

**File: NavScreensProfessional6Transcript2018**

**Interviewee: children's librarian**

Interviewer: So, thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I'd like to chat with you about advice you may provide to families about using various electronic devices, such as TV, smartphones, laptops, iPads, e-readers, desk top computers, even game consoles. Basically, anything that has a screen, okay? So, first tell me, what devices you have in the library and what devices you see parents and kids bring into the library.

Interviewee: We have the Playaway devices in the library, they're kind of orange cases that you've probably seen around. One of them is a tablet. It's a preloaded Android tablet that have different learning apps programmed into them. The other one we have in the library is called a Playaway View, and it is just preloaded with either early-learning television shows, or they're leveled for pre-schoolers all the way up to teens, and it's not interactive in any way. They just have videos pre-loaded on to those Playaway View devices. As far as what we have kids bringing in, they are mostly bringing in their own iPads or phones or other tablets, they're bringing in. I think that the tablets are a pretty big hit, the ones that we have in the library that are pre-loaded, and I do recommend those quite a bit, because they're interactive. It's a much more active experience, and they're tend to be loaded with learning apps that require interaction. Whereas the view devices, are just you're just staring at a screen for however long.

Interviewer: Okay, and do those circulate as well?

Interviewee: They do, yeah. Both of them circulate quite a bit. The only thing that hinders them is that they are not terrible rugged, so they come back damaged quite a bit, unfortunately. But we do have a pretty steady supply that come in, and we have a contract with a vendor where they'll replace them if it fits within a year, at a very discounted price. So, yeah they certainly get used and the circulation numbers bear that out.

Interviewer: That's excellent. Okay, how does your library system decide what to purchase in terms of hardware and software or what resources and applications, etcetera? Or how do you decide what resources or applications to recommend to parents and kids?

Interviewee: As far as ... well, for the purchasing, since we're a pretty large system, we have that centralized. So, as a librarian I don't have an awful lot of in ... I shouldn't say I don't have. I actually do have input on what we would purchase, but our department is big enough and smart enough to make those choices, where it kind of takes the burden off of us as librarians, as far as deciding what to purchase with hardware and software. What was the second part of the ... ?

Interviewer: What kind of resources or applications? How does your library system decide how to purchase certain applications or recourse?

Interviewee: So, it's largely based on if it's getting used or not. For instance, we just dropped a resource, which I personally was attached to called Freegal, in which you could download five songs for free without any restrictions each month. But it didn't get used

very broadly, and we replaced it with a service called Hoopla, which is really popular in libraries, now. Which is based on you get six checkouts per month, which include movies and music and audio books and e-books. So, our library system is really focused on whether it's getting used or not, to decide what resources to keep. And I might have strayed off there a little bit, and the second part there was something parents?

Interviewer: How do you or your library system centrally, how do you decide about recommendations to make to parents and kids?

Interviewee: How do we recommend to them or let them make recommendations? Well, I can talk about my professional experience: I am a big proponent, professionally, of having kids share screen time with parents. And so, when I recommend any screen resources or even when I'm recommending books, I always try to stress the importance of making it a shared experience with kids. And one of the resources that I really like that I recommend almost daily, is called Speakaboos. Have you heard of that?

Interviewer: I have.

Interviewee: Okay, yeah. So, I'm a big fan of this, because it's a really good opportunity for parents and kids to share that literacy experience together. Words come on the screen, it makes it easy to point out words and spell words together. You can sing together with your kids, you read stories, you can let them interact with the stories. So, for me personally, when I make a recommendation, it's always with the idea of how can I get parents and kids together on the same couch, or in the same chair, in the same room, sharing that screen time with each other, to make the most of it.

Interviewer: Okay. Does the system as a whole make decisions about what you can recommend to parents and kids, or is that more of a one-on-one?

Interviewee: It's more ... it's personal. It's a case-by-case basis. We do not established policies or procedures or guidelines for when to make a recommendation or when not to. And as a librarian, that's really freeing, because you can ... you sort of get the opportunity to establish a relationship with the customer and tailor your recommendation to what they need.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewer: Back up. Okay, part two. Were you finished with that response?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. In what ways do you help parents and caregivers with decisions about their child's screen media practices?

Interviewee: Part of it is, of course, just the reference interview when you have a customer come in and ask for books. For instance, this happened just a couple days ago: someone came in and recommended books about sign language. They wanted

to teach their children sign language, and I was able to recommend what I think is one of the best ways to learn, is a TV show called Signing Time. We have the Signing Time DVDs, and I always recommend it actually for adults or for children. It's very interactive; again, gives parents and children an opportunity to sit down together and learn a new skill. I was able to send them home with that DVD as well as some books. There's that. I also have the opportunity to write on a regular basis for the library system blog. I recently did a post for the Speakaboos app and shared five different reasons to try it if you hadn't, and of course tied in my experiences as a parent and why I thought it was important that parents give that a try. Those are two ways that I can kind of get recommendations into parents' hands.

We do, of course in a library, displays. We typically don't highlight just screen media; we'll highlight books and screen media.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative), okay. Do you model screen media use for your parents in, say, your programming or anything along those lines?

Interviewee: We do. In our programming, we use an iPad and projector often in our science programs, and we do YouTube videos. As far as modeling healthy practices, we don't really [there 00:02:20] because we're just showing a video to try to tie into the topic. Unfortunately, I don't do the storytimes here, but storytimes would be a really excellent opportunity to model healthy screen habits and promote library resources at the same time.

Interviewer: Yes, most definitely. Storytimes tend to be with younger children though, not five to eleven.

Interviewee: That's true.

Interviewer: Do you intentionally address the topic or just discuss with parents and caregivers if asked?

Interviewee: Right now, it's just if asked. I haven't had a lot of opportunities to intentionally either model or discuss healthy screen practices outside of always trying to let my parents know how important it is to share that screen time.

Interviewer: So you haven't really integrated into a program or service that you currently offer or that you've offered in the past?

Interviewee: No, not with forethought and purpose.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. Do you disseminate information about this topic, and if so, how?

Interviewee: Well, in the way that I mentioned I guess before, and it's not a focused "here are some healthy ways to share screen time." It's almost in a commercial way,

trying to promote our library resources and including that information within the promotion rather than purposefully spelling out healthy screen time habits.

Interviewer: In what ways do you help children with decisions about their screen media practices?

Interviewee: So, I'm going to backtrack for just a moment because I think that one of the things I do from time to time that escaped me was recommend learning apps for parents. I think that this really is a byproduct of me being a parent myself, though. If I were not a parent, I don't think I would feel confident recommending apps to families. To piggyback off that idea, I occasionally will recommend learning apps to children, but it will only be if the parents are there close by, if they bring in their own devices. I really only recommend the library-approved apps, like I'll recommend our OverDrive reading app, or if a kid likes to listen to books I will recommend e-audiobooks through the OverDrive app. Who is this? Again, going to kind of be on the young end. I recommend the tablets that we have on the shelf and the play-aways all the time to kids because those are preloaded devices. There's not a lot that they can step into that parents wouldn't approve of. Those do get recommended quite a bit, those preloaded devices.

Interviewer: Do you model the screen media use for children?

Interviewee: No, not really.

Interviewer: So you made a comment I'd like you to expand a little bit. You said that you are comfortable recommending learning apps as a parent, but does that mean you are uncomfortable recommending them as a librarian?

Interviewee: I'm not uncomfortable recommending them at all. I think why I'm comfortable recommending them professionally is because I've had the experience of having my own kids sitting right there with me using the app so I know exactly what to expect, whereas I feel as if I didn't have children, I would feel significantly less confident in making those recommendations because I probably wouldn't have had training or used them myself. It's kind of a serendipitous thing that I happen to have through children, and that I sort of get to use them for professional experience with the apps that I do recommend.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you for that clarification. What devices are most frequently mentioned by parents, if at all?

Interviewee: iPad. I mean, for the ones that their children use?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: Oh yeah. iPad. Kind of everything is an iPad now.

Interviewer: All right. I'm just making a note of that in case we need to come back to it later.

Interviewee: Sure.

Interviewer: What activities do parents ask about in relation to an iPad, or do they?

Interviewee: Games. They're asking mostly about games. [There was one 00:07:34], I only had really one opportunity that comes to mind where parents were curious about the content of the game. They came to the library specifically to ask a librarian this question. "Is this game appropriate for my child?" I said, "Well, that's not exactly for me to say yes or no, but I can show you a way to find out what content is in that game, and then you can make that decision yourself." The resource I used in that situation was a resource called Common Sense Media and showed the parent how they can preview that game or see what content is within the game to decide themselves if it was appropriate or not.

Interviewer: Okay, excellent. So this answers my next question, or you might want to expand on this: what are some common questions parents ask you about the iPad and using it with their children? You might have already answered that.

Interviewee: Yeah, that's the most frequent thing it's related to, what the kid is consuming through the iPad. Yeah.

Interviewer: So your responses are generally pointing them to the website that you mentioned-

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Or some other site for evaluating games?

Interviewee: Yeah, absolutely. The one that I've come to kind of rely on in those situations is Common Sense Media because it's just an unbiased look at "here's what the content of the game is, you make the decision." It empowers the parent to make the decision themselves.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you think of any other resources you might have used?

Interviewee: Not particular to screen media use. That's the one I would use professionally, and it's the one I use personally too. I've had lots of experience, again, because I have three kids. I feel like I'm pretty fortunate because I get to kind of use them to preview my professional resources and I can share that at work.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). That is kind of a good way to learn more about these different applications. I do the same. Okay, so what do you think are the needs of parents in making decisions about their child's use of electronic devices? What do you think they struggle the most with?

Interviewee: Let me think about the question. Could you repeat it?

Interviewer: Of course.

Interviewee: Thank you.

Interviewer: What do you think are the needs of parents in making decisions about their child's use of electronic devices?

Interviewee: I think the greatest need is to have that, talking about the five to eleven age group, is to have that shared experience. I think that devices are often given as gifts and parents don't fully explore them or they say, "Hey, here's your new iPad" and it's kind of a one-off experience, and they say, "Okay, figure out how to use it." Professionally, I try to recommend as much shared screen time as possible because I think you can learn together when you are together, and maybe that's too much of a personal opinion rather than a professional opinion, but I think the greatest need is to share, for parents to recognize the importance of sharing some amount of screen time with their children.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: Now 100% of the time is not healthy either, or realistic probably in today's age, but 0% is not healthy either. That was a really convoluted way of saying I think it's important for parents to engage with their children with their screens, to be involved in what they are involved in.

Interviewer: I think you've answered that question previously as well, is they're looking for ideas on how to evaluate what their child is using or wants to use.

Interviewee: I think that is a much more succinct way of saying what I was trying to say. Yes, I think that is totally appropriate, that they want to know. I think parents more than anything, they want to know that their kid's screen time is meaningful, not that they're just wasting time. They maybe don't have the tools to do that, and hopefully libraries can help make more of a push to put those tools into parents' hands.

Interviewer: Do you think your population sees you as that kind of a resource that they can-

Interviewee: I don't.

Interviewer: You don't?

Interviewee: Unfortunately. I would love for them to, and I think that that's an important void that libraries can fill, but right now no, I don't. I don't think that they turn to libraries very often. I don't have very many experiences where I can dialogue one-on-one with parents about healthy screen time habits.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Do you have any idea why? Is it that they just don't come into the library with their children, or they just don't see librarians as a resource?

Interviewee: I think in this community, the library is still a place for books. Some of our programs and some of our outreach into schools have maybe countered that a little bit, but I think by and large, our community views the library as a place where you come to get books, not as a valuable resource for being a media mentor or screen time mentor.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. I think you've answered this one: are there any resources that you refer parents to? You mentioned Common Sense Media.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Any others that come to mind?

Interviewee: This is for evaluating screen media?

Interviewer: Yeah, or just for what's a good guidance for screen media.

Interviewee: That's the only one that comes to mind. I'm going to keep that ruminating as we go on-

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Any other resources I can think of.

Interviewer: All right. Are there resources that parents tell you they've consulted?

Interviewee: That's a good question. I cannot think of anything. Nothing comes to mind that parents have come and said that they've used to evaluate screen media. The kids that come in with iPads or come in with their own devices are typically using them to play social games, play Fortnite or play, what's it called? Minecraft.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: That kind of thing.

Interviewer: So multiplayer games?

Interviewee: Yeah, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: There's an acronym for it. I can't remember it. Multiplayer online collaborative something.

Interviewer: I have no idea. It used to be called [MOOS 00:15:19] and mods-

Interviewee: Yeah, that's right.

Interviewer: That was in the early days of just developing collaborative games online. Let's see, where were we? So you might not be able to answer this part then: do you have an impression of how parents feel about those resources, for example? Are they useful and relevant?

Interviewee: The ones that they've recommended?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative), that they've mentioned. You probably can't answer that one-

Interviewee: No, no. I'm not...

Interviewer: What would you like more information about in order to best advise parents?

Interviewee: That's a great question. I would love individualized training or even a university-level classed focused on screen media and healthy practices, and how to promote them within libraries, and how to actively and purposefully promote healthy screen media habits rather than simply just having that kind of be an organic conversation and it just kind of comes out from time to time. As I mentioned, I think libraries, they're positioned well to meet that need, to make recommendations and to view ourselves more in that screen media mentor-type role. I'd love more training.

Interviewer: Okay. One of those outcomes of this grant project is to develop training modules that we will then deliver within public library systems-

Interviewee: Oh, great.

Interviewer: So knowing your opinions and what your needs are is really important to this study, and also, part of it is we're reviewing what other libraries are doing, what other public libraries' websites provide, what types of information along those lines, so it's really important for us to know where you think the gaps are.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. Certainly those training modules, getting them in the hands of our youth and children services managers and letting them kind of push that out to our librarian staff would be tremendously helpful, having that tab on a website or a dedicated sidebar on a website, or healthy screen media habits. I think all that would come with the training modules I'm sure, but I'm glad to hear that.



Interviewer: That was a great recommendation though. I'm not sure we had thought about that, that far ahead yet. It's definitely something we will note as a recommendation. The other part of that question is, do you have programming currently for parents in any capacity? I'm just curious. Do you have a lot of parent programming?

Interviewee: Just any programming-

Interviewer: Sure.

Interviewee: Designed specifically for parents? Not related to screen media use?

Interviewer: Either.

Interviewee: Oh. I have several shared programs that are designed, again, to get children and parents interacting with each other. I do a monthly science program. I even put it on the flyer that parent participation is encouraged. In our community, a lot of times we'll get parents that just drop kids off at the library. I try to stress, "No, I want you to be here with your kids with the experiments and get your hands dirty, and do this together and make it a shared learning experience." We also have a craft night program that I mentioned, and [with child 00:19:01], so I encourage the same thing. I guess I encourage it at most of the programs that I do for grade schoolers. All my programs are aimed at ages five to twelve, so right in the age range that you're studying. I have a LEGO program that we do and a reading to dogs program. Parents aren't so much involved together there, but the other three, the LEGO club, the craft night, and the science program, all three I try to encourage parent collaboration.

Now I don't know if that answers your question or not because it's not specifically geared toward parents; it's more geared toward family units.

Interviewer: That's fine, though. That's still programming that involves parents in some way.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's really good to hear. Okay, let's see. You've somewhat answered this indirectly, but did you receive training about anything related to families and electronic devices?

Interviewee: I didn't receive training; I guess I sought out training in the form of the book that I had mentioned, "Becoming a Media Mentor," but I did not. Think back...I'm sure that it was covered in library school, like I'm sure that we talked about it at some point, but I don't know that I can recall a specific class or specific time in which healthy screen media habits were covered. As far as work, the answer is no. We haven't talked about it in the five years I've been here.

Interviewer: Okay, all right. Well this pretty much concludes my questions, but is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your role or potential role as a media mentor, or advisor to parents about children and electronic devices?

Interviewee: I guess I kind of mentioned this earlier, but I think public libraries are in a really good spot to do more than they're doing to empower parents to make good decision and as a byproduct, help their children make good screen media decisions. It's a topic that's exciting to me because I think it's really important. Again, that's coming from a parent's perspective. I think it's really important to know what your kids are doing on screens and let them know what you're doing too to share that screen time and view it as a learning experience rather than a, sometimes it is, but rather than a babysitter, a time-filler. That's something that can be a really valuable shared experience.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative), okay. I guess I do have one further-

Interviewee: Sure.

Interviewer: Kind of informational question: can you describe the demographics of your service population?

Interviewee: Yes. All the elementary schools, they're all Title I schools, so they're all free and reduced lunch. Our community is low income for sure. Anything more demographics, or-

Interviewer: Ethnicity? Race?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. I'm going to have to guess, but I would probably say may 20% Latino, maybe 20% African-American, maybe 60% Caucasian. Maybe even less Caucasian; maybe 50% Caucasian and then 25%/25%.

Interviewer: Does this branch serve the Air Force Base as well?

Interviewee: It does. We have the Library. We're actually closer to the Air Force Base than the Library. The Air Force Base has its own little library as well, but it's tiny and it's not affiliated with X Library in any way.

Interviewer: It's mainly for parents, I would think-

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: [Rather than 00:23:25] children.

Interviewee: Yeah. Children of Air Force, definitely they come here.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Huge Air Force population.

Interviewer: Yeah, I was just curious, but that gives me a good understanding of who your service population is or what their needs might be.

Interviewee: It's an interesting group because you have some Air Force vets who have traveled all around and they come in, brand new users to our library. Then you have some that are very low-income people that come in and frequent our library and have been users for years. One of my favorite parts of working here is we do a lot of outreach to the schools, so I get to know a lot of the grade-school kids just through our outreach. We go to afterschool programs at the schools and meet a lot of kids, so a lot of them come in and recognize and I recognize them. It's been fun building relationships with the community kids and parents.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative), excellent. Okay. Well, do you have any other comments?

Interviewee: I don't think so.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: All right.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

Interviewee: Yeah, you're welcome.