

File: NavScreensParent39Transcript2018

Interviewee: Father of two girls ages 7 and 11

Interviewer: ... And you have two girls; you said seven and eleven.

INTERVIEWEE: Seven, and eleven.

Interviewer: Let's see. I already asked how many kids you had, and their ages. We'd like to chat with you about electronic devices, including TVs, smartphones, laptops, iPads, e-Readers, computers, and gaming consoles, anything with a screen.

Interviewer: Can you tell me about the devices that you guys own, and how you use them?

INTERVIEWEE: It's probably better if I tell you what we don't own.

Interviewer: That's funny.

INTERVIEWEE: They both have iPads. They both have iPhones.

Interviewer: Wow.

INTERVIEWEE: And they have an Xbox.

Interviewer: Do they use the Xbox?

INTERVIEWEE: They do use the Xbox. The older one uses it more than the younger one.

Interviewer: Do you know what kind of game she plays?

INTERVIEWEE: She plays Fortnite, because that's what everybody's playing now.

Interviewer: That's what my kids said, yeah.

INTERVIEWEE: And there is Cuphead.

Interviewer: Cuphead?

INTERVIEWEE: Some challenge game. And this one that has a puzzle on it, but I forget the name of it.

Interviewer: The Cuphead, is it?

INTERVIEWEE: Cuphead? No, no. Cuphead is just a regular board, you have to go through each level, and the girls want to tackle challenge.

Interviewer:

Oh, I was imagining it was telling you different tricks you do, like with cups on your head.

INTERVIEWEE: Oh, no, no, no.

Interviewer: My version was much more exciting.

INTERVIEWEE: Exactly. The characters are actually teacups.

Interviewer: Oh, that's funny. Let's see. Do you know if they use devices anywhere else other than home, like at school, a friend's house?

INTERVIEWEE: They do. In their school, they have iPads that they use for part of the curriculum.

Interviewer: Do they get to take those home? Or stay in school?

INTERVIEWEE: Very rarely do they take them home, but they're for use in school, as part of the curriculum. Interviewer:

Wow. Do you know if the girls like it?

INTERVIEWEE: They do. It was somewhat useful for my oldest one. I've seen when they were learning Spanish.

Interviewer: Really?

INTERVIEWEE: And along with the Spanish teacher, it helped her pick up the language a little bit faster, using the iPad.

Interviewer:

That's wonderful. Let's see. Looking at these different devices, iPhones, iPads, Xbox, who is the primary user, and do they use them with you, or individually, or with each other?

INTERVIEWEE:

They will use them with each other when they are watching some cartoon or playing games.

Interviewer:

Oh, they play games together? That's wonderful.

INTERVIEWEE: They play games. And I guess the primary user would be at this point, the younger one uses it more than the older one.

Interviewer: How nice it is how they're reading together now.

INTERVIEWEE: Don't believe it. They go crazy on each other.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

INTERVIEWEE: No. They're fine.

Interviewer: Let's see. Think about your child's day, either one or both, yesterday, or a recent day you did together. Can you walk me through the day from the time they woke up, till bedtime, the kinds of devices, the screens they used?

INTERVIEWEE: Well, since we just started Summer Break, I can probably give you a prime example. But they'll get up, and typically wash up, have breakfast, do some minimal cleaning.

Interviewer:

Wow.

INTERVIEWEE:

But they will grab their devices pretty early in the day. And the youngest one is into crafts, so she will grab her device and look for projects to do on YouTube, search crafts.

Interviewer: Oh, now nice.

INTERVIEWEE: And then the oldest one will go around looking at whatever for her age, crazy videos, whatever. And then she'll typically play her Xbox for a while.

And then I have them do some reading, a little bit before lunch.

And then we'll have lunch, and probably go out for an activity of some kind, go swimming, or something to that effect.

In the evenings, normally during the school year, they'll come home and do their homework, and they'll have a little bit of time before dinner. And they're just hanging around, because they've done all the school type of stuff during the day, but they'll watch a few minutes of TV, have their dinner.

We'll have some family time after that. And then usually she'll end up, during the summers, especially, go in to play her video game for a while, and the other one will just go watch TV and hang out.

Interviewer: That's so nice. Do you know what kind of crafts she looks for?

INTERVIEWEE: Everything.

Interviewer: How does she find the videos?

DEA: She's been using them for a long time. She learned from her sister how to navigate YouTube. We have the restrictions on YouTube, so I'm pretty confident she won't find something that's not age appropriate.

But YouTube is pretty good at suggestions, obviously. It's Google. They do crazy things with the algorithms, but they know how to make them a suggested video, and there's particular users that she has, that come up on crafts every day, sometimes, to make a video for it. And then she'll want to experiment in the house.

Interviewer: So she goes out, and then does the crafts?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah. She'll have me go to the art store and go and get the parts. The younger one is definitely more, it's natural, she's more artistic in that regard.

INTERVIEWEE: The other one's more of a mechanical mind; she's socially active. She'll probably go save the whales or something.

Interviewer: Somebody needs to.

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, you said they both have iPhones?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you remember how old they were when they got them?

INTERVIEWEE: This was a battle in our house, but she just got one recently. She has a phone, but it's very limited. The older one has text messaging, but she doesn't really use it, and every text that she sends, we have a copy of.

Interviewer: Oh, how interesting.

INTERVIEWEE: So, we're aware of what's coming in and out on their devices. There is an app called "House Party," that you may hear some other parents talking about.

Interviewer: I haven't heard that.

INTERVIEWEE: This is how the kids are talking to each other on these devices.

Interviewer: Really? It's a chat app?

INTERVIEWEE: It's a chat app.

Interviewer: I haven't heard of that one. It's for kids only, or does she talk-

INTERVIEWEE: It's mostly kids use it, but it's also not like some strange adult will come in. It's geared toward kids, so there's a lot of monitoring. Any communication that comes in on House Party, say, if Janet comes on House Party, we get a notification on our phone that "Janet has come on to House Party." So we know most of the time who she's talking to.

Interviewer: Do you know how she found out about this?

INTERVIEWEE: From other kids in school.

Interviewer: And any idea why they use that instead of the standard text?

INTERVIEWEE: Well, there are simultaneous chats that can go on. So, instead of your one-to-one chat, they'll be a group.

Interviewer: Oh, how interesting.

INTERVIEWEE: They'll have the room. And there's a video element to it, so they can see each other. But it's so strange when they get on, and they actually play video games and talk to each other.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

INTERVIEWEE: On the app.

Interviewer: Oh, at the same time?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

Interviewer: So, are they talking on the phone, too?

INTERVIEWEE: No, it's an on-screen app, and then all different windows come up.

Interviewer: Oh, they can hear each other.

INTERVIEWEE: So, the phone will be here, she's playing a game, talking to them.

Interviewer: That's good.

INTERVIEWEE: It's another world. I'm just trying to adjust.... I'm becoming a dinosaur myself. So I'm trying not to get out of touch.

Interviewer: I can never keep up with the games, and it just changes so fast. I'm trying, I'm trying. Interesting.

Interviewer: So, you said that you had parental controls on YouTube, and on their chat, too?

INTERVIEWEE: On their chat.

Interviewer: Do you know how you found out about those, or how you decided to use them?

INTERVIEWEE: I've been in the technology field for a little bit. And then, just searching the web before we go out and do those things. Just trying to halt as much as we can, any contact that shouldn't be taking place. And to always have a system of monitoring who they are actually communicating with.

Interviewer: That's a good idea, yeah. Now I'm kind of feeling bad that I never did that with my kids.

INTERVIEWEE: We didn't know then, and now it's gotten a little bit more ... Because there's so many social media elements, that there are holes that you just have to be mindful of, that you don't think of. Like when you think is someone harmless, that kids are just doing, but someone who has some nefarious moves can use those same ways to try to do it.

INTERVIEWEE: Just like there's been more of a focus for the app developers, and they are developing those apps for kids, to have those monitoring elements built into the application itself. It looks like they've gotten the hint, because nobody wants to say, "Hey, I'm forcing something to happen to my kid by using this app." You know what I mean?

Interviewer: Oh, yeah, yeah. [crosstalk 00:10:21].

INTERVIEWEE: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: How do you establish routines related to your kids' use of devices? Or do you?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah. I try my best. But they understand, usually if they're on for 45 minutes to an hour, all right, take a break. But they're smart kids. They'll go from Xbox to the other device. So I have to say, "All right, take a break from all electronics."

INTERVIEWEE: And we have a pretty good selection of books for them to read.

Interviewer: I saw they were really enjoying that one now.

INTERVIEWEE: They've always been into books, thankfully, since the beginning, so it's not necessarily a struggle. But then to go on and pick up a book, and we'd go to Barnes & Noble often, and go buy books that we make sure are in their interest.

And I do read a lot, so I think they picked it up a lot from me.

Interviewer: They must have. They must have, because many parents really do struggle with that.

So, we just find really where their interests seem to lie at the time. Okay, why don't we get a book where you'll get to learn more about it?

Interviewer: That's wonderful. Let's see. If the kids need help fixing something, or help using something, who in the family do they turn to?

INTERVIEWEE:

That's me. For the most part, it's me.

Interviewer: Because you have the background?

INTERVIEWEE: Yeah, I have the background. And just, Mom, that's not her world. So I'm the strict one in this. Mom's a little bit more lenient. But she understands. As far as their safety's concerned, she's on top of it as well.

Interviewer: Great. You said you looked on the web for some information so that you learned about screen devices. Are there any other sources, or anything you can point us to for parents? A recommendation? Anything that you use?

INTERVIEWEE: You know what would be smart, I need to develop this myself, and it may exist. I don't want to say that it doesn't, but there needs to be some type of portal where parents in particular can go to, as a checklist. And if they did it in conjunction with libraries, and all these places, "Okay, make sure you go to checklist.com or whatever, and if your child has this device, make sure this, this, this and this, is something you may want to look out for."

INTERVIEWEE: That way, when the marketing comes into it, now when the child gets a device, the parent has something to have as their one-sheet, and decide: "Okay, you're going to get this device."

INTERVIEWEE: I know Apple's trying to do it where in their new software update, they're trying to send notifications when adults have been on these devices for what they perceive is too long from whatever studies that they do.

INTERVIEWEE: But if there was something that was marketed to that way as well, so when I came in here and signed these kids up for this library card, I can get a one-sheet that says, "Well, if your children have technical devices, check: Have you made sure the password is on? Have you made sure that they take a break after 15 minutes?" Blah blah blah blah blah. Because parents don't know what to do.

INTERVIEWEE: Adults are struggling with these things, but there's an assumption that an adult should know. But studies have proven right and left that adults don't know what to do with these things. So if they don't know, how is the child informed?

We're at that time period now where there may be enough data to really see the effects of these things. Because it's roughly been 20 years, give or take, that these things have really been around and we can look at: is it calling attention to this deficit? Is it not calling attention to this deficit? Are they processing information effectively, or is it just coming in and going out? Those are studies I'd be curious to see.

INTERVIEWEE: When there's content that they're making now, you have to make it because these people have short attention spans. And is it due to the fact that everything happens so instantaneously?

INTERVIEWEE: Just look at our world. We have a world where our President ... the President, has 143 characters to express himself. You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

INTERVIEWEE: On major issues. And at one time you sat down, and your parents sat down, and read the New York Times, and read this 1500-word piece on it. And now it's been reduced to 143 characters.

INTERVIEWEE: Don't make the assumption that parents even know. Parents need to be educated. So yes, the child needs to be educated, but if the parents aren't informed, then what is the child going to be educated about? It's just going to be like, "Oh, no, no, you can't do this." And the parents don't really know why.

Those studies smack them in the face when they see that it could cause this, or it's not the most beneficial way to do it, and they have some way of saying, well, there's a study done that shows that grade slippage, ADD, whatever the heck it is, they can understand it.

INTERVIEWEE: Because I'm sure there are going to be studies on adults and how we've dealt with these things in the past 20 years, and how our social relationships have suffered because we communicate so much on these devices. So the interpersonal contacts ... I know somebody's got to be doing a study on this. We don't relate to each other the same way anymore. We have shorter patience with one another.

INTERVIEWEE: Are we really processing or cherishing our social interactions with each other? Because we want everything in seconds: "All right, give me the [inaudible 00:17:12]." One time we sat on the back porch with wine, or whatever, and you went into those long stories about things. Now it's like, "Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative). Give me the main points."

Interviewer: I keep thinking about what you said about the President, just what is it, 143 characters?

INTERVIEWEE: 143 characters.

Interviewer: Versus Lincoln, or the speaker who spoke when Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address. It was a two-hour speech.

INTERVIEWEE: Right. And you sat there, and you tried as much to process a two-hour speech.... Or you watched Walter Cronkite at one point, and it goes to the hour news program. Then it goes to Tom Brokaw on this side....

And now, I can go online right now, and every half an hour, the top headlines change. And I can view the headlines.

Interviewer: Yeah.

INTERVIEWEE: This is one of those things I'm just trying to understand myself. We have access to everything. But are there no filters in place so we can process. Just because you have access to everything, is it a good thing? Because if you don't know how to focus in on this particular area to process it and learn from it, just because you have access to everything, you could take a page from here, and a page from here, and a page over there. Are you really getting anything from it?

INTERVIEWEE: And that's what the Internet is. The whole world has opened up, but if you don't have anyone to filter out the noise sometime, what's left is ...

Interviewer: Yeah, I feel like that. This is great, and really helpful. Is there anything else that you'd like to tell us about this topic?

INTERVIEWEE: Like I said, I guess one thing I'd definitely like you to take away, see if other people express this as well, is, parents need education in this area. And it needs to be at points like libraries, especially. Because libraries are now closing, and facing competition from electronic devices. I just moved from New York, and I know it well.

Interviewer: New York City, or New York State?

INTERVIEWEE: New York State. And the hours are being cut. And some of their reasons is, "Well, you can get a lot of this information with these devices."

INTERVIEWEE: The program like this, making actual reading fun again, picking up a book, as opposed to ... Turning the pages like this, sitting down, having reading groups.

INTERVIEWEE: When I was a little younger, we'd have our little reading groups. We read the book, and then we'd come back in to discuss it, that whole bit. Those things need to somehow be made cool again, so kids have the same book to read and discuss the books, to see if the children are processing, and becoming critical thinkers when they're reading this material.