (Holt et al, 2009).

Many studies conducted in the USA and other countries not only supported this idea that the authoritative parenting style is always associated with

optimum youth outcomes, but also compared to that, a neglectful parenting style, corresponded with children's poorest performance (whereas authoritarian and indulgent parenting occupied an intermediate position), school integration, psychological well-being, adaptive achievement strategies, self-enhancing attributions drug use, and accuracy in perceiving parental values. Research suggests that certain parenting styles are linked with the propensity for substance abuse among adolescents. For example, alcohol abuse was higher among adolescents who perceived low parental control, and the children of authoritative parents were less likely to use illicit substances than those of neglectful parents. Another found that adolescents who rated their parents more highly on these dimensions had lower tobacco, alcohol and 'other drug' consumption (Holt et al, 2009).

Dangers associated with Internet use

These dangers are so rampant and perilous that the television industry has taken notice numerous local, national, and cable networks have aired news - talk shows, or documentaries about children and the Internet. These dangers are exacerbated when children have unrestricted and unsupervised access to the internet, when there are no restrictions or boundaries to what they may or may not do online, and when parents rely solely on the computer as the after-school babysitter.

These are some of the dangers: Cyber-Paedophiles; Access to Pornography; Inappropriate Content - violent material, hate sites, torture, and other things, such as how to make a bomb; Cyber bullying; Online gambling; Violent games; and Internet addiction.

Like addiction to drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or caffeine, internet addiction is marked by symptoms of increasing tolerance, withdrawal, mood changes, and interruption of social relationships. Research on problematic internet use shows that overuse of the internet and problematic / pathological internet use or the internet addiction have a significant relationship with such factors as loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, the symptoms of antisocial tendencies and external control, psychological symptoms, shyness, social disinhibition, low social support and pleasure with the internet. As per a study conducted in Turkey there were significant differences between the students' Internet addiction scores and the presence of physical behaviour problems (going to bed late, skipping meals, eating meals in front of the computer) and psychosocial behaviour problems (suffering from conditions such as restlessness, anger, heart

palpitations, or tremors when they could not connect to the Internet, decreased relationships with family and friends, feelings of anger, arguing with parents, and finding life boring and empty without an Internet connection (Alvarez et al, 2003).

Self Help Tips for Parents

- The best defence as a parent is to have frequent and open conversations with kids about the challenges of being online.
- Become computer literate and be actively involved in your children's online experiences.
- Place computers in high-traffic areas, not a child's room.
- Use screening software.
- Read unfamiliar e-mails. Monitor telephone and modem changes. Check out unfamiliar phone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- Show you care: spend some time with the child. Reassure him that you are concerned about him.
- Provide enough attention to the child. Spent time with the child for conversation.
- Don't allow children to spend long periods of time on the computer, especially at night.
- Set reasonable rules: Allow perhaps an hour per night after homework, with a few extra weekend hours.
- Help children understand that online users may not be who they claim to be or who they seem to be. Get to know your children's Internet friends.
- Tell children to report anything they come across online that seems strange or makes them uncomfortable especially if they are ever asked personal questions or invited to personal meetings.
- Tell children to report to you suggestive, obscene or threatening e-mail or bulletin board messages. Forward copies to your ISP (Internet Service Provider) and insist they help deal with the problem.
- Be concerned if children mention adults you don't know, become sensitive, or appear to have inappropriate sexual knowledge.
- Post the Internet Safety Rules for Kids by your computer.

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